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GLOBAL PRODUCTION NETWORKS FOR FRACKING, GAS LIQUIDS AND PLASTICS: POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR A SELF- REINFORCING PROBLEM

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Currently, she is also researching the economic and political aspects of global production networks through which a fracked gas liquid (ethane) is transformed into plastics..

November 1st

10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Special Events Forum

Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University

Street parking available

Contact Preethy at pt328@rutgers.edu with any questions

ABSTRACT

Although the connection between the two is obscure, ethane, a gas liquid produced through natural gas fracking, is currently stimulating increases in world plastics production, which ultimately adds to the pollution of the world's oceans with plastic wastes. Here, I examine the newest strand of a global production network (GPN) for ethane, which starts in Pennsylvania, USA. Ethane is an attractive feedstock for plastics because it is chemically efficient and inexpensive, allowing plastics to be manufactured more profitably. Although the state regulates extractive, material transport, manufacturing and waste disposal practices within each of the four nodes of the GPN (upstream, midstream, downstream and waste stream), existing regulations are inadequate to prevent greenhouse gas loading, water and air pollution, increased production of toxic substances or the proliferation of plastic wastes caused by the ethane-to-plastics GPN. While efforts to reform environmental practices of ethane-to-plastics GPNs face formidable barriers, GPNs also offer multiple opportunities for policy interventions as they generate environmental threat at multiple locations and span multiple jurisdictions and regulatory arenas. Reasons that current US regulations have not been effective in curbing the increas in both ethane and plastics production are examined, and policy changes recommended.

Save the Date: May 6, 2020
15th REI Annual Energy Symposium: Decarbonizing the Energy System by 2050