Distributional Implications of Alternative U.S. Greenhouse Gas Control Measures

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Distributional Implications of Alternative U.S. Greenhouse Gas Control Measures

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Distributional Implications of Alternative U.S. Greenhouse Gas Control Measures∗

Sebastian Rausch, Gilbert E. Metcalf, John M. Reilly, and Sergey Paltsev

Abstract

We analyze the distributional and efficiency impacts of different allowance allocation schemes motivated by recently proposed U.S. climate legislation for a national cap and trade system using a new dynamic computable general equilibrium model of the U.S. economy. The USREP model tracks nine different income groups and twelve different geographic regions within the U.S. We find that the allocation schemes in all proposals are progressive over the lower half of the income distribution and proportional in the upper half of the income distribution. Scenarios based on the Cantwell-Collins allocation proposal are less progressive in early years and have lower welfare costs due to smaller redistribution to low income households and, consequently, lower income-induced increases in energy demand and less savings and investment. Scenarios based on the three other allocation schemes tend to overcompensate some adversely affected income groups and regions in early years, but this dissipates over time as the allowance allocation effect becomes weaker. Finally, we find that carbon pricing by itself (ignoring the return of carbon revenues through allowance allocations) is proportional to modestly progressive. This striking result follows from the dominance of the sources over uses side impacts of the policy and stands in sharp contrast to previous work that has focused only on the uses side. The main reason is that lower income households derive a large fraction of income from government transfers, and we hold the transfers constant in real terms, reflecting the fact that transfers are generally indexed to inflation. As a result, this source of income is unaffected by carbon pricing while wage and capital income is affected.

KEYWORDS: U.S. Greenhouse Gas Policy, distributional effects, regional effects, income class, allowance allocation, computable general equilibrium models

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1. INTRODUCTION

U.S. Senate proposals for cap and trade legislation and the House-passed Waxman Markey Bill focus on similar overall cuts in greenhouse gases. The biggest difference among them is how allowances, and the revenue from their auction, would be distributed. Different uses of revenue or different allowance allocations would not in the first instance affect the direct cost of achieving emissions reductions but they can have important implications for how costs are borne by different regions and among households of different income levels. Different uses of revenue may have indirect effects on the overall welfare cost of a policy to the extent revenue is used to offset other distortionary taxes. In addition the allowance allocation has efficiency impacts to the extent that it creates further distortions or prevents pass through of the full CO$_2$ price in some products, or is used in some way that does not create value for U.S. citizens. Rausch et al. (2009) investigated some generic allocation schemes with a multi-region, multi-household static general equilibrium model of the U.S., the U.S. Regional Energy Policy (USREP) model. Here we extend the USREP model to a recursive dynamic formulation and design allocation schemes intended to approximate more closely specific cap and trade proposals.

In extending the USREP model to a recursive dynamic formulation we borrow the dynamic structure of the MIT Emissions Prediction and Policy Analysis (EPPA) model (Paltsev et al. (2005)). With this extension we are able more closely to represent features of revenue use and allowance allocation in specific legislative proposals and contrast their distributional implications. As with previous analyses of greenhouse gas legislation conducted with the EPPA model such as that in Paltsev et al. (2009) we attempt to capture key features of the cap and trade provisions in the proposals but are not able to address many other provisions of the bills that deal with energy efficiency standards and the like. The added value here is that we can consider distributional effects of proposed legislation. We contrast the allowance allocation schemes of the House legislation (Waxman-Markey) with those of the Senate proposals of Kerry and Boxer and of Cantwell and Collins. As a result of negotiations in the Senate the Kerry-Boxer bill has stalled and been replaced by a discussion draft by Senators Kerry and Lieberman. The bill contains a variety of new features but is similar to Waxman-Markey in its allocation of allowance value. To isolate the effects of different allocation schemes, we formulate a cap and trade policy designed to limit cumulative emissions over the control period in all scenarios to 203 billion metric tons (bmt). The cap and trade provisions of the proposals we consider would lead to somewhat different cumulative emissions because of differences in the timing of reductions, sectoral coverage, and whether outside credits were allowed.
Waxman-Markey and Kerry-Boxer are part auction, part free allocation with a complex allowance and revenue allocation designed to achieve many different purposes. In contrast, Cantwell and Collins proposal auctions all allowances and distributes most of the revenue with a very straightforward lump sum allocation to individuals. Extending our analysis to distributional issues requires further interpretation, especially for those proposals with complex allocation schemes, of how allocation of allowances and auction revenue would actually occur if current proposals were implemented.

Our analysis shows a number of results. First, scenarios based on the Waxman-Markey and Kerry-Boxer (or Kerry-Lieberman) allowance allocation schemes are more progressive (i.e., a larger welfare loss is imposed on higher income households) in early years than scenarios based on the Cantwell-Collins proposal. We emphasize, however, that the overall distributional impact of these proposals depend on all the features of these legislative proposals and not just the cap and trade programs. Nonetheless the allowance allocation schemes are important determinants of the overall distributional impact of these bills. Second, scenarios based on the Cantwell-Collins allocation proposal have lower welfare costs due to lower redistribution to low income households and consequent lower income-induced increases in energy demand. Third, we find that the Waxman-Markey and Kerry-Boxer (or Kerry-Lieberman) allocation schemes appear to overcompensate some adversely affected income groups and regions early on, though this dissipates over time as the allocation scheme evolves to something closer to lump sum distribution. Fourth, the allocation schemes in all proposals are progressive over the lower half of the income distribution and essentially proportional in the upper half of the income distribution. Finally we find that carbon pricing by itself, ignoring the return of carbon revenues through allowance allocations, is proportional to modestly progressive. We trace our result to the dominance of the sources side over the uses side impacts of the policy. It stands in sharp contrast to previous work that has focused only on the uses side, and has hence found energy taxation to be regressive. It is worth pointing out that our model framework provides only an analysis of welfare costs of climate policy and does not attempt to incorporate any benefits from averting climate change. Any welfare changes reported in this paper therefore refer to changes in costs.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 briefly describes the recursive dynamic version of the USREP model. Section 3 provides some background on incidence theory. Section 4 discusses the legislative proposals we evaluate, mapping the allowance and revenue allocation in the Bills to specific distributional schemes in the model. Section 5 defines policy scenarios based on the proposed greenhouse gas control measures. Section 6 investigates the distributional implications across regions and income classes of allocation scenarios reflecting our interpretation of proposed policies, and Section 7 reports
the results of a counterfactual analysis that allows us to trace the source of
distribution effects we observe. Section 8 concludes.

2. A RECURSIVE-DYNAMIC U.S. REGIONAL ENERGY POLICY
MODEL

USREP is a computable general equilibrium model of the U.S. economy designed
to analyze energy and greenhouse gas policies. It has the capability to assess
impacts on regions, sectors and industries, and different household income
classes. As in any classical Arrow-Debreu general equilibrium model, our
framework combines the behavioral assumption of rational economic agents with
the analysis of equilibrium conditions, and represents price-dependent market
interactions as well as the origination and spending of income based on
microeconomic theory. Profit-maximizing firms produce goods and services using
intermediate inputs from other sectors and primary factors of production from
households. Utility-maximizing households receive income from government
transfers and from the supply of factors of production to firms (labor, capital,
land, and resources). Income thus earned is spent on goods and services or is
saved. The government collects tax revenue which is spent on consumption and
household transfers. USREP is a recursive-dynamic model, and hence savings and
investment decisions are based on current period variables.

The USREP model is built on state-level economic data from the
IMPLAN dataset (Minnesota IMPLAN Group, 2008) covering all transactions
among businesses, households, and government agents for the base year 2006.
The detailed representation of existing taxes captures effects of tax-base erosion,
and comprises sector- and region-specific ad valorem output taxes, payroll taxes
and capital income taxes. IMPLAN data has been augmented by incorporating
regional tax data from the NBER tax simulator to represent marginal personal
income tax rates by region and income class. Energy data from the Energy
Information Administration’s State Energy Data System (SEDS) are merged with
the economic data to provide physical flows of energy for greenhouse gas

1 As in any standard computable general equilibrium model, our framework adopts a full-
employment assumption and further assumes that money is neutral, i.e. production and
consumption decisions are solely determined by relative prices.

2 Experience from a forward-looking version of the EPPA model (Babiker et al. (2008)) suggests
that energy sector and CO₂ price behavior are similar to those derived from a recursive-dynamic
model. Consumption shifting as an additional avenue of adjustment to the policy may, however,
lower overall policy costs. On the other hand, inter-temporal optimization with perfect foresight
poorly represents the real economy where agents face high levels of uncertainty that likely lead to
higher costs than if they knew the future with certainty. We leave for future work the careful
comparison of how alternative approaches to expectations formation may influence model results.
accounting. Non-CO₂ greenhouse gases are based on the EPA inventory data, and are included as in the EPPA model with endogenous costing of the abatement (Hyman et al., 2003).

The basic structure and data used in the USREP model are described in some detail in Rausch et al. (2009) with the dynamic structure borrowed from EPPA (Paltsev et al., 2005). We focus discussion here on elements of the model that differ from that described in these two previous papers and on the data sources and calibration needed to regionalize the model. The underlying state level data base provides flexibility in the regional detail of the model. Here we use the regional structure shown in Figure 1. This structure separately identifies larger states, allows representation of separate electricity interconnects, and captures some of the diversity among states in use and production of energy.

![Figure 1](image_url)

**Figure 1.** Regional Aggregation in the USREP Model.

Table 1 provides an overview of the sectoral breakdown and the primary factors of production. Consistent with the assumption of perfect competition on product and factor markets, production and consumption processes exhibit constant-returns-to-scale and are modeled by nested constant-elasticity-of-substitution (CES) functions. A detailed description of the nesting structure for each production sector and household consumption is provided in Rausch et al. (2009).
Table 1. USREP Model Details: Regional and Sectoral Breakdown and Primary Input Factors.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Primary Input Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska (AK)</td>
<td>Non-Energy</td>
<td>Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California (CA)</td>
<td>Agriculture (AGR)</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida (FL)</td>
<td>Services (SRV)</td>
<td>Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York (NY)</td>
<td>Energy-Intensive (EIS)</td>
<td>Crude Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England (NENGL)</td>
<td>Other Industries (OTH)</td>
<td>Shale Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East (SEAST)</td>
<td>Transportation (TRN)</td>
<td>Natural Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East (NEAST)</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Coal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central (SCENT)</td>
<td>Coal (COL)</td>
<td>Nuclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas (TX)</td>
<td>Convent. Crude Oil (CRU)</td>
<td>Hydro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (NCENT)</td>
<td>Refined Oil (OIL)</td>
<td>Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain (MOUNT)</td>
<td>Natural Gas (GAS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific (PACIF)</td>
<td>Electric: Fossil (ELE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electric: Nuclear (NUC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electric: Hydro (HYD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Technologies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Model regions are aggregations of the following U.S. states: NENGL = Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island; SEAST = Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi; NEAST = West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, District of Columbia; SCENT = Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana; NCENT = Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa; MOUNT = Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico; PACIF = Oregon, Washington, Hawaii.

There are nine representative households in each region differentiated by income levels as shown in Table 2. Households across income classes and regions differ in terms of income sources as well as expenditures. State-specific projections through 2030 are from the U.S. Census Bureau (2009a). Labor supply is determined by the household choice between leisure and labor. We calibrate compensated and uncompensated labor supply elasticities following the approach described in Ballard (2000), and assume for all income groups that the uncompensated (compensated) labor supply elasticity is 0.1 (0.3). Labor is fully mobile across industries in a given region but is immobile across U.S. regions.

The USREP model incorporates demographic data on the population and number of households in each region and income class for the base year 2006 based on U.S. Census Data (2009b). We apply state-specific population growth rates uniformly to all income groups.
Savings enters directly into the utility function which generates the demand for savings and makes the consumption-investment decision endogenous. We follow an approach by Bovenberg, Goulder and Gurney (2005) distinguishing between capital that is used in production of market goods and services and capital used in households (e.g. the housing stock). We assume income from the former is subject to taxation while the imputed income from housing capital is not, and so households can shift investment between market and housing capital in response to changing capital taxation. Lacking specific data on capital ownership, households are assumed to own a pool of U.S. capital—that is they do not disproportionately own capital assets within the region in which they reside.

We adopt the vintage capital structure of the EPPA model. Malleable capital is mobile across U.S. regions and industries, while vintaged capital is region and industry specific. As a result there is a common rate of return on malleable capital across the U.S. The accumulation of both malleable and non-malleable capital is calculated as investment net of depreciation according to the standard perpetual inventory assumption. Given base year data about investment demand by sector and by region, we specify for each region an investment sector that produces an aggregate investment good equal to the sum of endogenous savings by different household types. Foreign capital flows are fixed as in the EPPA model. We assume an integrated U.S. market for fossil fuel resources and that the regional ownership of resources is distributed in proportion to capital income. Rausch et al. (2009) explored the implications of assuming instead that resource ownership was regional. Such an assumption amplifies regional differences in the impacts of climate legislation, resulting in greater costs for

### Table 2. Annual Income Classes Used in the USREP Model and Cumulative Population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income class</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cumulative Population for whole U.S. (in %)^a</th>
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<tr>
<td>hh1</td>
<td>Less than $10,000 per year</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh10</td>
<td>$10,000 to $15,000 per year</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh15</td>
<td>$15,000 to $25,000 per year</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh25</td>
<td>$25,000 to $30,000 per year</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh30</td>
<td>$30,000 to $50,000 per year</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh50</td>
<td>$50,000 to $75,000 per year</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh75</td>
<td>$75,000 to $100,000 per year</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh100</td>
<td>$100,000 to $150,000 per year</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh150</td>
<td>$150,000 plus per year</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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^Based on data from U.S. Census Bureau (2009a).
regions with significant energy production but we believe that assumption overestimates regional differences because equity ownership in large energy companies is broadly owned.

Labor-augmenting technical change is a key driver of economic growth as in EPPA. Regional labor productivity growth rates were calibrated to match AEO2009 GDP growth through 2030. Beyond 2030, population and labor productivity growth rates are extrapolated by fitting a logistic function that assumes convergence in growth rates in 2100. The 2100 targets for annual labor productivity growth and for annual population growth are two and zero percent, respectively.

Energy supply is regionalized for USREP by incorporating data on regional fossil fuel reserves from the U.S. Geological Service and the Department of Energy\(^4\). The resource depletion model and elasticities of substitution between resource and non-resource inputs in fossil fuel production are identical to those in EPPA. As in EPPA, we specify a range of advanced energy supply technologies.\(^5\)

The markups, share parameters and elasticity parameters for the advanced energy supply technologies are those from Paltsev et al. (2009) and the same cost mark-ups apply in all regions except for renewables. For renewables the cost shares are taken from Paltsev et al. (2009) but regional mark-ups and elasticity parameters are derived from regional supply curves. Regional wind supply curves for each technology have been estimated based on high-resolution wind data from NREL (2009) and a levelized cost model described in Morris (2009) that was also the basis for cost estimates in Paltsev et al. (2009). The TrueWinds model (NREL, 2009) provides data on the capacity factors for wind turbines if they were located at sites across the U.S., allowing construction of a regional wind supply curve that depends on the quality of wind resources in each region. We derive regional supply curves for biomass from data from Oakridge National Laboratories (2009) that describes quantity and price pairs for biomass supply for each state.

Non-price induced improvements in energy efficiency are represented by an Autonomous Energy Efficiency Improvement (AEEI) parameter as in EPPA, and represent technological progress that reduces at no cost the energy needed in consumption and production activities, thus resulting in reduced energy use per unit of activity and general productivity improvement over time. Reference case energy use is calibrated to the updated AEO2009 reference case (Energy Information Administration (2009)). The baseline thus includes both the impacts of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA).


\(^5\) A list of these technologies can be found in Paltsev et al. (2009).
Sectoral output produced in each region is converted through a constant-elasticity-of-transformation function into goods destined for the regional, national, and international market. All goods are tradable. Depending on the type of commodity, we distinguish three different representations of intra-national regional trade. First, bilateral flows for all non-energy goods are represented as “Armington” goods (Armington (1969)), where like goods from other regions are imperfectly substitutable for domestically produced goods. Second, domestically traded energy goods, except for electricity, are assumed to be homogeneous products, i.e. there is a national pool that demands domestic exports and supplies domestic imports. This assumption reflects the high degree of integration of intra-U.S. markets for natural gas, crude and refined oil, and coal. Third, we differentiate six regional electricity pools that are designed to provide an approximation of the existing structure of independent system operators (ISO) and the three major NERC interconnections in the U.S. More specifically, we distinguish the Western, Texas ERCOT and the Eastern NERC interconnections and in addition identify AK, NENGL, and NY as separate regional pools. Within each regional pool, we assume that traded electricity is a homogenous good, where no electricity is traded between regional pools.

Analogously to the export side, we adopt the Armington (1969) assumption of product heterogeneity for imports. A CES function characterizes the trade-off between imported, from national and international sources, and locally produced varieties of the same goods. Foreign closure of the model is determined through a national balance-of-payments (BOP) constraint.

3. BACKGROUND ON DISTRIBUTIONAL ANALYSIS

Carbon pricing through a cap-and-trade system has very similar impacts to broad based energy taxes – not surprising since over eighty percent of greenhouse gas emissions are associated with the combustion of fossil fuels (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2009)). The literature on distributional implications across income groups of energy taxes is a long and extensive one and some general conclusions have been reached that help inform the distributional analysis of

6 We identify NY and NENGL as separate pools since electricity flows with contiguous ISOs represent only a small fraction of total electricity generation in those regions. For example, based on own calculation from data provided by ISOs, net electricity trade between ISO New England and ISO New York account for less than 1% of total electricity produced in ISO New England. Interface flows between the New York and neighboring ISOs amount to about 6% of total electricity generation in ISO New York.

7 The regional electricity pools are thus defined as follows: NENGL, NY, TX, AK each represent a separate pool. The Western NERC interconnection comprises CA, MOUNT, and PACIF. The Eastern NERC interconnection comprises NEAST, SEAST, and FL.
carbon pricing. First, analyses that rank households by their annual income find that excise taxes in general tend to be regressive (e.g. Pechman (1985) looking at excise taxes in general and Metcalf (1999) looking specifically at a cluster of environmental taxes).

The difficulty with this ranking procedure is that many households in the lowest income groups are not poor in any traditional sense that should raise welfare concerns. This group includes households that are facing transitory negative income shocks or who are making human capital investments that will lead to higher incomes later in life (e.g. graduate students). It also includes many retired households which may have little current income but are able to draw on extensive savings.

That current income may not be a good measure of household well being has long been known and has led to a number of efforts to measure lifetime income. This leads to the second major finding in the literature. Consumption taxes – including taxes on energy – look considerably less regressive when lifetime income measures are used than when annual income measures are used. Studies include Davies, St Hilaire and Whalley (1984), Poterba (1989, 1991), Bull, Hassett and Metcalf (1994), Lyon and Schwab (1995) and many others.8

The lifetime income approach is an important caveat to distributional findings from annual incidence analyses but it relies on strong assumptions about household consumption decisions. In particular it assumes that households base current consumption decisions knowing their full stream of earnings over their lifetime. While it is reasonable to assume that households have some sense of future income, it may be implausible to assume they have complete knowledge or that they necessarily base spending decisions on income that may be received far in the future.9 It may be that the truth lies somewhere between annual and lifetime income analyses. Moreover, if one were to use a lifetime income approach, one would like to track consumption over the lifecycle to capture any lifecycle changes in the consumption of carbon intensive products and compare lifetime carbon pricing burdens rather than a single-year snapshot. This paper takes a current income approach to sorting households.

Turning to climate policy in particular a number of papers have attempted to measure the distributional impacts of carbon pricing across household income groups. Dinan and Rogers (2002) build on Metcalf (1999) to consider how the

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8 Most of these studies look at a snapshot of taxes in one year relative to some proxy for lifetime income – often current consumption based on the permanent income hypothesis of Friedman (1957). An exception is Fullerton and Rogers (1993) who model the lifetime pattern of tax payments as well as income.

9 On the other hand casual observation of graduate students in professional schools (business, law, medicine) make clear that many households are taking future income into account in their current consumption decisions.
distribution of allowances from a cap and trade program affects the distributional outcome. Both these papers emphasize that focusing on the distributional burden of carbon pricing (either a tax or auctioned permits) without regard to the use of the revenue raised (or potentially raised) from carbon pricing provides an incomplete distributional analysis. How the proceeds from carbon pricing are distributed have important impacts on the ultimate distributional outcome.

The point that use of carbon revenues matters for distribution is the basis for the distributional and revenue neutral proposal in Metcalf (2007) for a carbon tax swap. It is also the focus of the analysis in Burtraw, Sweeney and Walls (2009). This latter paper considers five different uses of revenue from a cap and trade auction focusing on income distribution as well as regional distribution. A similar focus on income and regional distribution is in Hassett, Mathur and Metcalf (2009). This last paper does not consider the use of revenue but does compare both annual and lifetime income measures as well as a regional analysis using annual income. Grainger and Kolstad (2009) do a similar analysis as that of Hassett, Mathur and Metcalf (2009) and note that the use of household equivalence scales can exacerbate the regressivity of carbon pricing. Finally Burtraw, Walls and Blonz (2009) consider the distributional impacts in an expenditure side analysis where they focus on the allocation of permits to local distribution companies (LDCs). Rausch et al. (2009) also investigate the welfare costs of allocations to LDCs and find that allocations that lead to real or perceived reductions in electricity prices by consumers have large efficiency costs.

With the exception of the last paper, all of the papers above assume that the burden of carbon pricing is shifted forward to consumers in the form of higher energy prices and higher prices of energy-intensive consumption goods and services. That carbon pricing is passed forward to consumers follows from the analysis of a number of computable general equilibrium models. Bovenberg and Goulder (2001), for example, find that coal prices rise by over 90 percent of a $25 per ton carbon tax in the short and long run (Table 2.4). This incidence result underlies their finding that only a small percentage of permits need be freely allocated to energy intensive industries to compensate shareholders for any windfall losses from a cap and trade program. See also Bovenberg, Goulder and Gurney (2005) for more on this issue.

Metcalf et al. (2008) consider uses side effects as a result of higher consumer prices and sources side effects as a result of lower factor returns, over different time periods for a carbon tax policy begun in 2012 and slowly ramped

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10 They assume world pricing for oil and natural gas so that the gross of tax prices for these two fossil fuels rise by the full amount of the tax.
11 The tax on carbon emissions from coal are largely passed forward to consumers in all years of the policy in roughly the same magnitude found by Bovenberg and Goulder (2001). Roughly ten percent of the burden of carbon pricing on crude oil is shifted back to oil producers initially with the share rising to roughly one-fourth by 2050 as consumers are able to find substitutes for oil in the longer run. Interestingly the consumer burden of the carbon tax on natural gas exceeds the tax. This reflects the sharp rise in demand for natural gas as an initial response to carbon pricing is to substitute gas for coal in electricity generation. By 2050 the producer price is falling for reasonably stringent carbon policies.12

Fullerton and Heutel (2007) construct an analytic general equilibrium model to identify the various key parameters and relationships that determine the ultimate burden of a tax on a pollutant.13 While the model is not sufficiently detailed to provide a realistic assessment of climate change impacts on the U.S. economy it illustrates critical parameters and relationships that drive burden results.

The general equilibrium models discussed above all assume a representative agent in the U.S. thereby limiting their usefulness to considering distributional questions. Metcalf, et al. (2008) apply results from a representative agent model to data on U.S. households that allows them to draw conclusions about distributional impacts of policies but the household heterogeneity is not built into the model.14

Several computable general equilibrium (CGE) models have been constructed to investigate regional implications of climate and energy in the U.S. For example, the ADAGE model, documented in Ross (2008), has a U.S. regional module which is usually aggregated to five or six regions. The MRN-NEEM model described in Tuladhar et al. (2009) has nine U.S. regions. Both these models use a single representative household in each region.

11 Sources side effects refer to burden impacts arising from changes in relative factor prices, while uses side effects refer to burden impacts arising from change in relative product prices. This terminology goes back to Musgrave (1959).
12 Distributional results depend importantly on the stringency of policy. How stringent the policy is affects whether carbon free technologies are adopted in the EPPA model and therefore what the relative demand for fossil fuels is. In the text above we are reporting carbon tax results for a policy that limits emissions to 287 billion metric tons over the control period.
13 The paper also provides a thorough summary of the literature on the incidence impacts of environmental taxes.
14 A recent paper by Bento et al. (2009) marks an advance in the literature by allowing for household heterogeneity over income and location. That paper considers the impact of increased U.S. gasoline taxes taking into account new and used car purchases along with scrappage and changes in driving behavior.
Rausch et al. (2009) does an explicit CGE analysis of carbon pricing in a single-period CGE model. That analysis considers a variety of possible allocations of the revenue and/or allowances from cap-and-trade system and finds that the use of revenues affects the overall progressivity of the policy substantially. It also finds that a significant portion of the carbon price is passed back to factors of production – most notably owners of natural resources and capital. This contributes to a greater progressivity of carbon pricing than found in literature that assumes full forward shifting.


Below we carry out distributional analyses of cap and trade policies based on alternative proposals for greenhouse gas control legislation currently under consideration in the U.S. These are the house-passed American Clean Energy and Security Act (H.R. 2454) sponsored by Reps. Waxman and Markey, the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (S. 1733) a Senate bill similar to H.R. 2454 and sponsored by Senators Kerry and Boxer, and now replaced by the American Power Act (APA) draft bill by Kerry and Lieberman, and the Carbon Limits for America’s Renewal (CLEAR) Act, a competing Senate Bill sponsored by Senators Cantwell and Collins. All proposals seek an overall reduction of GHG emissions in the U.S. to 83% below 2005 levels by 2050 with intervening targets. Cap and trade components of the bills cover most of the economy’s emissions but not necessarily all of them, with other measures directed toward uncapped sectors. For example, estimates are that Waxman-Markey covers between 85% and 90% of emissions with a cap and trade system. Waxman-Markey has a slightly looser target for sectors covered by the cap and trade in 2020 than does Kerry-Boxer, issuing allowances at a level 17% below 2005 emissions in 2020, whereas the economy-wide goal is a 20% reduction by that date. Kerry-Lieberman would sell as many allowances as needed to refineries at a fixed price but would adjust over time to meet quantity targets. In our simulations of the effects of these bills, we assume the national goals are met, and we achieve them with a cap and trade system that covers all U.S. emissions except for land use CO$_2$ sources (or sinks). All of these proposals including banking and limited borrowing provisions and hence the time profile of reductions described in the bills are better thought of as the time profile of allowance allocation, with actual emissions levels in each year determined by how allowances are banked or borrowed (to the extent borrowing is allowed). In our simulations we find that the allocations result in net banking with no borrowing. Of course, in actuality borrowing may occur to the extent that unexpected costs make it attractive to bring permits forward in time.

While the stated national targets are identical across the bills, the Cantwell and Collins proposal has no provision for the use of offsets from outside the capped
sectors to be used in lieu of the cap. Reductions similar in nature to the offsets allowed in the other bills are to be funded from a portion of the auction revenues that are subject to future appropriations. The other two proposals allow up to two billion tons per year of outside credits from a combination of domestic and foreign sources. In our simulations the domestic credits would need to come from a combination of reduced land use emissions and increased land use sinks. Foreign credits would come from qualified reductions abroad. As shown in

![Figure 2. The Allocation of Allowance Value in the Waxman-Markey Bill.](image)

Paltsev et al. (2009) if these credits are available at reasonable costs they would significantly reduce the CO$_2$ price and expected welfare cost of the legislation. Emissions from the capped sectors then are reduced much less than the target levels in the bill because available allowances are supplemented with external credits. Our main interest in this paper is the consequences of alternative distribution of allowances, and so we simulate the Cantwell-Collins allocation scheme allowing for the same level of outside credits as the other two bills. Any
differences are the result of the allowance distribution mechanisms rather than the level of the cap.

The proposals are not always clear as to whether allowances are auctioned by some central Federal Agency and the revenue distributed or the allowances are distributed to entities who then can sell them. For example, designations to States could involve either a portion of allowance revenue or direct allocation of allowances leaving it up to the State to sell them into the allowance market. For our modeling purposes it does not matter whether it is revenue or the allowances that are distributed. We thus focus in our analysis on the allocation of “allowance value” in the different proposals to allow for distribution of allowances or the revenue from an auction.

Figure 2 shows the allowance allocation scheme as it is proposed in the Waxman-Markey bill. We do not show graphically the Kerry-Lieberman, Kerry-Boxer and Cantwell-Collins allowance allocation schemes here. The Cantwell-Collins bill calls for 75% of allowance revenue to be returned in a lump sum manner and 25% retained to meet several objectives but without specifying percentages for each. In terms of Figure 2, that bill would be simply two bars dividing allowance value among these two purposes. The allocation schemes in Kerry-Boxer and Kerry-Lieberman are similar to Waxman-Markey. The main difference is in terms of allowances set aside to offset the impact of the bill on the deficit. Waxman-Markey allocates at most 10% of the allowances for this purpose, in part directly and in part by directing how revenues obtained through early auction would be used, whereas Kerry-Boxer allocates a percentage that grows to 25%. The allocation of revenue for deficit impacts in Kerry-Lieberman is much closer to Waxman-Markey. The increasing share devoted to this purpose proportional reduces the allocation to all other purposes. For example, Kerry-Boxer is able to allocate less than 50% of allowance value directly to households through either the low income energy assistance or the consumer rebate fund—whereas Waxman-Markey is able to allocate about 65% to households by 2050 through these two programs.

Both Kerry-Boxer and Waxman-Markey have a small strategic reserve of allowances and both allocate a substantial portion of allowances to local electricity and natural gas distribution companies in early years on the basis that these regulated entities will turn allowance value over to ratepayers, thus offsetting some of the impact of higher energy prices. This turns these LDCs into the mechanism for distribution as opposed to a government auction agency as in Cantwell-Collins. The other bills transition to a system closer to Cantwell-Collins over time, replacing the LDC distribution with a consumer rebate fund. Both

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15 This depends in part on whether future vintage allowances are sold early in the 2014-2020 period. If so, the share of allowances allocated to deficit reduction rises to roughly 12 percent of total allowances (current allowances and future allowances brought forward).
retain a separate allocation to focus specifically on low income energy consumers. Both also then distribute allowances to different industries that are expected to be particularly affected by the legislation, but these allocations phase out by 2030. Use of allowances as an extra incentive for carbon capture and sequestration is also identified in both. A next set of allowances are allocated to fund various domestic energy efficiency programs. The next grouping of allocations is for international mitigation and adaptation and for domestic adaptation programs. Waxman-Markey contains a large set of allowances in later years designated for prior year use. This use possibly reallocates allowances through time, allowing the possibility of Federal borrowing if allowance prices rise too much. Of more relevance here is that the bill prescribes about one-half of this allowance value to go to the Treasury to offset impacts on the deficit and the other half as a consumer rebate. These amounts are shown in Figure 2 combined with the other provisions that direct revenue to the Treasury and to the consumer rebate. That value is allocated in the year in which the allowances would be originally issued, i.e. assuming the Federal government does not borrow them or if it does, the income is not rebated immediately. The Kerry-Boxer bill does not have this provision.

We do not represent the many different programs to which these allowances or allowance value would go, and the exact recipients will depend on program decisions yet to be made. However, we approximate the impact on regions and households of different income levels by distributing the allowance value based on data we have within the model, and that approximates what we believe to be the intent of the different distributions or how they would tend to work in practice. The distributional instruments we have at our disposal in the USREP Model and the correspondence to allocations called out in the bills are given in Table 3. For example, we allocate to households the proposed distribution of allowances to LDCs based on emissions and respective electricity and natural gas consumption. To determine the regional distribution, we allocate 50% of LDCs allowances based on historic sectoral emissions for the electricity and natural gas electricity sector, respectively. The other half is allocated to regions based on household electricity and natural gas consumption. Within a region, allowances to LDCs are allocated based on respective fuel consumption. Allocations designated for low income households are distributed to households with incomes of less than $30,000 per year.

Distributions to industries other than LDCs go to households based on their capital earnings on the basis that this value will be reflected in the equity value of firms, and so households that own capital, for example, through stock.

Rausch, et al. (2009) consider the efficiency implications of a misperception by households that this lump-sum transfer lowers the marginal price of electricity and natural gas.
Table 3. Correspondence between Proposals Allowance Value Allocations and Distribution Instruments in USREP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALLOWANCE RECIPIENTS</th>
<th>MODEL INSTRUMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitigating Price Impacts on Consumers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All electricity local distribution companies (LDCs)</td>
<td>Lump-sum transfer to consumers. Allocated to regions based on GHG emissions (50%) and based on value of electricity consumption (50%). Within a region, allocated to households based on the value of electricity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional allowances for small electricity LDCs</td>
<td>Lump-sum transfer to consumers. Allocated to regions based on GHG emissions (50%) and based on value of gas consumption (50%). Within a region, allocated to households based on the value of gas consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural gas LDCs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State programs for home heating oil, propane, and kerosene consumers</td>
<td>Lump-sum transfer to consumers based on value of oil consumption (excluding oil consumed for transportation purposes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistance for Households and Workers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection for low-income households</td>
<td>Lump-sum transfer to households with annual income less than $30k.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker assistance and job training</td>
<td>Distributed to regions based on value of energy production (coal, crude oil and refined oil). Within a region, distributed across households based on wage income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per-capita consumer rebate</td>
<td>Lump-sum transfer based on per-capita.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear working training</td>
<td>Distributed to regions based on value of nuclear electricity generation. Within a region, distributed across households based on wage income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocations to Vulnerable Industries</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Funding</td>
<td>Distributed to regions based on energy use (industrial and private). Within a region, distributed based on household energy consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International Funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Adaptation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposited into the Treasury (to offset the bill’s impact on the deficit)</td>
<td>Distributed to government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants to state and local agencies for transportation planning and transit</td>
<td>Distributed to government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation for “early action” emission reductions prior to cap’s inception</td>
<td>Distributed to households on a per capita basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowances already auctioned in prior years</td>
<td>46% distributed to households on a per-capita basis, 54% distributed to government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic reserve allowances</td>
<td>Distributed to households on a per capita basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note to Table 3: This allowance category only applies to the Kerry-Boxer bill. Allocations to vulnerable industries include: Energy-intensive trade-exposed (EITE) industries, all petroleum refiners, additional allowances for small refiners, merchant coal-fired electricity generators, generators under long-term contracts without cost recovery, cogeneration facilities in industrial parks. Technology Funding includes: Carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) incentives, state renewable energy and efficiency programs, state building retrofit programs, incentives for renewable energy and agricultural emissions reductions, clean vehicle technology incentives, energy innovation hubs, energy efficiency and renewable energy worker training fund, advanced energy research, supplemental reductions from agriculture, abandoned mine land, and renewable energy. International Funding includes: International avoided deforestation, international clean technology deployment, and international adaptation. We allocate allowances that are already auctioned in prior years to the government and to households according to the respective average share over the period from 2012-2050.
ownership, will be the beneficiaries.\textsuperscript{17} Allowances distributed for energy efficiency and such are distributed by region based on regional energy consumption and then within a region by energy consumption by household on the basis that regions and households that consume more energy have more opportunities to take advantage of these programs. Allowances designated for worker assistance are distributed to regions based on oil and coal production on the basis that these industries are most likely to be affected by unemployment as the country shifts away from fossil fuels. We distribute funds devoted to CCS along with other energy R&D funds.

Given this mapping of the allocation provisions in the various legislative proposals we construct \textbf{Figure 3} that is similar to Figure 2 but showing instead the allocation of allowance value mapped to the instruments we use in USREP. The distribution instruments for all of these uses, except Foreign and Government, direct revenue to households but the particular instrument determines how the allowance value is allocated among households in different regions and in different income classes. As modeled, allowance value allocated abroad has no value for U.S. households. In the proposed legislation, most of the allowance value distribution is a pure transfer but some of these program expenditures are intended to incentivize energy savings and the like. Our allocation approach treats all of these program expenditures as pure transfers.\textsuperscript{18} To the extent these programs overcome barriers that are not addressed by the CO\textsubscript{2} price, additional efficiency gains would reduce the welfare costs we estimate. To the extent these programs create double-incentives for particular activities, then they are redirecting abatement to activities that are not the most cost effective and that would increase the welfare cost we estimate. The assumption that they are pure transfers is therefore a neutral assumption. Furthermore, note that transfers of allowance value to households are treated as being non-taxable, with the effect of increasing how much allowance value must be set aside relative to a scenario where such transfers are taxed.

\textsuperscript{17} An output-based rebate (OBR) to energy-intensive and trade-exposed (EITE) industries may result in a greater pass-through of allowance value to end consumers relative to our allocation based on capital earnings. How this allowance should be divided up, however, depends on factors such as the degree of pass-through in downstream sectors, given that EITE products are often intermediate goods, e.g. steel. Our approach treats all vulnerable industries symmetrically, and we allocate allowances lump-sum proportional to capital income. Our approach does not capture incentive effects that would arise if allowance value was used to subsidize output in these industries. Such output subsidies would incur additional efficiency costs that we do not capture.

\textsuperscript{18} We assume that the 25\% of allowances in the Cantwell-Collins bill that go to a dedicated trust to fund climate mitigation and adaptation, clean energy and efficiency, and transition assistance programs, are allocated according to residual shares for similar categories (Energy use, Foreign, Government) in the Waxman-Markey bill. We understand that additional legislation would be
Allowances allocated to government reduce the need for capital and labor taxes to be raised as much to meet the revenue neutrality assumption we impose\(^\text{19}\), and so affect the distribution to households based on how increases in taxes affect different regions and income classes.

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\(^{18}\) See Section 5 for a discussion of our treatment of revenue neutrality.

\(^{19}\) See Section 5 for a discussion of our treatment of revenue neutrality.
5. SCENARIO DESIGN

We distinguish two sets of scenarios that differ with respect to the underlying allowance allocation scheme. Scenarios labeled TAAS represent a Targeted Allowance Allocation Scheme that is based on the Waxman-Markey or Kerry-Lieberman proposal. The TAAS_DR scenario sets aside a larger amount of allowances for the purpose of Deficit Reduction (DR) as in the allocation rule proposed by Kerry-Boxer. Scenarios labeled PCDS model a simple Per Capita Dividend Scheme as is described in the Cantwell-Collins proposal.

For each of the proposed allocation schemes, we design two scenarios that differ with respect to how the revenue neutrality requirement is met. Our base case assumption is that sufficient allowance revenue is withheld by the government to cover the deficit impact and the remaining revenue is allocated at the percentages shown in Figure 3. An alternative case, denoted TAX, assumes that only the amount of allowance revenue specifically designated for deficit reduction in the bills is allocated to the government. We then raise capital and labor taxes uniformly across regions and income classes (in percentage points) to offset revenue losses from carbon pricing. This is separate from any allowance revenue targeted to deficit reduction. All scenarios assume the medium offset case from the analysis carried out in Appendix C of Paltsev et al. (2009) with identical assumptions about supply and costs of domestic and international offsets. We further assume that offsets have a cost to the economy, and implement this assumption by transferring abroad the value of allowances purchases internationally. Our assumption is that the average cost of these credits is $5 per effective ton of offsets of CO$_2$-e in 2015, rising at 4% per year thereafter. Also note that since we create more allowance revenue for the government by increasing the allowances to account for credits coming from outside the system, we assume that the income transferred abroad to account for permit prices is taken from the allowance revenue. Finally, our assumptions about the supply of offsets imply a 203 bmt cumulative emissions target for 2012-205, which underlies all of the scenarios we consider here.

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20 We fix real government spending in the policy scenarios to match government spending under the reference scenario. Since government spending does not enter household utility functions, we did not want to confound welfare impacts from changes in the size of government with welfare impacts of climate policy. We discuss the implications of this assumption in section 6.1 below. Government spending in the reference scenario is assumed to grow in proportion with aggregate income.

21 The Waxman-Markey bill specifies that 1.25 tons of foreign reductions are required to produce 1 ton of effective offsets. The $5/ton initial offset price means the actual payment per ton of foreign reduction is $4. For all proposals analyzed, we treat offsets costs symmetrically.
Our analysis also takes banking and borrowing into consideration. In the Waxman-Markey bill, banking of allowances is unlimited and a two-year compliance period allows unlimited borrowing from one year ahead without penalty. Limited borrowing from two to five years ahead is also allowed, but with interest. In general, we find no need for aggregate borrowing, and so there is no need to implement an explicit restriction on it.

Our scenarios draw on features of the proposed pieces of legislation described above but in no way purport to model them in their entirety. Our focus is on the efficiency and distributional consequences of allowance allocation schemes and our scenarios model allowance trading along with their allocation over time. In that regard, we have had to interpret how we believe various allocations would work in practice when the exact allocation approach has not yet been fully described, and would only be completely determined by executive branch agencies responsible for these programs if the legislation were implemented. In addition, we do not model other components of the various pieces of legislation dealing with other policy measures such as renewable portfolio standards.

6. ANALYSIS OF SCENARIOS

Figure 4 shows the Reference and Policy with offsets emissions for the period 2012 to 2050. Projected Reference cumulative emissions over the 2012-2050 period are 298 bmt. In the Policy with offsets case, cumulative emissions are 203 bmt, a reduction of nearly one-third from Reference. The emissions path shown in Figure 4 for the Policy with offsets case is the result from the scenario TAAS. Cumulative emissions are identical under all six policy simulations, and the actual emissions paths are nearly identical. Slight differences in the emissions paths exist because of different overall welfare costs and distributional effects that can lead to a slightly different allocation of abatement over time, but these differences are so small that they would be imperceptible if plotted in Figure 4. Emissions in the Reference include estimates of the effects of existing energy policies under the Energy Independence and Security Act and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as they are projected to affect greenhouse gas emissions. Note, that while the allowance allocation for 2050 is set at 83% below 2005, our projected emissions in 2050 in the Policy with offsets case are only 35% below 2005 emissions because of the availability of offsets and banking. Before turning to distributional analyses by income group or region, we consider the aggregate U.S. welfare impacts of the various policies we model. Figure 5 presents the change in welfare relative to the Reference scenario, measured in equivalent
variation as a percentage of full income\textsuperscript{22}, for the various bills. One key result we see is that the _TAX scenarios lead to higher welfare costs than the scenarios where a fraction of the allowance revenue is withheld to satisfy revenue neutrality. Considering the TAAS scenario, for example, the welfare cost is 1.38 percent of full income by 2050 under the lump-sum scenario and 1.60 percent under the tax scenario. Similar results hold for TAAS\_DR and PCDS. This occurs because the _TAX scenarios create more deadweight loss from capital and labor taxation. Many economists have focused on a double-dividend effect where allowance revenue is used to lower capital and labor taxes, but here we have the reverse effect. Not enough of the revenue is retained to offset the deficit effects of the bill so that capital and labor taxes need to be increased, thereby increasing the cost the bill.\textsuperscript{23}

Conditional on the treatment of revenue shortfalls, the three scenarios have very similar aggregate costs. TAAS\_DR\_TAX is somewhat less costly than TAAS\_TAX because the former scenario reserves more of the allowance to offset the deficit and thus capital and labor taxes do not need to be increased as much.

\textsuperscript{22}Full income is the value of consumption, leisure, and the consumption stream from residential capital.

\textsuperscript{23}This follows from our particular assumption about how taxes are raised to maintain revenue neutrality. It is certainly possible that lump-sum taxes could be employed or some other configuration of tax increases that is less distortional than the tax increases we model. Therefore one should not conclude that our result is general.
The costs of $PCDS$ and $PCDS\_TAX$ are slightly lower than the $TAAS$ scenarios. The lower costs of the $PCDS$ scenarios at first blush are surprising. These scenarios retain less of the allowance value to offset the deficit, and hence in the $_TAX$ case it requires somewhat higher increases in capital and labor taxes to offset the deficit. The lower costs in $PCDS$ scenarios arise from the distributional outcomes as they affect energy expenditures and savings. In particular, $TAAS$ and $TAAS\_DR$, through the low income energy assistance programs allocate more of the revenue value to poorer households. Lower income households spend a larger fraction of their income on energy and they save less. Thus, the abatement effect of pricing carbon is offset to greater extent by an income effect among poorer households in the $TAAS$ and $TAAS\_DR$ than in the $PCDS$ scenarios. In addition, there is less saving and therefore less investment in $TAAS$ and $TAAS\_DR$ because less is saved for each additional dollar allocated to poorer households. Note that our aggregate welfare estimates are a simple sum of the welfare of each income class across all regions. An aggregate welfare function that weighted the welfare of lower income households higher, giving welfare benefit to more progressive outcomes would change these results, showing better results for $TAAS$ and $TAAS\_DR$. How much to value more progressive outcomes is a judgment. Here

![Figure 5](http://www.bepress.com/bejeap/vol10/iss2/art1)
we leave it to the policy community to decide whether the more progressive outcome of TAAS and TAAS\_DR is worth the extra welfare cost.

### 6.1. Distributional Impacts across Income Groups

Aggregate impacts obscure differential effects across households. Ideally we would construct a measure of the lifetime burden of carbon pricing and relate that to a measure of lifetime income. Our data do not allow us to do that. Our recursive-dynamic model has households of different income groups in each year but we have no data that allow us to track the transition of households from one income group to another. Instead we report burden impacts for different income groups at different points of time to show how the relative burden shifts over time.

Figure 6 shows the burden for a representative household in each income group for 2015, 2030, and 2050 for TAAS measured as equivalent variation. Positive values indicate that a household benefits from the carbon policy. Households in the two lowest income groups, hh1 and hh10, benefit in all periods as the return of permit revenue through various mechanisms more than offsets the higher cost of goods and services due to carbon pricing and any effects on their wages and capital income. Households hh15 and hh25 initially benefit but eventually bear net costs, hh15 only in the final period. The effect of allocating an increasing amount of allowances on a per-capita basis is particularly strong for the lowest income group relative to higher income households since a dollar of additional revenue makes up a larger fraction of full income for these households.\(^\text{24}\) The five highest income households bear net costs throughout the period though the burden through 2030 is less than 1 percent of income for all income groups. Over time, the burden of the policy grows for wealthier households with the burden ranging from 1 to roughly 1.5 percent by 2050.

In all years the cap and trade policy combined with the TAAS allocation scenarios is sharply progressive over the first five income groups though the burden for each income group, except that of the lowest, grows over time as the policy begins to impose larger reductions in emissions. The difference in burdens

\(^{24}\) Pechman (1985) realized that income data for the low income groups suffered from substantial income mismeasurement. Since then, the approach adopted by him and many others is to omit the lowest income group from distributional analyses. Given the interest of the policy community for impacts on low income households, we decided to report results for households with annual income less than $10k, but we want to point out that in light of likely measurements problems we do not have the same degree of confidence in results as we do for other income groups.
over the lowest five income groups grows over time as does the spread between the burden for the lowest income group relative to the highest income group. The

![Figure 6. Welfare Change by Income Group, U.S. Average (Scenario TAAS).](image)

policy is essentially neutral over the top income groups in all periods, as we will show below over time sources side effects become more important in shaping the distributional outcomes than do uses side effects.

Table 4 reports the annual cost in dollar terms for different households, in different years. On average the per-household costs are relatively modest in the early years of the program. While the costs appear large by 2050, it is important to keep in mind that incomes are growing so that these costs are still modest relative to household income. The average over time is the net present value (NPV) average. Note that Waxman-Markey allows considerable borrowing of allowances from the future by the Federal government if necessary to moderate CO₂ prices in the early years.

If these were auctioned in earlier years then the allowance revenue would accrue to the government earlier and in principle it could be used earlier. We have assumed the revenue is only available when the allowances were originally scheduled to be auctioned. If borrowing occurred and the revenue was used as specified in the bill—to reduce deficit impacts and as a lump sum rebate to consumers - that could blunt some of the progressivity in earlier years.

Costs and distributional impacts for TAAS\_DR are very similar to TAAS and so we do not report them here. Rather we turn to the PCDS in Figure 7.
TAAS and TAAS_DR. PCDS has modest to negative burdens (positive gains in Figure 7) initially with burdens rising over time. In comparison to the former bills the burden spreads across income groups in any given year are smaller. Lower income households benefit in the early years but not as much as in TAAS

Table 4. Annual Cost per Household by Income Group (Scenario TAAS).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hh0</th>
<th>hh10</th>
<th>hh15</th>
<th>hh25</th>
<th>hh30</th>
<th>hh50</th>
<th>hh75</th>
<th>hh100</th>
<th>hh150</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>-614</td>
<td>-472</td>
<td>-467</td>
<td>-426</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>401</td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>-563</td>
<td>-412</td>
<td>-418</td>
<td>-349</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>501</td>
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<td>221</td>
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<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>-450</td>
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<td>-64</td>
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<tr>
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<td>110</td>
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<td>2758</td>
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<td>-778</td>
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<td>1853</td>
<td>2974</td>
<td>3246</td>
<td>3482</td>
<td>4278</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NPV Average\(^a\) -291 -150 -119 -33 331 538 614 642 780 347

Note: Table reports annual dollar costs per household by income group in various years. All dollar amounts are in 2006 dollars. \(^a\) Net Present Value (NPV) average of welfare costs discounted to 2010 at 4% per annum.

and TAAS_DR. This is reflected in the flatter distributional curves for different years. By 2050 the PCDS scenario and the TAAS scenario have more similar distributional effects because by that time the allocation formula in TAAS_DR has become similar to that of the PCDS, with 65 percent of revenue distributed on per capita basis. The remaining difference is the continued allocation to low income consumers.

Distributional outcomes are altered when the full value of allowances is allocated as specified in the bills and revenue losses in the federal budget are instead made up by raising personal income tax rates. In general, the distributional burden across household groups is more progressive in the _TAX cases. Consider the burden snapshots for three different years as shown in Figure 8 for TAAS_TAX. Lower-income households fare better under this approach with benefits to the lowest income group rising from 1 to about 1.5 percent of full

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Figure 7. Welfare Change by Income Group, U.S. Average (Scenario PCDS).

Figure 8. Welfare Change by Income Group, U.S. Average (Scenario TAAS_TAX).
income in 2015, while the highest income groups are only slightly affected. Lower income groups continue to do better – and in some cases are better off – when tax rates are raised to recoup lost tax revenues than when allowance value is withheld. In general they remain better off through 2050 because of the tax changes. By raising taxes to offset the deficit, more revenue remains available to be distributed, and the increase in transfers to lower-income groups more than offsets increases in taxation to these households. A similar result holds for the PCDS allocation proposal (see Figure 9).

The different treatments of revenue neutrality illustrates a classic equity-efficiency trade-off, where the withholding of allowances to preserve revenue neutrality yields higher efficiency but less progressive outcomes than if taxes are raised to maintain revenue neutrality in the government budget.

The impact of climate policy on government tax revenues is significant and helps explain why the different approaches to maintaining revenue neutrality matter. The initial loss of tax revenue due to higher costs for firms and reduced economic activity is 31.3 percent of the value of allowances in 2015. The percentage begins rising in 2040 and by 2050, the loss in tax revenue rises to one-half. The high tax revenue loss is in part an artifact of the assumption in the model that fixes the path of government spending to match that of the reference (no policy) scenario. We refer to this as absolute revenue neutrality. Lower GDP growth increases the size of government relative to GDP and magnifies the loss in
tax revenue relative to allowance value. We make this assumption because the
government sector in USREP does not produce explicit public goods that have
any welfare value. By keeping revenue neutral changes in government we do not
release or consume more resources that otherwise would be available to private
sector.

An alternative approach would be to fix the ratio of government spending
to GDP in the policy scenarios. To assess the distributional implications of this
would then require production of a public good and an estimate of how that public
good created welfare for different income classes in different regions, so that
when government spending was increased or decreased we would have an
estimate of how that was affecting distribution compared with how distribution
was affected by changes in resources available to the private sector. If the
government were kept at the same size in relative rather than absolute terms, the
revenue needed to offset impacts on the deficit would not increase and would
generally be at about the percentage we see in 2015. The difference would then
be additional allowance value that could be used for distributional or other
purposes.

We note that the Congressional Budget Office scores bills on their impact
on the deficit, using a standard procedure for all legislation that is accepted by
Congress. The CBO methodology is described in Congressional Budget Office
(2009). That approach will not be consistent with our approach that endogenously
calculates the deficit, and the revenue needed to close the deficit. The two
approaches do lead to reasonably close estimates of the allowance value that must
be set aside in early years (25 percent for CBO and 30 percent in this analysis)
before the results diverge due to the different modeling approach taken by CBO
from the approach taken here.

With absolute revenue neutrality, the need to make up substantial revenue
losses leads to fairly large increases in marginal personal income tax rates under
the tax-based make-up. In 2015, tax rates under TAAS_TAX, TAAS_DR_TAX, and
PCDS_TAAS increase by 0.52, 0.34, and 0.48 percentage points, respectively.
Respective tax rate increases in 2050 are 1.50, 0.79, 1.48 percentage points. The
TAAS_DR_TAX increases are much less than the other two scenarios because
more of the revenue is explicitly allocated to deficit effects of the proposal. This
just illustrates one way to make up revenue losses. Other approaches could be
undertaken that could enhance efficiency or equity goals.25

Summing up, we find that the TAAS and TAAS_DR scenarios on the one
hand and the PCDS scenarios on the other have quite different distributional
impacts across households, especially in the early years of the program. In

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25 This is simply a variant on the green tax swap idea analyzed by Metcalf (1999) and others.
addition, policy decisions on how to close the budget deficit arising from decreased tax collections have both efficiency and distributional implications.

Using higher personal income taxes to close the deficit incurs an efficiency cost but increases the progressivity of the programs because more of the allowance revenue is available for distribution to households. We next turn to regional impacts.

### 6.2. Distributional Impacts across Regions

Policy makers have also expressed concern over the regional impacts of climate policy. In this section we explore how regional impacts change over time for the allocation scenarios we have designed. Figure 10 shows that the greenhouse gas emission reductions differ substantially among regions. Results are shown for the TAAS scenario. These differences reflect different shares of emissions from different sectors (electricity, transportation, industry) and different electric generation technologies (nuclear, hydro, coal, natural gas). The energy and emissions intensive regions (MOUNT, SEAST, SCENT, NCENT) show the largest reductions. States in the Mountain, Southeast, Northeast and North Central regions all experience reductions in GHG emissions relative to the business as usual scenario in excess of 50 percent by 2050.

Figure 11 shows the welfare impact of the TAAS scenario for each region. Initially California, Texas, Florida and states in the South Central, Pacific, and New England regions gain from the policy while other states suffer losses. By 2050 all states are bearing costs, ranging from about one-half of one percent (New England) to about one and three-quarters percent.

Welfare impacts for Alaska are not shown in Figure 11 to better visualize relative welfare impacts for other regions. Under the TAAS scenario Alaska’s welfare effects are as follows: 2015: -0.42%; 2020: -1.15%; 2025: -2.26%; 2030: -2.57%; 2040: -3.52%; 2050: -5.27%. The substantial welfare impacts for Alaska can be attributed to the fact that Alaska exhibits by far the highest energy intensity among all regions and is a large energy producing state with a small population (see Figure 14). In earlier years of the policy, welfare effects are relatively modest compared to, e.g., 2030 and 2050. Alaska actually receives by far the highest allowance revenue per household among all regions under the TAAS scheme since many of the allowances are allocated on the basis of either energy consumption or production, but this is far from sufficient to offset the large costs the economy bears. As we note below, over time the allowance allocation effect becomes less important in determining welfare.

With absolute revenue neutrality, the need to make up substantial revenue losses leads to fairly large increases in marginal personal income tax rates under
Figure 10. GHG Emissions Reductions by Region (Scenario TAAS).

Figure 11. Welfare Change by Region (Scenario TAAS).
overall policy costs, and relative regional welfare differences are increasingly shaped by energy characteristics and income sources. This explains why welfare effects for Alaska become more negative over time both relative to earlier periods of the policy and in comparison to other regions. The Alaska case is an interesting one in that it is a small state in terms of population and GDP with relatively unique energy use and production attributes. Our other regions, by aggregating more states, tend to average out so that there is less disparity. The Alaska results are illustrative of within region effects that we do not capture because of our aggregation.

Regional impacts under PCDS are less balanced initially (Figure 12). The standard deviation of welfare impacts under PCDS is slightly larger (0.11) than under the TAAS scenario (0.09). Recall that PCDS deliberately takes a per-capita approach premised on the view that regional disparities do not matter, while TAAS includes a number of provisions (such as LDC allocations) that are explicitly intended to address regional disparities. While the regional dispersion of welfare impacts is slightly larger under PCDS, one interesting result of this analysis is that the much simpler per-capita based approach is almost as effective in achieving a balanced regional outcome as the targeted allocation scheme. By 2050, the impacts under PCDS are quite similar to those under TAAS. Differential regional impacts due to differences in allowance allocation schemes dissipate over time. Section 7.1 provides a discussion of this effect.

Impacts under TAAS_DR are very similar to those under TAAS and are not reported here. Figure 15 also shows that the relative impacts across regions are

![Figure 12. Welfare Change by Region (Scenario PCDS).](image-url)
fairly stable over the policy period under the PCDS allocation. South Central, North Central and Northeast states bear a larger impact of the policy though the maximum difference across the period is less than two percentage points.26

We do not show here the _TAX_ scenarios because the results are broadly similar to the scenarios where a fraction of the allowance value is withheld to satisfy revenue neutrality. The main differences are that the overall welfare costs are larger for the U.S. as whole and thus regional losses tend to be somewhat larger. In terms of distribution, the _TAX_ cases tend to favor lower income regions (South and middle of the country) at the expense of higher income regions (mainly the east and west coasts) because higher income regions pay more taxes.

Summing up the regional results, all allocation scenarios lead to modest differential impacts across most regions. The TAAS and TAAS_DR proposals show greater gains to several regions in the initial years of the policy and higher costs to other regions than do the PCDS scenarios. One of the political economy realities of climate change is that the East and West Coast regions have pushed harder for climate legislation, while the middle of the country and much of south has resisted such legislation. With high energy intensity in these regions and the significant presence of fossil industry, one might expect greater economic impacts of GHG mitigation legislation in these regions. The Cantwell-Collins bill has not been subject to as much debate and negotiation as the other two bills, and has been able to retain a simple allocation formula. The much richer set of allocation mechanisms in Markey-Waxman and Kerry-Boxer are likely the result of negotiation among representatives of these regions. To the extent our analysis captures the regional distributional intent of these bills it suggests that the allocation formula are not completely effective in evening out regional effects. Some states like Texas and those in the South Central region that might have been expected to suffer higher costs have those costs blunted significantly and actually come out ahead in early years. Other regions such as the Mountain and North Central states remain the biggest losers in early years. Over time the allocation mechanisms evolve, and regional impacts are driven more directly by other factors.

26 Welfare impacts for Alaska under the PCDS scenario are as follows: 2015: -0.60%; 2020: -1.10%; 2025: -2.31%; 2030: -3.25%; 2040: -4.61%; 2050: -5.95%. Note that under the PCDS allocation scheme Alaska receives less allowance revenue as compared to the TAAS case. This lowers savings and investment, and hence brings about even larger welfare losses in later periods of the policy as for the TAAS scenario.
7. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE BURDEN RESULTS

In a CGE model it is difficult to attribute differences in results by region and income class to specific causes because the possible sources of differences are many and they interact in complex ways. This section provides an analysis of the results to provide greater insight into why we see differences in effects.

7.1. The Importance of the Allowance Allocation Effect over Time

In order to isolate the impact of the allowance allocation on welfare, we run a scenario assuming the allowance value in a given period is not recycled while allowances in antecedent periods are allocated according to the scheme described in the TAAS scenario.

![Figure 13. Regional Welfare Impacts without Allowance Allocation (Scenario TAAS).](image)

Note that welfare costs will be higher in this case because the unrecycled revenue increases government expenditure which as described earlier does not, as modeled, enter household utility functions. The intent here is to use this exercise to isolate the effects of higher energy costs caused by pricing from those distributional impacts that result from the allowance allocation. Figure 13 shows
regional welfare impacts under this “no-recycling” case. As expected, welfare costs for each region and each period are higher as compared with the corresponding scenario that assumes revenue allocation (compare with Figure 11). For 2015, the distribution of regional costs is due to differences in regional abatement costs. In later years, the results are driven by abatement costs for that year, and the economic growth effects from previous years through the impact on Gross Regional Product and savings and investment. We see from Figure 13 that the pattern of regional welfare costs corresponds closely to differences in regional energy intensity (energy consumption per dollar of GDP). Figure 14 shows an index of energy intensity by region over time (normalized to the current period U.S. value). The patterns of regional welfare impacts and relative energy intensities largely coincide, and are stable over time.

Comparing Figure 13 with Figure 11 now provides a way of disentangling the effect of the current period allowance allocation on welfare. The key result is that the allocation effect becomes less important over time, and that regional welfare impacts are eventually driven more by differences in the energy intensity. One reason for this result is that over time there is less allowance value to be distributed relative to the rising CO₂ price as the carbon policy becomes tighter. The number of allowances decreases over time and, in addition to that, the erosion of the tax base is steadily increasing which means that more of the allowance value has to be retained to maintain revenue-neutrality. This effect explains why initially in periods 2015-2025 the allocation of allowances has a strong effect on regional welfare impacts of the policy. As noted, regional effects of TAAS bear little relationship to factors like energy intensity and energy production that should factor into the cost of the policy. Some of the regions that display relative
high energy intensity are actually overcompensated in 2015 and 2020 (viz. the South Central and North Central region, and Texas). The results suggest that any implemented allocation scheme will prove to be less effective over time in muting the regional variation in welfare impacts.

7.2. Sources vs. Uses Side Impacts of Carbon Pricing

A well-established observation is that carbon pricing incorporates a regressive element because lower income households spend a higher proportion of their income on energy. Most estimates of the distributional impact of carbon and energy pricing focus on this “cost-push analysis” element of carbon pricing by using an Input-Output framework to trace price increases through a make-and-use matrix to evaluate the policy cost on different households based on expenditure shares (e.g., Dinan and Rogers (2002), Parry (2004), Burtraw et al. (2009) and Hassett et al. (2009)). Such an approach neglects behavioral responses to relative price changes and does not take into account sources side effects. Rausch et al. (2009) found that even in a static model the sources side effects were important in determining the distributional effects of carbon pricing. Here we repeat their counterfactual analysis in our recursive dynamic simulation.

Figure 15 provides welfare impacts across income groups for three scenarios designed to disentangle the contribution of sources and uses side effects on welfare across the income distribution. The logic of our counterfactual analysis is as follows. If households in different income groups are characterized by identical income shares i.e., have equal ratios of capital, labor, and transfer income, then a change in relative factor prices affects all households equally. This counterfactual analysis isolates the distributional impacts of the uses of income effects of a policy. If households are assumed to have identical expenditure shares for all goods and services, a change in relative product prices produces an equal impact on consumers in different income classes. In that case, we isolate the distributional impacts by effects on sources of income of a policy. Any differential burden impacts of a policy across households from the counterfactual case that eliminates differences among households in how they spend their income are then determined by sources of income effects. Results that eliminate differences in income sources, allows us to focus on how uses side factors shape the relative burden of carbon pricing.

The two counterfactual cases do not eliminate these drivers of incidence but by eliminating household heterogeneity they suppress differential impacts across the income distribution. Harberger (1962) uses a similar analysis to identify the incidence of a corporate income tax. Note that as we measure the real
burden, i.e., the change in equivalent variation, our incidence calculation is independent from the choice of numéraire.

Panel a shows results for 2015, panel b for 2030 and panel c for 2050. In each panel results for three cases are shown. The line labeled “carbon pricing burden” shows the welfare effect that combines income and expenditure heterogeneity.

Figure 15. Relative Sources vs. Uses Side Impacts across Income Distribution.

This is the welfare effect, without any recycling, given observed income sources and expenditures shares as they vary among households. The line labeled “identical income shares” eliminates heterogeneity of income sources to isolate the uses side effect of the policy. The line labeled “identical expenditure shares”
eliminates expenditure heterogeneity to isolate the sources side effect. A downward slope indicates a progressive result and an upward slope a regressive result.

To eliminate the muddying effect of allowance allocation we assume that the carbon revenue is not recycled to households.27 Non-recycled revenue increases government spending on goods and services which, by assumption, is not utility enhancing. As a result, the costs to households are much larger because the allowance revenue is not available to them. Still, however, we see the striking result that carbon pricing is modestly progressive initially and, for income groups above the two lowest becomes essentially neutral by 2030. For the counterfactual analysis we hold real government transfers to households constant at the no-policy level.

The uses side impacts are sharply regressive in all years in accord with previous analyses that focus on expenditure side burdens only. Sources side impacts, on the other hand, are modestly progressive in 2015 and essentially proportional in the other years. In all years, combined effects in the line “carbon pricing burden” track closely the line “identical expenditure shares”. This suggests that relative welfare impacts across the income distribution are largely driven by sources side effects.

Table 5 reports sources of income by income class for the base year, and helps to explain why sources side effects are modestly progressive especially at low income levels. The relative income burden of carbon pricing depends on the change in relative factors prices and on differences in the ratio for the sources of income for households. We find that the capital rental rate increases over time relative to the price for labor. As the capital-labor ratio slightly increases in income, just looking at the relative income burden from changes in capital and labor income would imply that the sources side is slightly regressive. This finding is in line with Fullerton and Heutel (2010) who find that the capital and labor income for the lowest income households falls proportionally more than average. What makes the source-side incidence modestly progressive to proportional is the fact that low income households derive a large fraction of income from transfers relative to high income households, and we hold transfers constant relative to the no policy baseline. Transfer income thus insulates households from changes in capital and labor income. This effect is strongest for the two lowest income households where transfers account for about 80 and 60 percent of income as shown in Table 5.28

27 We also looked at a scenario in which we assume that additional government revenue is spent according to private sector consumption. We find that this has second-order effects only.
28 The sensitivity of distributional impacts of policies to the treatment of government transfers has been found in other work. Browning and Johnson (1979), for example, find that holding transfers fixed in real terms sharply increases the progressivity of the U.S. tax system.
Table 5. Source of Income by Annual Income Class in USREP Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fraction of Income from Labor</th>
<th>Fraction of Income from Capital</th>
<th>Fraction of Income from Transfers</th>
<th>K/L ratio</th>
<th>Transfer / (Cap.+Labor) ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hh1</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh10</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh15</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh25</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh30</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh50</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh75</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh100</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>-1.7%</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh150</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>-3.3%</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on IMPLAN data (Minnesota IMPLAN Group, 2008). Household transfers include social security, state welfare payments, unemployment compensation, veterans' benefits, food stamps, supplemental security income, direct relief, earned income credit. Note that transfers are net of household transfer payments to the rest-of-world (including cash transfers as well as goods to the rest-of-world).

Figure 15 also suggests that especially in a dynamic setting, the sources side effect is more important in determining the welfare impact than is the uses side effect for a given income class. The intuition for this result seems fairly obvious — over time the impacts of an ongoing mitigation policy cumulate through effects on overall economic growth and are reflected in general wage rates and capital returns. The annual abatement costs become an ever smaller share of the economic burden of the policy, and so are less important in determining the overall impacts. Furthermore, because the fraction of income derived from transfers increases over time, we find that the progressivity of the sources-side effect also slightly increases for the five lowest income groups.

Overall, this analysis demonstrates that it can be misleading to base the distributional analysis on uses side factors only. The virtue of our general equilibrium framework is the ability to capture effects both from the uses of income and through the sources of income.

8. SUMMARY

There has been much attention on the overall cost and efficiency of current legislative proposals for addressing climate change in the U.S. In this paper we focus on the distributional effects of the policies taking account of both the higher energy costs that carbon pricing implies and the distribution of allowance value...
described in the bills. Secondarily we are also interested in any efficiency effects of the allowance allocation approaches in the different bills. To focus on the effect of allowance allocation, we used approximations of the allowance allocation features of current proposals, but represented here as a comparable, comprehensive cap on all emissions in the U.S. with the same level of external credits allowed across all allocation scenarios. We, therefore, did not represent other features of the bills many of which may have strong efficiency and distributional consequences. While we try to adhere to the text of the various pieces of legislation as closely as possible when allocating allowance value, we note that we had to rely on our own interpretation of legislative intent in places where allocation mechanisms were not completely defined in the bills. While the scenarios are motivated by the various proposed pieces of legislation, none of the scenarios should be interpreted as an analysis of the complete legislation.

Focusing on efficiency first, we find that retaining more of the revenue to offset the deficit impacts of the legislation, as does the Kerry Boxer bill, improves the efficiency of mitigation policy because labor and capital taxes need to be raised less to maintain revenue neutrality. Economic efficiency is improved if all deficit impacts are offset with revenue retained from the allowance auction. The trade-off is that it would leave less revenue to affect desired distributional outcomes.

We also find that the scenarios designed to approximate the Cantwell-Collins allocation proposal to be less costly than those we used to approximate the other bills. We trace this result to the fact that the Cantwell-Collins allocation proposal distributes less of the allowance value to poor households. In the other allocation schemes, more money for poorer households produces a greater income effect on energy demand, and as a result abatement is more costly. Poorer households also save less, and so more allowance value going to poor households leads to less savings and investment. Economists have widely acknowledged that there is an equity-efficiency tradeoff between schemes with lump-sum distribution and those that would cut labor and capital taxes, reducing the distortions they create. Here we find a more subtle equity-efficiency tradeoff, where even under lump sum distribution of revenue there is an efficiency gain to distributing value to wealthier households because less is spent on energy and more of the allowance value ends up as savings and investment.

Our analysis of distribution by income class and region show that the Waxman-Markey and Kerry-Boxer (or Kerry-Lieberman) allocation schemes address the distributional impacts of the policy by redistributing more of the allowance value to poorer households and to central and southern regions of the U.S. in the early years of the policy, shifting allowance value away from wealthier households and the coasts. In fact the bills redistribute to such a degree that they tend to result in net economic benefits for the poorest households and for some
regions of the country such as the South Central states, Texas, and Florida that would generally be expected to bear the highest costs. The very simple per capita allocation scheme of Cantwell-Collins tends to be more distributionally neutral by income class but produces slightly less balanced outcome by region. Over time the distribution schemes matter less. In part this is because over time all these bills convert to a consumer rebate and so are more like the Cantwell-Collins allocation approach. However, over time more of the annual cost of the policy is the result of economic growth effects—reductions in past Gross Regional Product, savings, and investment. The annual abatement costs become a smaller share of the total costs, and the available revenue to alter distributional effects shrinks relative to this increasing cost.  

An important finding of this paper is that sources side effects of carbon mitigation proposals dominate the uses side effect in terms of determining distribution outcomes. In the near term, the distributional consequences of the carbon pricing can be significantly affected by the distribution of allowance value. Over the longer term, however, the overall growth effects are more important determinants of distribution and the revenue available from the allowance auction may not be sufficient to have much effect in changing distributional outcomes. This point is reinforced by the finding that carbon pricing by itself, i.e., when carbon revenues are not recycled back to households, is neutral to modestly progressive. This follows from the dominance of sources over uses side impacts of the policy and stands in sharp contrast to previous work that has focused only on the uses side. We find sources side effects to be modestly progressive to proportional because low income households derive a relatively large fraction of their income from transfers which insulates them from changes in capital and labor income.

We emphasize that our scenarios focused solely on the distributional implications due to carbon pricing and the allocation of allowance revenue, and that we did not attempt to model each bill in its entirety. More precise representation of the many programs described in these bills could give different outcomes and there is inevitable uncertainty in economic forecasts of this type. We also must admit significant limitations in our ability to forecast relative effects on regions over the longer term. Climate policy will dramatically change energy technologies, and regions that aggressively develop these industries and attract investment could fare better even if they currently are heavily fossil energy dependent. However, such regions must overcome the initially higher costs of their fossil energy dependence.

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29 As noted above, the share of allowances that must be held back for revenue neutrality in the out years falls if government spending as a share of GDP is held fixed. A priori it is not obvious which assumption on government spending is more realistic.
9. REFERENCES


