Abstract:

This paper attempts to understand how elected politicians and voters respond to new information on the threats of climate change. In particular, we study how members of the U.S. House of Representatives change their support for bills aimed at contrasting climate change in the aftermath of a hurricane. Exploiting the quasi-random trajectory of hurricanes within states for identification, we document that Congress members from districts hit by a hurricane are substantially more likely to support green bills in the year after the disaster. The effect does not seem to persist for more than one year. The effect is weaker for Congress members from districts that specialize in fossil fuel production, with a strong Republican electoral share, and who have a conservative voting record.