

Harvard's Theda Skocpol provides [a compelling narrative](#) and analysis of why [Waxman-Markey](#) didn't become law. In terms of my own empirical work, [Kotchen and I document](#) using Google Trends that interest in "global warming" fell in states with rising unemployment rates. Gurney, Zhou, [Michael Cragg and I document](#) that Conservative Representatives from high carbon and poor districts do not vote in favor of carbon regulation. Here is the [published version](#) of this paper.

If you manage to read to page 125 of her paper, you will see that she pushes for policy schemes that build a broader coalition to support carbon mitigation. She seeks to reduce the elitism in the environmental movement. She writes at length about "cap and dividend" that would take a chunk of the permit auction revenue and give it back to "Joe the Plummer" so he can see the rewards from taxing the pollution now. So, this is harnessing basic ideas from behavioral economics. Rather than solely offering people the abstract promise of "less future damage from climate change", the \$ dividend offers "immediate gratification". I have the feeling that Cass Sunstein would approve.