

THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW SOCIETY AND THE INSTITUTE FOR LEGAL RESEARCH
present

“CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENERGY CRISIS: LESSONS FROM HISTORY”



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Monday, February, 9, 2009
Goldberg Room (297 Boalt Hall)
12:45 pm

Over the past three decades, society has failed in its efforts to address either the climate crisis or our dependence on fossil fuels. As a new presidential administration elevates energy and climate issues to the forefront, we must ask why we have not addressed these critical problems thus far, and whether history and historians might suggest useful lessons and implications for future policy-making.

In this public talk, Paul Sabin will explore the history of energy politics in California and the nation to anticipate likely contours for future energy policymaking. He will examine the history of past energy transitions to show how unprecedented and politically challenging it will be to make a dramatic shift away from fossil fuels. His themes include the vital role of government in accelerating change in the energy markets, as well as the generations-long political struggle that is likely to play out within administrative, judicial and legislative settings. Professor Sabin also will touch on the contributions that historians have made to our thinking about adaptation to climate change and the role of climate in driving past societal transformations.

Paul Sabin is an assistant professor of history at Yale University. His research and teaching focus on U.S. environmental history, energy politics, and political and economic history, including natural resource development in the American West and overseas. He is the author of *Crude Politics: The California Oil Market, 1900-1940* (University of California Press, 2005), and was previously the founding executive director of the non-profit Environmental Leadership Program.