

Elizabeth Sorensen Montoya

✉ elizabeth.sorensenmontoya@colorado.edu

🌐 www.elizabethsorensenmontoya.com

Citizenship: United States of America

University of Colorado Boulder

Department of Economics

256 UCB

Boulder, CO 80309

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, University of Colorado Boulder	<i>expected 2025</i>
M.A., Economics, University of Colorado Boulder	2022
M.S., Economics, University of Oregon	2020
B.S., <i>summa cum laude</i> , Business Administration - Economics & Finance, Black Hills State University	2019
B.A., <i>summa cum laude</i> , Spanish, Black Hills State University	2019

CERTIFICATES

Certificate in College Teaching, University of Colorado Boulder	<i>expected 2024</i>
---	----------------------

FIELDS

Environmental Economics, Health Economics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record, University of Colorado Boulder <i>Environmental Economics (online)</i>	Summer 2024
Instructor of Record, University of Colorado Boulder <i>Principles of Macroeconomics</i>	Spring 2024
Teaching Assistant, University of Colorado Boulder <i>Principles of Macroeconomics & Principles of Microeconomics</i>	2020-2024

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, University of Colorado Boulder <i>Department of Economics & Institute of Behavioral Science, Reporting to Prof. Tania Barham</i>	2023
Research Assistant, University of Colorado Boulder <i>Department of Economics, Reporting to Prof. Jonathan Hughes</i>	2022
Research Assistant, University of Colorado Boulder <i>Department of Economics, Reporting to Dr. Mahdiah Yazdani</i>	2021
Undergraduate Research, Black Hills State University <i>Reporting to Prof. Ron DeBeaumont</i>	2018-19

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Assistant, American Economic Association Mentoring Program	2023-2024
--	-----------

SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

Graduate Award for Public Policy Research <i>Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder</i>	2024
National Bureau of Economic Research, program participant <i>Mentoring Program on Aging and Health Economics</i>	2024
Third Year Paper Award <i>Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder</i>	2023
Bacon Family Economics Graduate Scholarship <i>Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder</i>	2022
Chiesman Essay Scholarship	2015

JOB MARKET PAPER

Privatization of U.S. Drinking Water Systems: Impacts on Quality

While the existing economic literature has extensively examined the effect of privatization on efficiency and profitability, its impact on quality remains underexplored. Understanding this relationship is particularly important in sectors where quality is essential for human health. This study investigates how privatizing U.S. drinking water systems affects quality. Given the competing incentives and regulatory pressures that influence a firm's quality decisions, the ultimate impact of privatization is theoretically ambiguous. Using hand-collected data on municipal systems sold to private companies and employing a propensity-weighted difference-in-differences approach, I find that privatization leads to 1.4 fewer Safe Drinking Water Act violations, a 20% decrease in an index of regulated contaminant concentrations, and a 30% decrease in an index for contaminants that pose an immediate threat to human health. These findings indicate that privatization leads to an overall improvement in drinking water quality and back-of-the-envelope estimates suggest economically meaningful benefits to public health, averaging at least \$12.6 million per state in the sample.

WORKING PAPERS

Birth Outcome Effects of Nitrate Contamination in Drinking Water (*under review*)

Despite the prevalence of drinking water contamination in the United States, its health effects are not well understood. Unlike the extensive research on health impacts of air pollution, studies on water contamination are limited, mainly due to a lack of high-frequency water contamination data. To address this gap, I construct a novel dataset of monthly nitrate contamination levels in California's community water systems linked with individual birth records. Nitrate contamination is a persistent issue in water systems in the United States, posing a potential threat to infant health. This study estimates the effect of prenatal exposure to nitrate contamination below current regulatory limits on birth outcomes. Using a panel fixed-effects approach with water system and time fixed effects, I compare birth outcomes across infants from the same water system who were exposed to differing levels of nitrate contamination during each trimester of gestation. I find that third-trimester exposure to nitrate concentrations below regulatory limits increases the likelihood of preterm birth and low birth weight by 1.9 and 1.4 percentage points, respectively. Relative to sample means, these estimates translate to a 38% increase in the probability of preterm birth and a 34% increase in the probability of low birth weight birth.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Effect of Stricter Shipping Fuel Sulfur Content Regulation on Air Pollution

Climate Change, Migration, and Health among Older Adults (*with Tania Barham, Lori Hunter, and Dylan Connor*)

Sweating through the Night: How Nighttime Heat Affects Student Outcomes (*with Grant Webster*)

PRESENTATIONS

<i>Southern Economic Association Conference (scheduled)</i>	2024
<i>Front Range Energy and Environmental Economics Camp</i>	
<i>University of Colorado Boulder Graduate Student Seminar</i>	
<i>University of Colorado Environmental and Resource Economics Workshop</i>	2023
<i>University of Colorado Boulder Environmental Economics Seminar</i>	
<i>University of Colorado Boulder Graduate Student Seminar</i>	
<i>University of Colorado Boulder Environmental Economics Seminar</i>	2022

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Organizer – University Colorado Boulder Graduate Student Seminar	2023-present
Host – Graduate Student Panel at Graduate Student Recruitment	Spring 2022
Graduate Student Mentor	2021

AFFILIATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Affiliate, Institute of Behavioral Science-University of Colorado Boulder
Health and Society Program, Population Program, CU Population Center

Member, Association of Environmental and Resource Economics

SKILLS

Software: R, Stata, Python

REFERENCES

Jonathan Hughes, PhD (advisor)

Department of Economics

University of Colorado Boulder

256 UCB

Boulder, CO 80309

Email: jonathan.e.hughes@colorado.edu

Tania Barham, PhD (committee member)

Department of Economics

University of Colorado Boulder

256 UCB

Boulder, CO 80309

Email: tania.barham@colorado.edu

Daniel Kaffine, PhD (committee member)

Department of Economics

University of Colorado Boulder

256 UCB

Boulder, CO 80309

Email: daniel.kaffine@colorado.edu

Nicholas Flores, PhD (teaching reference)

Department of Economics

University of Colorado Boulder

256 UCB

Boulder, CO 80309

Email: nicholas.flores@colorado.edu