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Rural Residential Energy Transition and Energy Consumption Intensity in China

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Abstract: This paper examines the impact of residential energy transition on residential energy consumption per capita (RECPC), and identifies the underlying drivers in rural China. Based on province-level panel data for years 1991-2014 in rural China, it is shown that energy transition from traditional biomass energy (TBE) to traditional commercial energy (TCE) significantly decreases RECPC, while energy transition from TBE or TCE to advanced commercial energy (ACE) significantly increases RECPC. As is revealed by the energy stacking model, per capita income has a significantly negative impact on RECPC, and the impact of lagged RECPC is opposite. Due to the regulation of energy price, there exists price distortion in China's rural energy market and the price mechanism functions poorly. Besides, factors, including juvenile dependency ratio and education level, significantly reduce RECPC. Therefore, it is vital to integrate rural energy into national energy strategic system, facilitate energy transition process and introduce the market system reform of rural energy and continue to improve the education level of rural residents in rural China.

Keywords: rural residential energy transition; energy consumption intensity; residential energy consumption per capita

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Abbreviations: TBE, traditional biomass energy; TCE, traditional commercial energy; ACE, advanced commercial energy; RECPC, residential energy consumption per capita.

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