FOREWORD

Climate change is the justice challenge of our century, demanding unprecedented global and local legal, public policy and governance responses. The climate crisis undermines all possibility to advance our world's Sustainable Development Goals, impacting efforts to tackle poverty and hunger, to secure reliable access to health, education, clean water and energy, to protect life below water and on land. The most vulnerable face the heaviest and earliest burdens, but all of humanity is at stake. As we navigate an era marked by rising temperatures, intensifying floods, storms, droughts and wildfires, and escalating social and economic disruptions, the need for law and public policy insights to drive fast, effective climate action has never been more critical.

This issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Climate Research* reflects the urgency and importance of the challenge, particularly in its focus on climate law and policy. Convening diverse perspectives on the potential for legal and governance tools to catalyse transformative change in the face of mounting climate risks, the editors and authors of this collection offer a crucial and courageous contribution.

Among the central themes explored here are the evolving legal frameworks under the Paris Agreement, which frames international climate cooperation. Key in the discourse is the recognition that governance frameworks must extend far beyond ambition. They must reflect sustainability, equity and accountability, ensuring that all countries and communities, particularly the most vulnerable, are part of decision-making on all levels. Climate law and policy must prioritise the voices of those most affected by the crisis, while addressing historical responsibilities and future risks. Climate solutions must be inclusive, leveraging finance and investment, technology and science and community engagement, while advancing human rights, environmental and economic dimensions. The collection also underscores the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of climate law and policy. It challenges scholars, practitioners, and policymakers alike to think critically and act boldly to shape legal and policy frameworks that are not only effective in curbing emissions but also in safeguarding human rights and ensuring sustainable development alternatives for generations to come. As we confront an increasingly volatile future, such dialogue and engagement is essential for forging new pathways toward global sustainability and justice.

The contributions in this issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Climate Research* offer a rich and nuanced exploration in climate studies, focusing on the growing centrality of legal and policy innovation in addressing the climate crisis. The *Journal*'s division into shorter, summative "Insights" and longer, original "Articles" serves as a practical framework, engaging the reader's interest. The breadth of research presented here spans both theoretical and applied dimensions, showcasing the dynamic interplay between emerging legal principles and treaties, policy innovation, and practical solutions.

On the theoretical side, James Rice's compelling exploration of the 'just emissions' theory offers a critical contribution to governance and institutional philosophy, prompting fresh perspectives on equity in climate action. In contrast, more applied studies, such as Jilian Neufeldt's investigation into media framing of London's Ultra-Low Emissions Zone expansion and Tarlan Ahmadov's research on

Baltic bike-sharing schemes, provide practical insights grounded in qualitative content analysis. These works illuminate how localised strategies and narratives influence broader policy objectives. The diversity of methods and approaches offers new perspectives on common concerns. For instance, Khang Minh Pham's insightful application of orchestration theory to the International Maritime Organization's Polar Code complements Railla Veronica Puno's detailed analysis of synergies and conflicts in international law on oceans. Madelon van den Hoek Ostende considers the rights of nature approach in European law and jurisprudence touching especially on habitat protection in the Wadden Sea. Together, these pieces highlight the importance of strengthening regimes in global climate governance.

Indeed, legal scholarship is well represented, with further works addressing pressing justice and regulatory challenges. Tanvi Ajmera examines the criminalisation of environmental protestors and defenders. Anuttama Ghose and S M Aamir Ali offer a combined policy and legal analysis of climate refugees and displacement in the Sundarbans. Livia Ventura provides a comparative analysis of directors' duties in corporate law in relation to sustainability, whilst Eoin Jackson explores interactions of corporate law and the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, adding a critical rights-based perspective.

Technology, energy transitions and politics also emerge as central themes. Shrawani Shagun's study on space infrastructure links climate security to disaster reduction and food systems, while James Radford's examination of nuclear energy in Europe's net-zero ambitions and Murray Fallk's analysis of fracking's role in US elections highlight the nexus of technology and policy. Further, a notable feature of this issue is its embrace of underutilised methodologies. Paulina Gotz's work on the social acceptance of renewable energy in Germany and the collaborative study by Thant Thura Zan, Ida Dokk Smith and Indra Øverland on stakeholder dynamics in Indonesia's Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) underline the importance of qualitative research to uncover human dimensions often overlooked in climate governance. Rosie Alexandra Ward's careful statistical analysis of the UK's Contracts for Difference offshore wind scheme further underscores the methodological diversity and depth of this collection.

In addition, the inclusion of Oona Lagercrantz's fascinating literary and historical investigation into geoengineering in speculative fiction and practice offers a unique lens on how climate challenges have been envisioned across time. This interdisciplinary perspective reminds us of the importance of historical and cultural narratives in shaping present and future climate discourses.

The research presented in this issue of the Cambridge Journal of Climate Research underscores a fundamental truth: addressing the climate crisis requires a deeply interdisciplinary, innovative, and inclusive approach. As the contributions demonstrate, the challenges posed by climate change are as diverse as they are complex, calling attention to the evolving role of law and public policy as both a driver and a safeguard in the transition to a sustainable future. New research and teaching is urgently required to find and activate stronger, smarter public policy and legal instruments to address emerging challenges, whether by advancing innovative rights-based approaches, or by enhancing the regulatory frameworks governing financial structures, industries and technologies critical to achieving net-zero goals.

Yet, the climate crisis is not only a matter of policy, law, and technology—it is also a crisis of vision and knowledge. The future we seek shapes decisions taken today. The narratives we craft—as professors and researchers, policy leaders, professionals and practitioners—must inspire courage, creativity and commitment, while acknowledging the severity of the challenges ahead. As we stand at the crossroads of an uncertain future, the research presented in this *Journal* offers valuable insights and practical tools toward a more just and sustainable world.

The editorial team of this issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Climate Research* deserves particular recognition for their thoughtful curation and stewardship. Under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Kaden Pradhan of Gonville and Caius College, the team has assembled an issue that not only reflects the diversity and complexity of climate research but also elevates its relevance for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners alike. The Senior Editors, Tamara Zambiasi of Newnham and Manav Divecha of Queens', alongside Associate Editors Lakshmi Rasipuram-Balakrishnan of St Edmund's, Siang Ern Lek of Hughes Hall, Apoorva Aladalli of Queens', Isabella Dressel of Churchill, and Sara Uddin Nasrat of Fitzwilliam, have demonstrated exceptional dedication in bringing this volume to fruition. Their collaborative effort is evident in the careful selection and refinement of contributions, ensuring both intellectual rigor and thematic coherence across the issue.

In guiding this project, the editors have balanced established voices and emerging perspectives, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of climate research. Their emphasis on diverse methodologies and novel approaches underscores the importance of fostering innovative inquiry in this rapidly evolving field. Importantly, this editorial team also represents the next generation of climate leaders—early career scholars with the vision and commitment to advance knowledge and action on one of the most pressing issues of our time. Their work on this issue reflects a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of climate challenges and a willingness to engage with complexity and uncertainty. These qualities are essential for shaping the future of climate policy and law, as well as for building bridges across disciplines and sectors.

The editors' collective achievement in producing this special issue is more than an academic contribution; it is a call to action. By curating research that pushes boundaries, challenges assumptions, and highlights pathways for transformative change, they have made a meaningful contribution to the global discourse on climate governance.

It is an honour to commend their work to readers, and I look forward to encouraging these and further crucial efforts to advance climate scholarship, dialogue and action worldwide.

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