

**MS Project**  
**Department of Environmental Science and Policy**  
**College of Science**  
**George Mason University**

**Candidate:** Ashley McKenna Robertson

**Defense Date and Time:** December 11, 2023, 10:00am-12:00pm

**Defense Location:** Hybrid – David King Hall 3006 and Zoom

**Title:** Spotlight on Stakeholders: Influence and Power Dynamics in South Korean Solar Energy Policy (2017 – 2022)

**Thesis Director:** Dr. Jennifer F. Sklarew

**Committee:** Dr. Ted Hsuan Yun Chen, Dr. Thomas Kalinowski

**ABSTRACT**

Despite South Korea's climate policies focused on lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increasing renewables generation, they continue to rely on non-renewables for almost all energy needs. The environmentally-minded Moon Jae-in presidency (2017 – 2022) focused on renewables' implementation, particularly solar energy. Nevertheless, influential organizations have cemented structures and actors to protect the energy status quo. Thus, the research identifies influential organizations and how they shaped national solar energy policy during the Moon administration. Through semi-structured qualitative interviews and document analysis, influential organizations and methods were identified and analyzed within solar energy policy. This research contributes novel metrics to measure influence, new insights on influential actors and their influence methods, and previously unidentified policy actor networks in South Korean solar energy policy at the theory-building in the literature.