

# *The Ethics of Communicating Scientific Uncertainty: Understanding How Scientists, Environmental Lawyers, and Journalists Treat Uncertainty*

September 22-23, 2014

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
1779 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC

## **Pre-Workshop Webinar: Friday, September 12, 3:00 pm EDT**

One-hour online webinar: *How Professional Standards Shape Scientists', Lawyers', and Journalists' Approaches to Uncertainty*

- Journalism and uncertainty—David Poulson (Michigan State University)
- Law and uncertainty—Jim Hilbert (William Mitchell College)
- Science and uncertainty—George Gray (George Washington University)

(webinar archived online at <http://www.eli.org/ethics-of-uncertainty>)

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## **Workshop Day One: Monday, September 22**

**8:30 am – 9:00 am**                      **Registration & Breakfast**

**9:00 am – 10:00 am**                    **Welcome and Introduction**

- Welcome—John Cruden, President, Environmental Law Institute (ELI)
- Workshop Goals—Jay Austin and Kathryn Mengerink (ELI)
- Participant Introductions

**10:00 am – 11:00 am**                    **Communicating Uncertainty: Three Perspectives**

- John Cruden (ELI), moderator
- Science and uncertainty—Andrew Rosenberg (Union of Concerned Scientists)
- Law and uncertainty—Michael Traynor (Cobalt Law)
- Journalism and uncertainty—Seth Borenstein (Associated Press)

**11:00 am – 11:20 am**                    **Break**

**11:20 am – 12:30 pm**                    **Pre-Workshop Questionnaire**

- Presentation and Discussion of Results—Kathryn Mengerink (ELI)

**12:30 pm – 1:15 pm            Lunch**

**1:15 pm – 2:30 pm            Study Topic Presentations**

- David Verardo (NSF Paleoclimate Program), moderator
- *Climate change, extreme weather events & uncertainty*, Paul Huttner (Minnesota Public Radio)
- *Hydraulic fracturing & uncertainty*, Marcia McNutt (*Science*)
- *Cumulative chemical exposure, environmental justice & uncertainty*, David Bussard (U.S. EPA)

**2:30 pm – 4:15 pm            Breakout Groups**

Breakout groups will focus on study topics. Each interdisciplinary group will explore the following questions:

- What ethical and communication challenges relate to this issue from the scientific, legal, and journalistic perspectives?
- What steps can be taken to overcome these challenges?
- Can scientists, lawyers, and journalists overcome these challenges in a collaborative way? If so, how?

**4:15 pm – 4:30 pm            Break**

**4:30 pm – 5:30 pm            Report from each breakout group**

**5:30 pm – 6:45 pm            Reception**

## **Workshop Day Two: Tuesday, September 23**

**8:00 am – 8:30 am            Breakfast**

**8:30 am – 9:00 am            Synthesis of Day 1 & Discussion**

Day One synthesis, identification of cross-cutting workshop lessons, and conclusions about communicating uncertainty

**9:00 am – 10:30 am           Breakout Groups**

Breakout group discussions by profession—conclusions, brainstorm other potential outputs

**10:30 am – 10:50 am           Break**

**10:50 am – 11:30 pm           Reporting out and Wrap-Up**

Reporting out, suggestions for future work, and wrap-up session

**11:30 pm – 12:15 pm           Wrap Up**