Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S1059-0560(18)30255-7

DOI: 10.1016/j.iref.2018.03.018

Reference: REVECO 1619

To appear in: International Review of Economics and Finance

Please cite this article as: Ee M.S., Chao C.-C., Wang L.F.S. & Yu E.S.H., Environmental corporate social responsibility, firm dynamics and wage inequality, *International Review of Economics and Finance* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.iref.2018.03.018.

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Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility, Firm Dynamics and Wage Inequality

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ABSTRACT

Based on a general-equilibrium framework, this paper examines the income distributional effect of firms which commit to environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) investments. In the short run with fixed number of firms, ECSR investment raises capital rental cost and hence widens wage inequality between skilled and unskilled workers via the factor substitution effect, while the increased capital cost causes firms to exit in the long run. This releases capital and hence lowers the capital rental cost. Thus, the wage gap can be mitigated or even narrowed by a rise in unskilled wage and a drop in skilled wage via the firm-exit effect. This theoretical prediction is confirmed by the empirical result.

JEL classifications: J31, L13, L33, R23 Keywords: Environmental CSR, Firm exit, Wage inequality

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