

Differences of Opinion:  
How Preferences for the Environment Differ Across Observable Factors

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Given the diverse energy resources in the state and preferences for environmentalism, we expect improved information concerning the state's citizens will be beneficial in future energy policy design. Using survey data from a statewide survey on preferences for energy in New Mexico, we employ a number of logit models to examine which observable variables influence the heterogeneity of preferences and opinions about the environment. Dependent variables include respondent's view on carbon dioxide regulation, public land use for energy production, local hydraulic fracturing issues, and environmental preferences from the New Ecological Paradigm scale. Based on previous analysis of data and extant literature, we know that preferences for the environment are correlated with many factors. Preliminary analysis of our survey data shows that preferences are correlated not only to socioeconomic characteristics and political leaning but also to respondent's geographic location, opinion about the economy and climate change. These results suggest that differences in NM are not simply a function of political preferences or working in the energy sector. By exploring which observable factors are correlated with environmental preference, we expect that policymakers will be able to understand better and target differences in opinions about policy changes.