

# COLLOQUIUM BY HENDRIK WOLFF

## FRACKING, COAL AND AIR QUALITY

TIME: 5:00-6:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, 5 APRIL 2017

VENUE: ACADEMIC BUILDING 1079

### *Fracking, Coal and Air Quality*

**Speaker:** Hendrik Wolff, Associate Professor of Economics, Simon Fraser University



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#### ABSTRACT:

The benefits of improved air quality induced by hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking” in the continental United States. The recent increase in natural gas supply led to displacement of coal-fired electricity by cleaner natural gas-fired generation. Using detailed spatial panel data comprising the near universe air quality monitors merged with US power plants locations, we find that coal generation decreased by 28% attributable to lower natural gas prices. Using an IV identification strategy to isolate fracking’s impact on natural gas prices we identify a 4% decrease in average PM 2.5 levels due to decreased coal generation. These benefits vary

geographically; air pollution levels decreased most in parts of Alabama by 35%. Back of the envelope calculations imply accumulated health benefits of roughly \$17 billion annually.

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BIO:

Hendrik Wolff is an Associate Professor of Economics at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby (close to Vancouver), Canada. He is co-editor of the Journal of *Environmental Economics and Management* and on the editorial council of the new journal, *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists* (JAERE).

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