

CALL FOR PAPERS

Subsurface Futures:

Extractives, Critical Minerals, and Decarbonization

*An international symposium on social, spatial, and legal research
related to subsurface implications of the transforming energy sector*



UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING

AIM AND BACKGROUND

The emerging energy landscape is likely to profoundly reshape where and how humans interact with the subsurface, and, with it, the legal, social and cultural institutions and relationships in extractive territories. These changes require a critical reconsideration of the social contract as it exists between stakeholders involved in the exploration and exploitation of the subsurface. Addressing questions of fairness and sustainability in the extractives sector on a global scale and within the context of climate change presents a challenge with inextricable social, economic, geographical, legal, and technical dimensions. The objective of the conference is to make an exploration of the spatial-legal relationships that apply to the subsurface and the potential evolution of such frameworks as a tool for the just transformation of the energy sector. Intervenorers in the conference will examine different issues of governance, planning, property ownership, rights, and power applicable to the subsurface throughout all stages of extraction.

This event is organized as part of a joint research project, *Transatlantic Exploration of Strategies for Decarbonization of Energy and Industrial Sectors*, between the University of Wyoming and the University of Pau and the Pays de L'adour (UPPA). The event are organized as part of the work carried out under the Energy Justice & The Social Contract chair held by Louis de Fontenelle, the SESAME project (PEPR Decarbonisation of Industry, funded under the French Future Investment Programme) the Justice Pathway for Extractives & Critical Minerals project (PEPR "Sous Sol Bien commun", financed by the French "Programme d'investissement d'avenir"), and the Occidental Chair for Energy and Environmental Policies, held by Professor Tara Righetti. The event is further supported by an International Conference Hosting Grant from the University of Wyoming Center for Global Studies.



SYMPOSIUM DETAILS

The symposium will be held on **October 21-23, 2025**, in Laramie at the University of Wyoming.

Limited travel funding will be available to intervenors with financial need.

KEY DATES

Submission of abstracts:
March 21, 2025

Notification of acceptance:
April 30, 2025

Submission of full papers:
September 15, 2025



SCOPE OF TOPICS

We invite papers on the following themes below:

- Cultural transitions in regions of extraction
- New extractives of the energy transition (critical minerals, geologic hydrogen, geothermal)
- Social-Ecological relationships in extractive territories
- Uses of the subsurface for disposal of waste (CO₂, Nuclear)
- Circularity and reutilization of the subsurface or extractive residuals
- Restorative justice and economic diversification efforts in extractive communities
- Labor relationships
- Equity issues, local to global
- The role of law and institutions in maintaining the social contract for extractives

We especially welcome proposals for interdisciplinary and comparative law papers. Papers will be compiled into an edited volume for publication in Spring of 2026.



The compiled work will be published by an international publisher.

GUIDELINES FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Authors are requested to submit the following by email:

- 1** A 500-word abstract
- 2** A short reflection (under 1000 words) on key research questions related to the subsurface and energy transition and how the work aligns with the conference objectives.

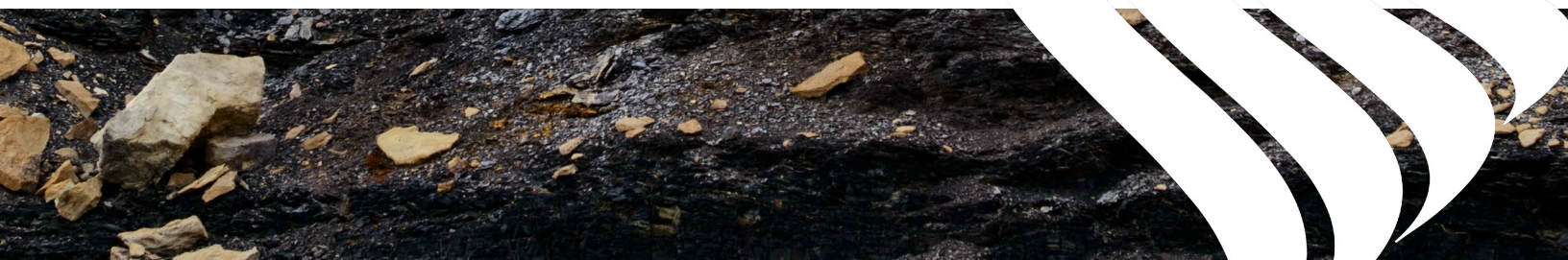
Proposals for papers should be sent, in **English**, by March 21, 2025 to:

Tara Righetti
tara.righetti@uwyo.edu

&

Louis de Fontenelle
louis.defontenelle@univ-pau.fr

Contributions from doctoral students, early career researchers, policymakers, and practitioners are encouraged.



SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Louis de Fontenelle, Associate Professor in Public Law, Director of the European Research Platform on Energy and Climate Law, TREE, University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour, CNRS

Tara Righetti, Occidental Chair of Energy and Environmental Policies, co-Director of the Nuclear Energy Research Center, and Director, Jurisprudence of Underground Law & Center group, University of Wyoming

Ann Eisenberg, Professor of Law, Research Director of the Center for Energy and Sustainable Development, West Virginia University College of Law

Rebecca Macklin, Interdisciplinary Research Fellow in Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity, University of Aberdeen

Catherine Banet, Professor of Law, Head of the Department for Energy and Resources Law, University of Oslo

Sébastien Chailleux, Assistant Professor, Science Po Bordeaux, Associate Researcher, TREE, University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour

About the Justice Pathways for Extractive and Critical Project (PEPR Sous-Sol, Bien commun)

The JPEC (Justice Pathways for Extractive and Critical Minerals) project studies the evolution of subsoil law as a tool for energy transition and sustainability at the level of French and European Union law. The research focuses on the issues of governance, social appropriation and justice related to subsoil exploitation.

About the UMR TREE (University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour, CNRS)

The TREE unit is designed as a 'problem-oriented interdisciplinary unit'. It tackles energy and environmental transitions by bringing together researchers from the fields of geography, sociology, law and economics. The unit's general objective is to analyse the issues, obstacles and levers involved in implementing energy and environmental transitions, by working on technological innovations, economic or fiscal incentives and regional initiatives in favour of transitions.

About the Transatlantic Exploration of Strategies for Decarbonization of Energy and Industrial Sectors Project

The project involves a legal study of the central public policies and regulations implemented in Europe and North America to decarbonize energy and industry, including CCUS, low-carbon fuels, and advanced nuclear technologies. The aim is to understand how law and economic regulation enable the necessary and fair transition to a low-carbon industry.

About the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources

The School of Energy Resources (SER) at the University of Wyoming (UW) is dedicated to advancing energy-driven economic development for the state of Wyoming. Created in 2006, SER enhances the university's energy-related education, research and outreach. SER directs and integrates cutting edge energy research and academic programs at UW and bridges academics and industry through targeted outreach programs.

About the University of Wyoming

Rooted in the traditions of the West and surrounded by the rugged Rocky Mountains, the University of Wyoming was founded in 1886 and is a nationally recognized land-grant research institution with expert faculty, top-ranked academics and world-class facilities.