



Institutions and Actors in US Climate Policy

Matthew C. Nowlin
MPA Program Director
Associate Professor
Dept of Political Science
College of Charleston

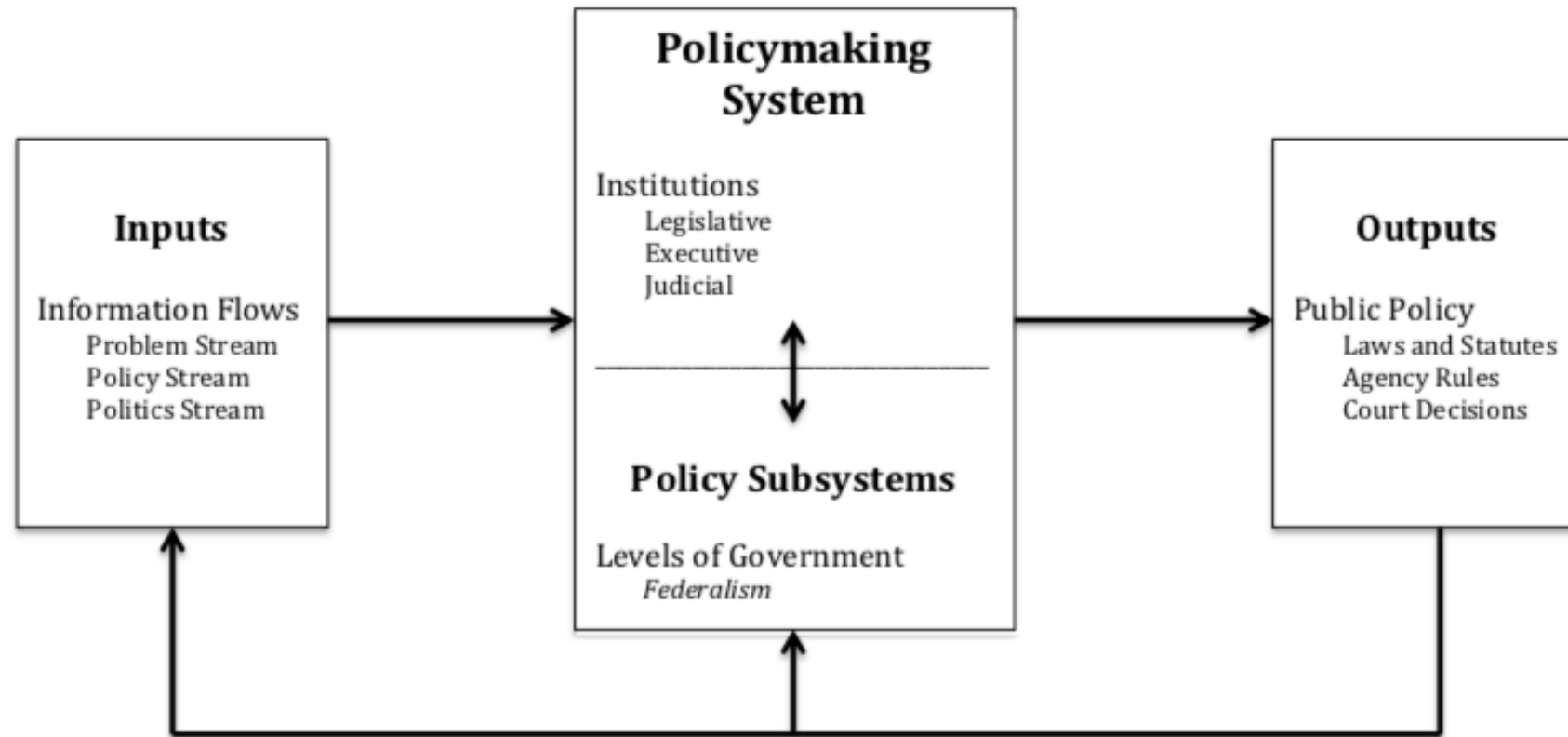
Overview

Agenda Setting

Policymaking System

- Institutions
- Regimes, subsystems, coalitions, and actors

Framework



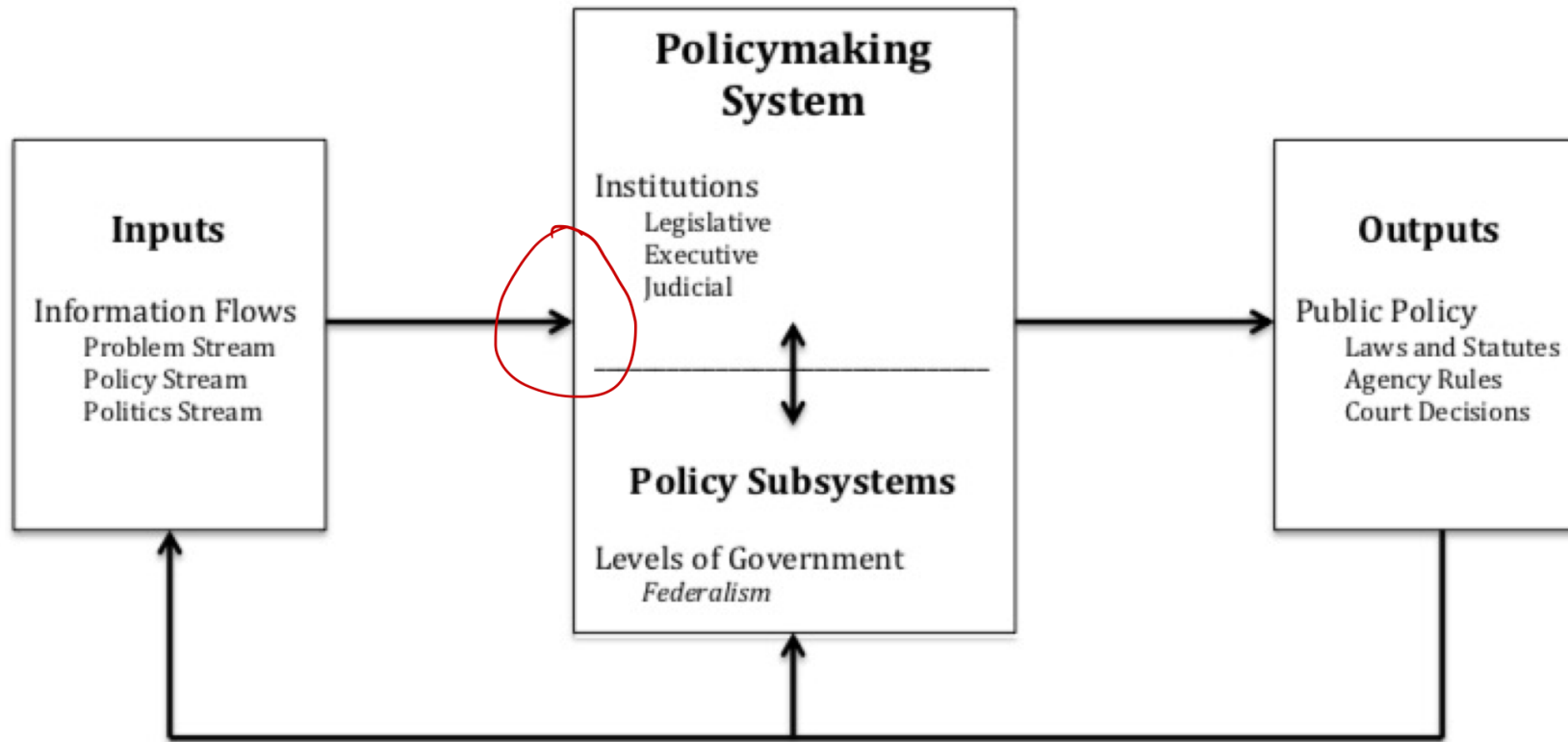
The Environmental Policymaking Process

Why do some policy issues emerge on the environmental policymaking agenda?

Agenda Setting

- **Policy agenda:** the issues currently being addressed by the policymaking system
- **Agenda-setting:** the process through which policy issues reach the agenda
 - First-order agenda setting: Attention to *issues*
 - Second-order agenda setting: Attention to *attributes of issues*
 - **Issue definition:** how an issue is defined, or understood, by policy actors and the public

Agenda Setting

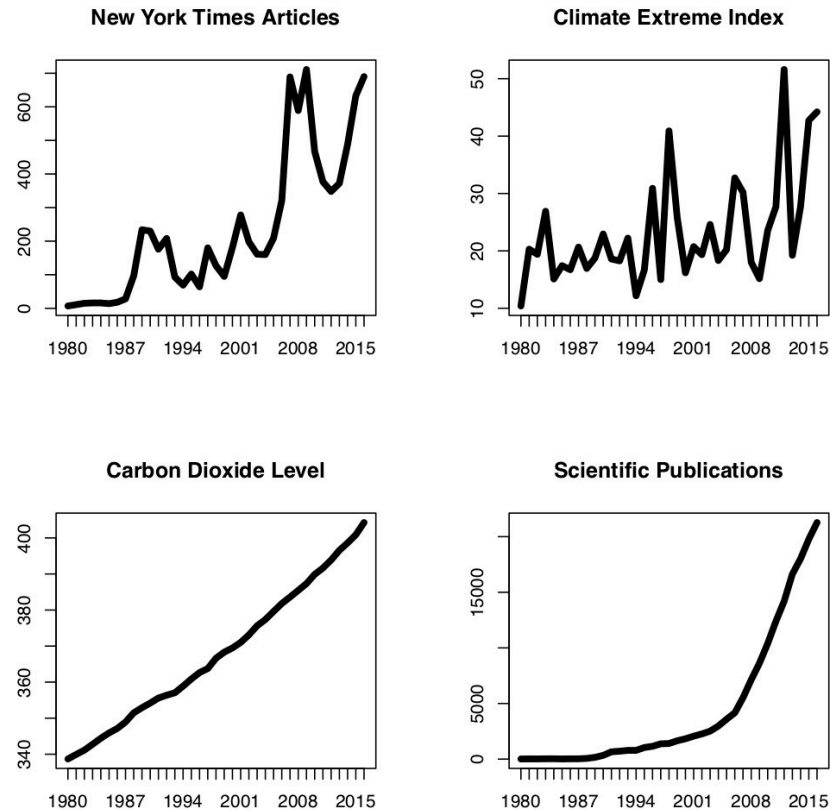


The Environmental Policymaking Process

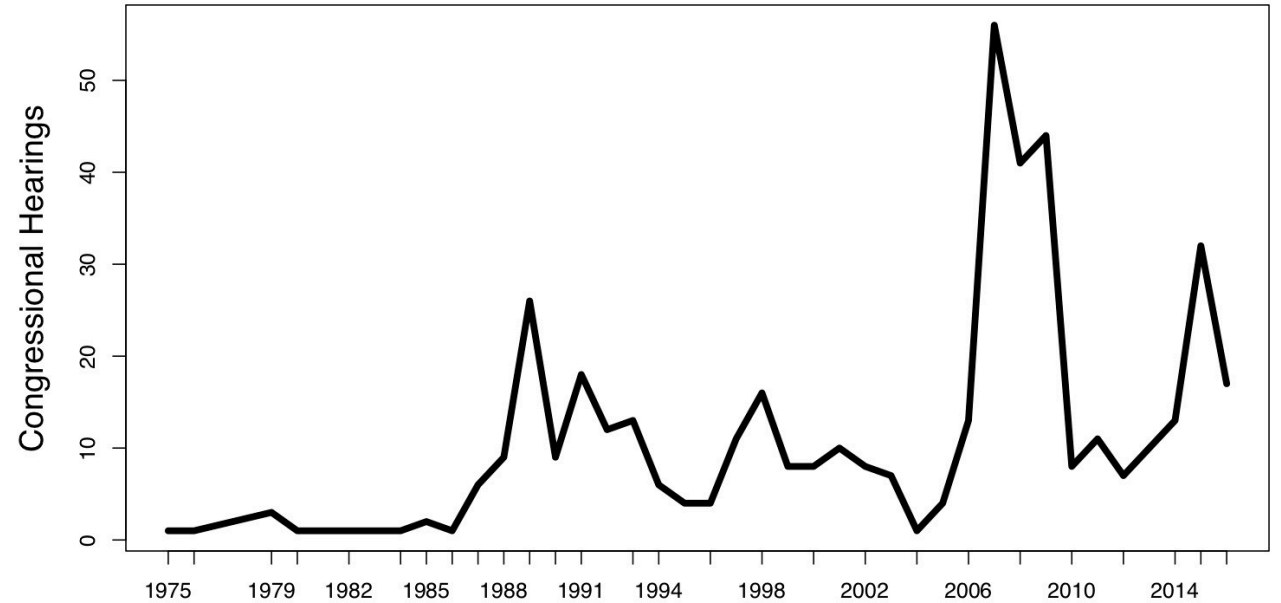
Agenda Setting: First Order

- Inputs: Information signals from the environment
 - *Problem* stream: information about various conditions that policymakers and citizens want addressed
 - *Policy* stream: the ideas, or solutions, that policy actors wish to see enacted
 - *Politics* stream: information about what government actions would be deemed acceptable in a representative system
- *Changes in inputs can make it more likely that issues receive the attention of the environmental policymaking system and make it on the policy agenda*

Agenda Setting: First Order



Climate Indicators



Congressional Hearings about Climate Change

Agenda Setting: First Order

Attention = Inputs + System Factors

- Inputs
 - New York Times
 - Climate Extreme Index
 - CO₂ Level
 - Scientific Publications
- System factors
 - **Democratic Congress**

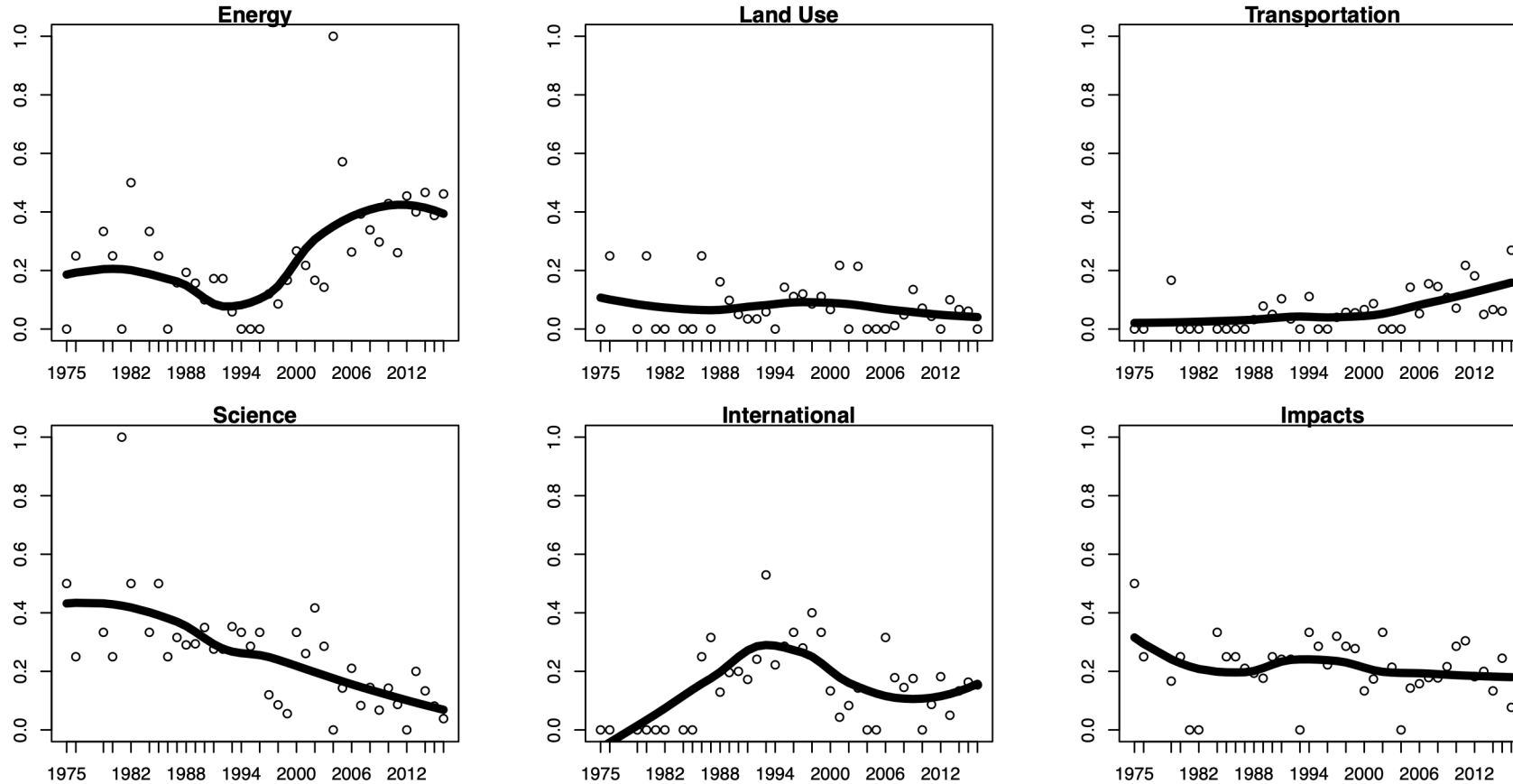
Agenda Setting: Second Order

Issue Definitions and Framing

- **Framing:** Give meaning and context to information signals
 - Add an attribute to an issue
 - Change how a current attribute is evaluated



Agenda Setting: Second Order



Climate Hearing Topics

How do the major policymaking institutions shape environmental policy?

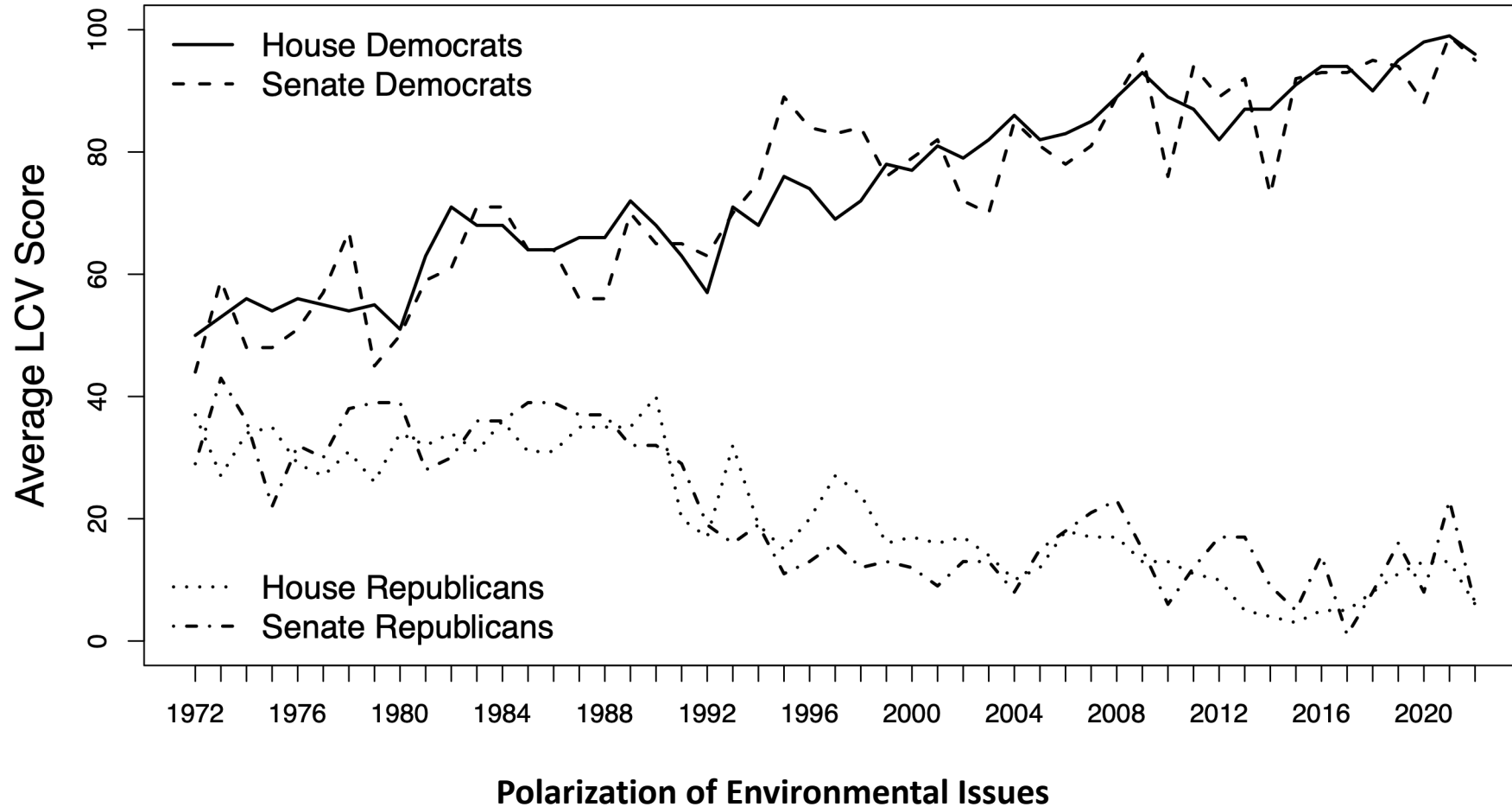
The Macro-Institutions and Environmental Policymaking

- *The macro institutions of the environmental policymaking system – Congress, the executive, and the courts – create pathways for information signals to be processed and turned into a unique form of policy*
- Pathways are created by the *rules* under which policy actors operate
- Decision-making authority is diffused across the macro-institutions
 - *Delegation*

Congress

- **Legislative pathway**
 - Both chambers of Congress → The president
- Congressional committees are the focal point of policy development
 - Process information
 - Develop legislation
 - Oversee implementation
- Party leadership
- Congressional polarization

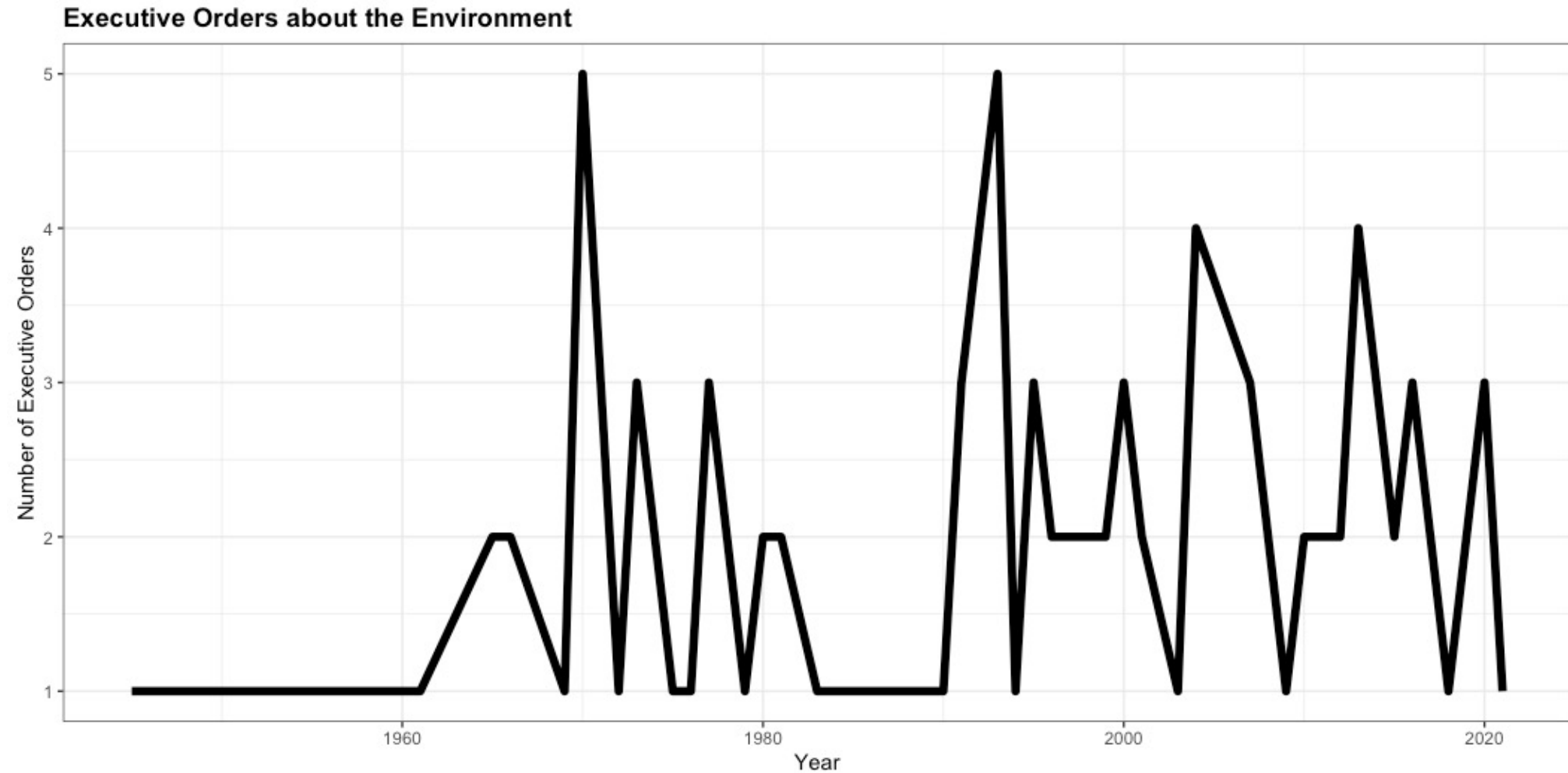
Congressional Polarization



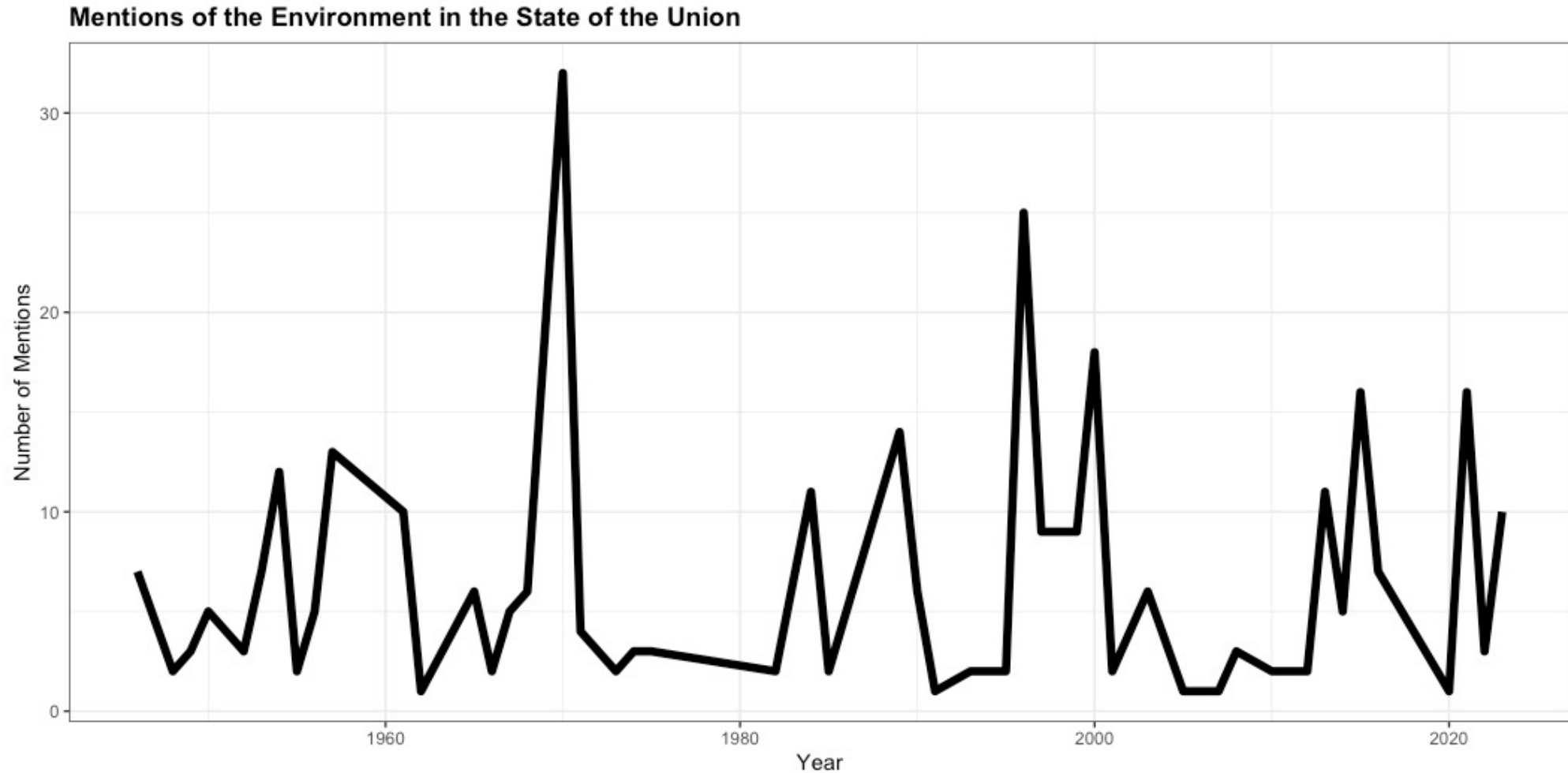
Executive Branch Pathways

- **The president:**
 - Executive agreements
 - *Executive orders*: An official means by which the president can instruct federal agencies on how to execute laws passed by Congress.
 - *Going public*
- **Executive branch agencies** (the bureaucracy)
 - Rules and regulations

Executive Orders



State of the Union



Environmental Bureaucracy

What agencies do

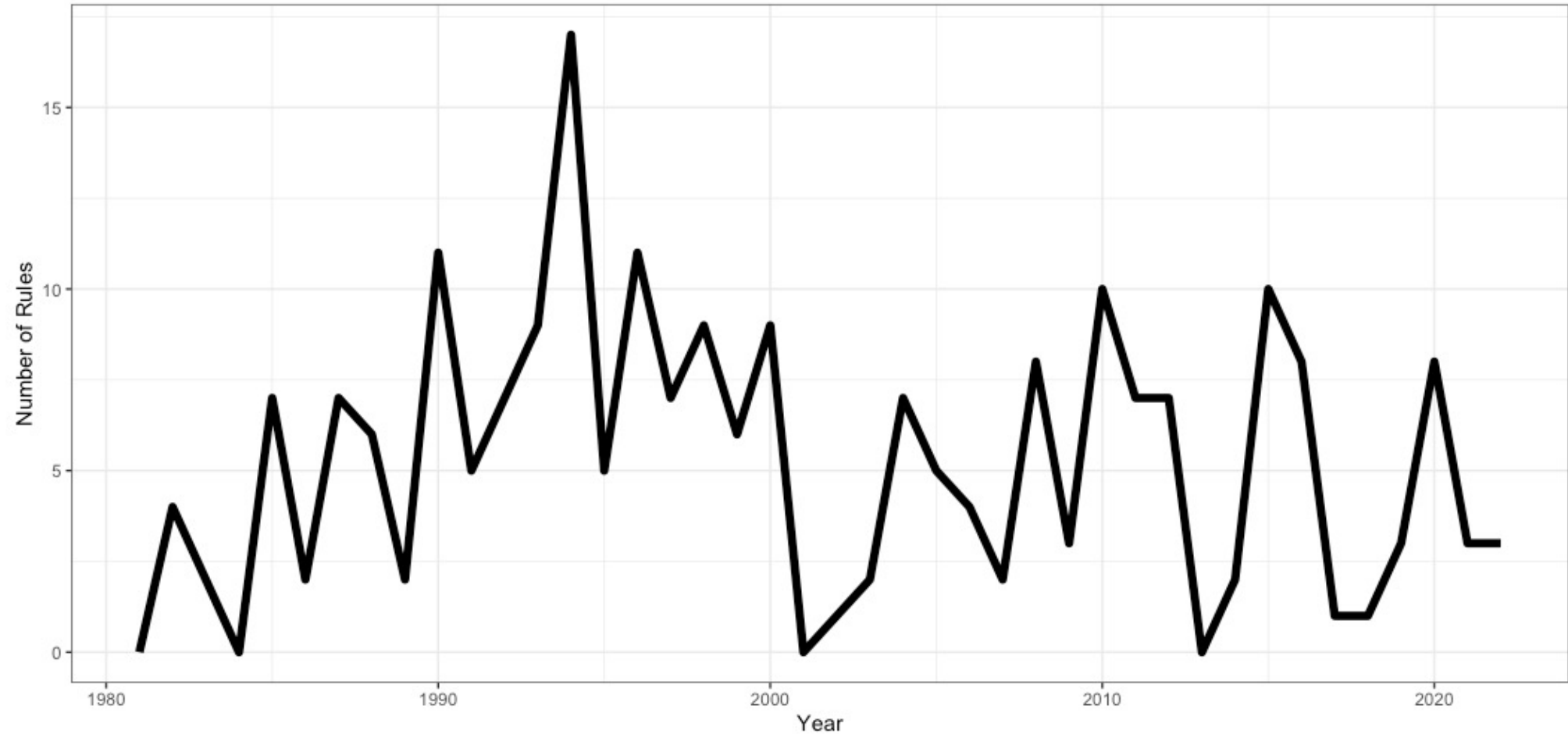
- Implement policy
- Interpret vague legislative language
- Create regulations

Table 4.1 Sample list of federal environmental agencies

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- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
 - National Park Service (NPS)
 - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
 - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - US Geologic Service (USGS)
 - Bureau of Safety & Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)
 - Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BSEE)
 - Office of Surface Mining Reclamation & Enforcement (OSMRE)
 - U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
-

EPA Significant Regulations

Number of Significant Regulations from the EPA: 1981-2022

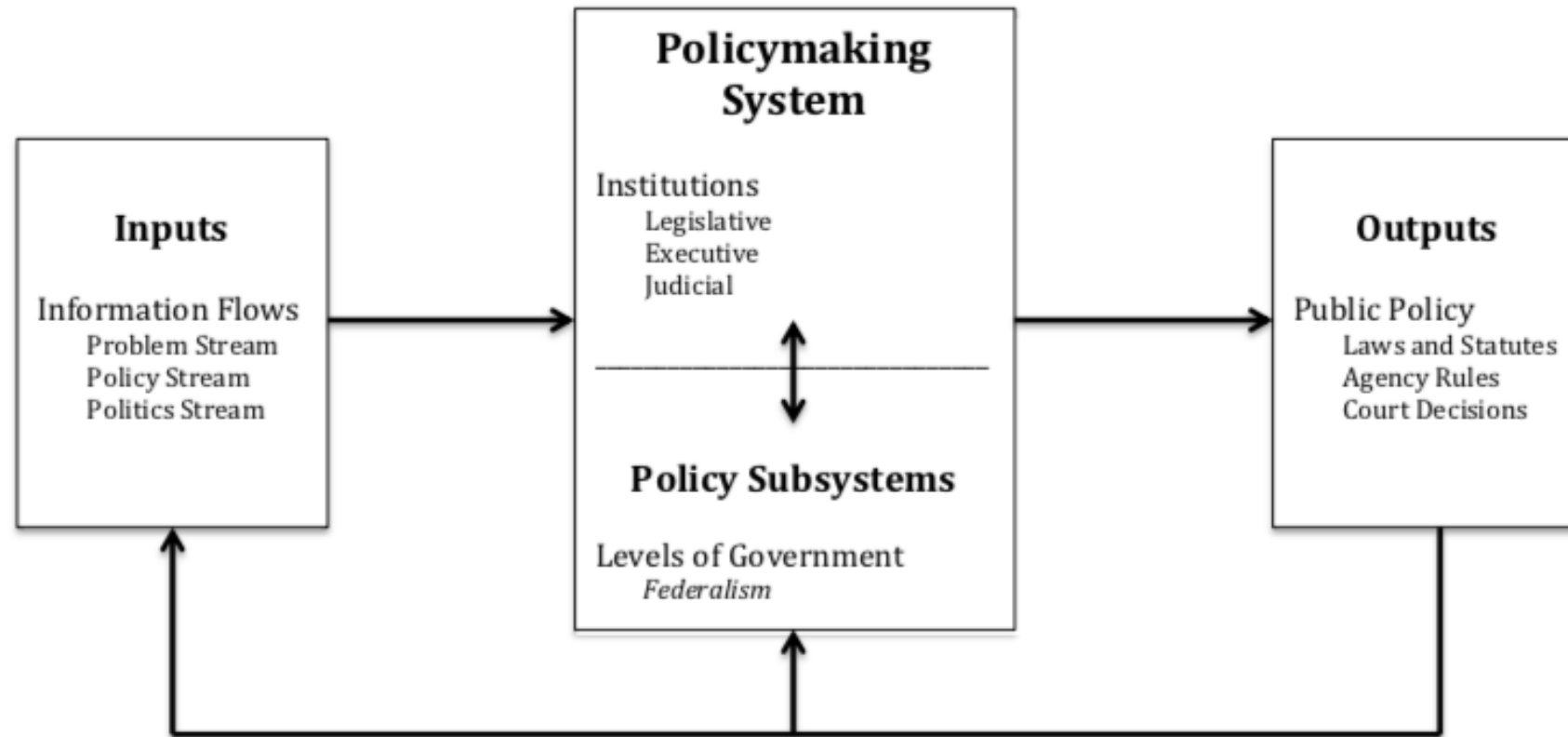


The Courts

- **Policymaking pathway:** Judicial decisions
- Judicial review
- Standing
- *Chevron deference*

Regimes, subsystems, coalitions, and actors

Framework



The Environmental Policymaking Process

Policy Actors and Coalitions

- *Official actors*: Those that are within government institutions
- Elected and unelected officials
- *Unofficial actors*: Those that are outside government institutions
 - Interest groups, political parties, media, activists, citizens
- **Coalitions**: policy actors that share policy preferences and coordinate their actions
 - Advocacy coalitions
 - *Bootleggers and Baptists*

Policy Subsystems

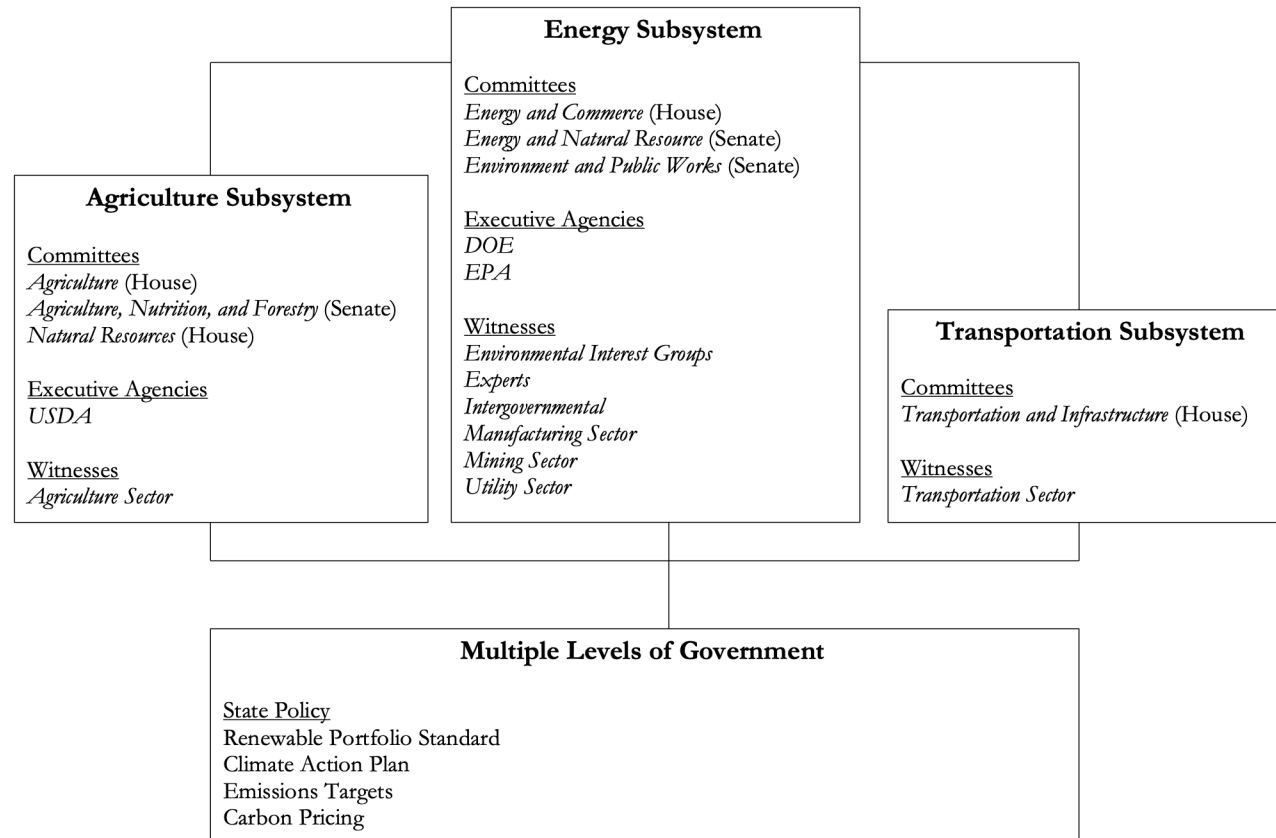
- *Semi-autonomous decision arenas consisting of actors and institutions organized around specific policy domains that operate in parallel and exist outside the spotlight of macro politics*
- Includes
 - *Policy actors: both official and unofficial*
 - *Institutions: Sub-units of the larger macro-institutions: congressional committees, bureaus within agencies*
 - *Multiple levels: Operate at multiple levels of government including local, state, and federal*

Policy Regimes

- *Networks of policy subsystems connected by a shared policy problem that integrates governing arrangements – ideas, interests, and institutions – that span multiple subsystems*
- Subsystems of the climate change regime
 - Agriculture
 - Energy
 - Transportation

Climate Change Policy Regime

Climate Change Policy Regime



Thank you!

Contact Info

- Matthew C. Nowlin
- MPA Program Director
- Associate Professor
- Dept of Political Science
- College of Charleston
- **email: nowlinmc@cofc.edu**