

# OSTROM WORKSHOP RESEARCH SERIES

## Zhengyan “Ian” Li

*O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs,  
Ostrom Research Awardee and Ostrom Fellow*



## “Truth Hurts? Mandatory Environmental Information Disclosure and Regulatory Activities”

**Wednesday, OCTOBER 16, 2019**

12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park

This paper examines the impacts of mandatory environmental information disclosure policy on the implementation of traditional environmental regulations in the context of the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), which is the major environmental information disclosure program in the U.S., and the Clean Air Act. Using quasi-experimental variation from TRI’s size-based reporting criteria and its expansion of industry coverage in 1998, I find that regulators significantly reduce regulatory activities on facilities that disclose information in the TRI. Regulatory activities, however, do not seem to react to the year-over-year change of disclosed TRI information. The results suggest strong intercorrelations between different forms of environmental policy. Information disclosure can complement the implementation of traditional environmental regulations as it provides new information for regulatory decision-making and leverages actions from other information users to motivate better environmental performance. At the same time, regulators’ reactions to information can serve as a mechanism for information disclosure policy to achieve its regulatory goals.

EOCR

[Zhengyan “Ian” Li](#) is a doctoral candidate in the O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University. Zhengyan is interested in the dynamics of the interactions among public organizations, citizens, civil society, markets, and the private sector in the formation and implementation of environmental policies. Zhengyan holds a BA in agricultural economics from Renmin University of China and an MPA from Columbia University in the City of New York.

Presentations are open to the public (see our website for papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon ([sturgeon@iu.edu](mailto:sturgeon@iu.edu); 812/855–3151).