The Economics of Climate Change
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1. The object of the NBER is to ascertain and present to the economics profession, and to the public more generally, important economic facts and their interpretation in a scientific manner without policy recommendations. The Board of Directors is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the work of the NBER is carried on in strict conformity with this object.

2. The President shall establish an internal review process to ensure that book manuscripts proposed for publication DO NOT contain policy recommendations. This shall apply both to the proceedings of conferences and to manuscripts by a single author or by one or more co-authors but shall not apply to authors of comments at NBER conferences who are not NBER affiliates.

3. No book manuscript reporting research shall be published by the NBER until the President has sent to each member of the Board a notice that a manuscript is recommended for publication and that in the President’s opinion it is suitable for publication in accordance with the above principles of the NBER. Such notification will include a table of contents and an abstract or summary of the manuscript’s content, a list of contributors if applicable, and a response form for use by Directors who desire a copy of the manuscript for review. Each manuscript shall contain a summary drawing attention to the nature and treatment of the problem studied and the main conclusions reached.

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7. NBER working papers and manuscripts distributed on the Bureau’s web site are not deemed to be publications for the purpose of this resolution, but they shall be consistent with the object stated in paragraph 1. Working papers shall contain a specific disclaimer noting that they have not passed through the review procedures required in this resolution. The NBER’s web site shall contain a similar disclaimer. The President shall establish an internal review process to ensure that the working papers and the web site do not contain policy recommendations, and shall report annually to the Board on this process and any concerns raised in connection with it.

8. Unless otherwise determined by the Board or exempted by the terms of paragraphs 6 and 7, a copy of this resolution shall be printed in each NBER publication as described in paragraph 2 above.
## Contents

Foreword ix

**Climate Change: Adaptations in Historical Perspective** 1
Gary D. Libecap and Richard H. Steckel

1. **Additive Damages, Fat-Tailed Climate Dynamics, and Uncertain Discounting** 23
Martin L. Weitzman

2. **Modeling the Impact of Warming in Climate Change Economics** 47
Robert S. Pindyck

3. **Droughts, Floods, and Financial Distress in the United States** 73
John Landon-Lane, Hugh Rockoff, and Richard H. Steckel

4. **The Effects of Weather Shocks on Crop Prices in Unfettered Markets: The United States Prior to the Farm Programs, 1895–1932** 99
Jonathan F. Fox, Price V. Fishback, and Paul W. Rhode

5. **Information and the Impact of Climate and Weather on Mortality Rates during the Great Depression** 131
Price V. Fishback, Werner Troesken, Trevor Kollmann, Michael Haines, Paul W. Rhode, and Melissa Thomasson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The Impact of the 1936 Corn Belt Drought on American Farmers’ Adoption of Hybrid Corn</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Sutch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The Evolution of Heat Tolerance of Corn: Implications for Climate Change</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael J. Roberts and Wolfram Schlenker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Climate Variability and Water Infrastructure: Historical Experience in the Western United States</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zeynep K. Hansen, Gary D. Libecap, and Scott E. Lowe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Did Frederick Brodie Discover the World’s First Environmental Kuznets Curve? Coal Smoke and the Rise and Fall of the London Fog</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen Clay and Werner Troesken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Impacts of Climate Change on Residential Electricity Consumption: Evidence from Billing Data</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anin Aroonruengsawat and Maximilian Auffhammer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Author Index</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject Index</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

Many economic historians and other social scientists have observed the climate change debate with dismay for its lack of attention to past experience and the diversity in the historical record. Climate change can be sudden, intense, and geographically focused, as in the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s, or gradual, irregular, and widespread as in the cooling of the Little Ice Age. Knowledge of the mechanisms of global climate change is far from complete, and forecasts of average temperature for the coming decades, much less centuries, are always hedged into alternative scenarios and wide confidence intervals. The place of regional climate change within the global system is heavily laden with complexity and seldom addressed by climate models.

If climate change over the decades is very difficult, if not impossible, to predict at the geographic level where national or regional policy is made, it is prudent to investigate how the economy and the political system have responded to climate change in the past when even less was known about the physical system that determines temperature, precipitation, and the like. We, therefore, welcomed the interest of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) in a project that views the past as a laboratory for understanding future scenarios when the economy must adapt to climate change. In this regard, we are grateful for the leadership and advice of James Poterba, president of the NBER, and Claudia Goldin, director of the program on Development of the American Economy, in support of this project. We also acknowledge the valuable organizational support of the Conference Department at the NBER.

Study of climate change and its implications is inevitably an interdisciplinary effort, and the chapters in the volume benefited from the contributions, advice, and expertise of several researchers in the NBER program
on Environment and Energy, including Maximilian Auffhammer, Maureen Cropper, Olivier Deschênes, Michael Greenstone, Robert Pindyck, Wolfram Schlenker, Martin Weitzman, and Catherine Wolfram. Several researchers from the program on Development of the American Economy presented earlier papers, discussed others, or provided advice to authors, including Hoyt Bleakley, Karen Clay, Price Fishback, Michael Haines, Zeynep Han- sen, Richard Hornbeck, Paul Rhode, Hugh Rockoff, Richard Sutch, Melissa Thomasson, and Werner Troesken. We also thank Melissa Dell, Haggay Etkes, Erica Field, Raghav Gaiha, Benjamin Jones, John Landon-Lane, Valerie Muellera, Cormac Ó Gráda, Benjamin Olken, Alan Olmstead, Daniel Osgood, Michael Roberts, Stephen Salant, James Stock, Daniel Sumner, and Hedrick Wolff, who also presented papers and discussed others at our conferences.

Gary Libecap
Richard H. Steckel
August 3, 2010