

Lifeng Ren

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Applied Microeconomics, Environmental and Resource Economics, Climate Change, Land Use

EDUCATION

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Ph.D., Applied Economics

Exp. 2027

University of California, Davis

M.S., Agricultural and Resource Economics; Applied Mathematics

2021

Purdue University

B.S., Agricultural Economics; Mathematics (Minor: Computer Science)

2018

WORKING PAPERS

[†] indicates lead/co-lead author

1. [†] “Public Provision of Air Quality Forecasts: Access, Accuracy, and Household Avoidance.” [JMP]
(with Qingyin Cai, Qingxiao Li).
Submitted.
2. [†] “Agricultural Adaptation to Drought: Evidence from Vietnam.”
(with Giang Thai, Khoa Vu, Nguyen Vuong).
3. [†] “Distributional Equity of Land Use Change and Ecosystem Service Gains under Global Biodiversity Conservation Scenarios.”
(with Elliott Woodhouse, Justin Johnson, David Leclère).
4. [†] “Land Use, Wildfire Smoke, and Global Agricultural Markets”
(with Justin Johnson)

WORK IN PROGRESS

1. [†] “Ecosystem Services of Low-Intensity Fires: Evidence from the United States”
2. “Global Gross Ecosystem Product” (with Stephen Polasky et al.)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Using AI to Inform Multi-Objective Global Sustainable Landscape Planning and Optimization <i>Research Assistant</i> Supervisor: Justin Johnson GitHub 	Fall 2023 – Present AI-LEAF
Modeling Heatwave Impacts on Mobility in Hennepin County Using an Agent-Based Model <i>Research Assistant</i> Supervisor: Bryan Runck GitHub 	Summer 2025 UMN
Ecosystem Services Distribution under Integrated Conservation Pathways <i>Research Intern</i> Supervisor: David Leclère GitHub 	Summer 2024 IIASA
Deterrence Effects of Enforcing SNAP Retailer Regulations <i>Research Assistant</i> Supervisor: Charlotte Ambrozek	Summer 2023 UMN
Using Forward-Looking Earth-Economy Models to Inform the Changing Wealth of Nations <i>Research Assistant</i> Supervisor: Justin Johnson	2022–2023 UMN

OUTREACH AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Ren, L. (2025). “Validating the Agent-Based Model for Cooling Options Utilization During Extreme Heat Events in Hennepin County.” *Community Assistantship Program (CAP) Report, University of Minnesota*. ([Report Link](#))

Ren, L. (2022). “Community Heating Feasibility Study for Lower Sioux Indian Community.” *Community Assistantship Program (CAP) Report, University of Minnesota*. ([Report Link](#))

† Kiely, S., Langone, M., McPhail, L., **Ren, L.**, ... & Lybbert, T. J. (2021). “Worth the Hype? Tall Vines Raise Profits for Some—Tradeoffs for All.” *Catalyst: Discovery into Practice* 2021 5:12-21. ([Paper Link](#))

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor 2023
Introduction to R Statistical Analysis Software for Applied Economics (Ph.D.-level), Rating: 4.8/5.0 UMN
Course Materials: [GitHub](#)  || [Website](#)

Guest Lecturer 2023
Big Data Methods in Economics (Ph.D.-level) UMN
Introduction to Natural Language Processing: [GitHub](#) 
Introduction to Large Language Models: [GitHub](#) 

Teaching Assistant 2020
Calculus III: Partial Derivatives and Series UC Davis

GRANTS AND AWARDS

UNU-WIDER Travel Grant, Presenter (\$3,000), UNU-WIDER 2026
Graduate Travel Grant (\$4,400), Applied Economics, University of Minnesota 2023-2026
CIFAP Graduate Travel Grant (\$2,800), Applied Economics, University of Minnesota 2025
CIFAP Small Research Grant, Co-PI (\$5,000), Applied Economics, University of Minnesota 2025
GLASSNET Early Career Scholars Travel Grant (\$1,500), GLASSNET 2024
Professional Development Grant (\$500), CFANS, University of Minnesota 2024
IonE Graduate Scholars in Agriculture and Climate (\$200), University of Minnesota 2023
Rex Hall Scholarship (\$1,100), College of Agriculture, Purdue University 2016

PRESENTATIONS

AAEA@ASSA (Scheduled) 2027
UNU-WIDER Workshop (ISEG-Lisbon), AAEA, Heartland Workshop (UIUC) 2026
AERE, AAEA, NatCap Workshop (Stanford) 2025
Annual Conference on Global Economic Analysis 2024
APEC-UMN (Student Seminar, [Recording](#) ) 2023

SKILLS

Programming & Software: R, Python, Stata, Julia, MATLAB, $\text{\LaTeX}$, SQL, GAMS, GEMPACK, InVEST, QGIS
Languages: English (Proficient), Mandarin (Native)