California researcher honoured by Global Summit of Transport Ministers
Berkley Ph.D. candidate Laura Schewel is Young Researcher of the Year for her paper “Shop ‘till we drop: An analysis of retail goods movement”


Laura Schewel of the University of California at Berkley (USA) is the winner of the International Transport Forum’s 2013 Young Researcher of the Year Award.

The Award will be presented to Ms Schewel today (23 May) during the 2013 Summit of Transport Ministers from the 54 member countries of the International Transport Forum (ITF), held in the city of Leipzig, Germany.

The ITF is an intergovernmental organisation that acts as a global transport policy think tank and organises an annual summit of Transport Ministers. It is part of the OECD family of organisations.

Ms Schewel was selected for the prestigious award for her paper entitled “Shop ‘Till we drop: A History and Policy Analysis of Retail Goods Movement”.

Movement of retail goods is central to modern economies. It is also an understudied aspect of our ecological footprint. The award-winning paper proposes a new analytical category (termed “Retail Goods Movement”) in drawing boundaries around the portion of freight dedicated to retail goods and the portion of driving dedicated to shopping.

This enables a better understanding of the allocation of resources to retail goods movement. For instance, it can now be stated that the energy intensity of retail goods movement in the US since 1990 increased per capita as well as related to retail expenditure.

In turn, this allows conclusions for transport policy, e. g. encouraging transit operators to take shopping-specific considerations into account. The approach “offers new opportunities to help reduce energy use and emissions to policy actors who may find themselves frustrated at their lack of influence,” explains award winner Schewel. The jury highly commended her sophisticated theoretical approach that delivers practical results.
Laura Schewel will be available for the media on 23 May from 16:15-16:30h at the ITF stand on Level +1 of Congress Center Leipzig

More information on the winner: 2013.internationaltransportforum.org/awards

Download photos for media use: www.flickr.com/photos/internationaltransportforum

The Summit on Twitter: @ITF_Forum (Hashtag: #FundingTransport)

About Laura Schewel

Laura Schewel is an advocate and a researcher in advanced transport. She is currently pursuing a PhD at the Energy and Resources Group at UC Berkeley as a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow in Energy Engineering. Her particular focus is on transport systems, sustainability and safety, as well as vehicle-system modelling and analysis.

Ms Schewel completed degrees in engineering and comparative literature at Yale University and then worked at the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), where she managed RMI’s vehicle electrification projects, including the Smart Garage Charrette and Project Get Ready. She then joined the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to develop planning for regulatory strategy for electric vehicles and energy storage.

Ms Schewel is the author of several publications about transportation behaviour, vehicle electrification, and sustainable transportation. Recently, she founded StreetLight Data, a firm that develops novel and powerful analytics about transportation behaviour to support urban design, transportation infrastructure design, retail and economic development, of which she is also the CEO.

About the International Transport Forum

The International Transport Forum at the OECD is an intergovernmental organisation with 54 member countries. It acts as a strategic think tank with the objective of helping shape the transport policy agenda on a global level and ensuring that it contributes to economic growth, environmental protection, social inclusion and the preservation of human life and well-being.

In pursuit of its mission, the International Transport Forum gathers statistics, conducts co-operative research programmes and organises an annual summit which brings together Ministers and leading representatives from industry, civil society and academia to engage in focused debate about strategies for tomorrow’s transport.

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