



# Dr. Leah Stokes

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## **Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States**

**Abstract:** In 1999, Texas passed a landmark clean energy law, beginning a groundswell of new policies that promised to make the US a world leader in renewable energy. As Leah Stokes shows in *Short Circuiting Policy*, however, that policy did not lead to momentum in Texas, which failed to implement its solar laws or clean up its electricity system. Examining clean energy laws in Texas, Kansas, Arizona, and Ohio over a thirty-year time frame, Stokes argues that organized combat between advocate and opponent interest groups is central to explaining why states are not on track to address the climate crisis. She tells the political history of our energy institutions, explaining how fossil fuel companies and electric utilities have promoted climate denial and delay. Stokes further explains the limits of policy feedback theory, showing the ways that interest groups drive retrenchment through lobbying, public opinion, political parties and the courts. More than a history of renewable energy policy in modern America, *Short Circuiting Policy* offers a bold new argument about how the policy process works, and why seeming victories can turn into losses when the opposition has enough resources to roll back laws.

**Bio:** Dr. Leah Stokes works on energy, climate and environmental politics. Within American Politics, this work focuses on representation and public opinion; voting behavior; and public policy, particularly at the state level. Within environmental politics, Dr. Stokes researches climate change, renewable energy, water and chemicals policy. This research has been published in top journals including the American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, British Journal of Political Science, Nature Energy, Energy Policy, and Environmental Science & Technology. She has also published articles in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, The Guardian, CNN and elsewhere, as well as being frequently quoted in national media.

Dr. Stokes completed a PhD in Public Policy in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning's Environmental Policy & Planning group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She also received a masters from MIT's Political Science Department. Before that, she completed an MPA in Environmental Science & Policy at the School of International & Public Affairs (SIPA) and the Earth Institute at Columbia University. Dr. Stokes also have a BSc in Psychology and East Asian Studies from the University of Toronto. Prior to academia, she worked at the Parliament of Canada and Resources for the Future.