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The Consequences of Spatially Differentiated Water Pollution Regulation in China

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Abstract

This paper studies the consequences of China's recent water pollution regulation. We find evidence that the regulation reduces pollution-intensive activity in highly regulated areas. Relative to the locations where regulations are more stringent (downstream cities), locations where regulations are less stringent (upstream cities) attract more water-polluting activity. As polluting activity concentrates upstream, a larger proportion of the river and more poor residents are exposed to high levels of pollution.

JEL Classification: Q58; Q53; R11

Keywords: Water pollution regulation; Firm production; Domestic pollution havens; China

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