

1 Low carbon energy R&D portfolios that are robust when models and experts  
2 disagree  
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7 **Abstract**

8 Crafting energy policy in the face of climate change is daunting due to significant disagreement  
9 over technological uncertainty and the ultimate societal consequences of climate change. We  
10 address the challenge of designing energy technology Research and Development (R&D)  
11 portfolios, accounting for both parametric uncertainty about technological change and structural  
12 uncertainty about damages from climate change. We synthesize these conflicting beliefs to develop  
13 a set of plausible R&D portfolios, which are robust to multiple expert studies on technological  
14 change and multiple models of climate damages. This approach accounts for the best available  
15 information and allows policy makers to negotiate over qualitative issues. We identify common  
16 ground, with a high investment in Solar and Bioelectricity robust under all beliefs and models  
17 when the climate policy is ambitious. We find investment into Nuclear R&D the most sensitive,  
18 with stark disagreement among the models. Finally, the structure of investment portfolios is less  
19 sensitive to uncertainty and disagreement under more ambitious climate policies.  
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30 Strategic R&D investment in low carbon energy technology is a critical path to  
31 decarbonizing the energy sector<sup>1,2</sup>. Allocating investment across portfolios of low carbon energy  
32 technologies while adhering to budget constraints and the requirement to reach climate targets is  
33 a tough task that requires handling enormous uncertainty. These uncertainties are related to the  
34 evolution of technologies and of the climate; the economic and societal consequences of long-term  
35 investments in the context of this change; and the role of climate policies<sup>2</sup>. Analyzing investment  
36 in low carbon energy technologies under these uncertainties is a growing research area<sup>2</sup>. Most  
37 work in this area has focused on analyzing portfolios of investment under *parametric*  
38 *uncertainty*<sup>2,3</sup>. Parametric uncertainty refers to uncertainty over the values of key model  
39 parameters; for example, the evolution of the costs and efficiency of energy technologies in  
40 response to investment in research and development<sup>4</sup> (R&D).

41 Many techniques have been used to investigate parametric uncertainty around climate and  
42 energy technology, including sensitivity analysis, uncertainty analysis, and sophisticated models  
43 of decision making under uncertainty<sup>2</sup>; many employing Integrated Assessment Models (IAMs).  
44 Sensitivity analysis, for instance, takes energy R&D investment as a given and examines the  
45 potential consequences of a range of technology assumptions<sup>5</sup>. Uncertainty analysis goes a step  
46 further, employing Monte Carlo or other similar methods to explore probability distribution over  
47 IAM outputs of interest (see for example Kanyako and Baker<sup>6</sup>.) Finally, a number of papers have  
48 used stochastic dynamic programming to identify optimal R&D portfolios under a wide range of  
49 assumptions or models<sup>2,7,8</sup>.

50 When it comes to climate change, however, it is not easy to derive probability distributions around  
51 the uncertain parameters: there is significant disagreement among experts and forecasting methods  
52 over these distributions<sup>9</sup>. This disagreement is of particular importance as there is no single

53 decision maker poised to solve climate change, but rather a wide range of stakeholders with oft-  
54 conflicting criteria. Approaches to address such disagreement have included robust optimization<sup>10</sup>,  
55 ambiguity aversion<sup>11,12</sup>, and bottom-up exploratory methods, such as Robust Decision Making<sup>13</sup>.

56         There has been a different approach to another kind of disagreement, often called *structural*  
57 *uncertainty*. Structural uncertainty refers to uncertainty about casual chains<sup>4</sup>, implicit assumptions,  
58 and worldview; and is reflected by the wide range of models seen in the literature<sup>14</sup>. Structural  
59 uncertainty, which we will refer to as model uncertainty from now on, has been addressed  
60 qualitatively, through multi-model intercomparison studies<sup>5,15</sup>. These studies compare results side  
61 by side and provide qualitative analysis of what drives the differences in the model outputs. For  
62 example, Bosetti et al<sup>4</sup> used distributions over technological costs in three global IAMs to  
63 investigate the impact that technology assumptions have on environmental and economic metrics  
64 across the models. Similarly, Gillingham et al<sup>16</sup> combined parametric and structural uncertainty in  
65 their analysis. They performed uncertainty analysis using probability distributions over population,  
66 total factor productivity and climate sensitivity and compared these results across multiple IAMs.  
67 They found that for most model outputs, parametric uncertainty was more important than model  
68 uncertainty, in the sense that the outputs varied more within models than between them.

69         In this article, we present an integrated analytical approach to addressing parametric and  
70 model uncertainty simultaneously, going beyond sensitivity analysis and qualitative comparisons.  
71 We synthesize multiple expert elicitations and multiple models *without losing information*, a key  
72 criticism of both traditional methods<sup>17</sup> and non-expected utility or robust optimization  
73 methods<sup>10,18,19</sup>. These previous methods mathematically resolve conflict (through averaging or  
74 eliminating information) and result in a fully ordered set, masking disagreement and limiting  
75 decision maker flexibility.

76 We synthesize multiple cost-benefit IAMs and multiple expert elicitation studies using the  
77 concept of belief dominance<sup>20</sup> to derive specific insights into portfolios of low carbon energy R&D  
78 investment that are robust to both parametric and model uncertainty. This is a dominance concept  
79 (similar to Pareto and stochastic dominance) that exists in the literature under a range of names<sup>21–</sup>  
80 <sup>24</sup>. Under belief dominance, one alternative dominates another if it performs better under all  
81 plausible “beliefs” about the state of the world, where ‘beliefs’ include models as well as  
82 probability distributions over parameters. We use belief dominance to identify non-dominated  
83 portfolios of investment in energy technology (See Methods). Applying the framework of Robust  
84 Portfolio Decision Analysis<sup>20</sup> (RPDA), the non-dominated portfolios are analyzed further to get  
85 insight into robust individual investments within the portfolios.

86 We consider portfolios made up of investments in five low carbon energy technologies:  
87 electricity from biomass, liquid biofuels, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), nuclear, and solar;  
88 and three possible levels of investment in each technology, making a total of 3<sup>5</sup> possible portfolios  
89 of investment. We used three probability distributions of future costs and efficiencies of energy  
90 technologies derived from three large-scale expert elicitation studies<sup>11</sup> to represent input  
91 uncertainty. We combine this with three prominent cost benefit IAMs to represent model  
92 uncertainty, leading to a total of nine beliefs. We identify all non-dominated portfolios of R&D  
93 investment in low carbon energy technologies across these beliefs. A portfolio is non-dominated  
94 if no other portfolios outperform it across all models and probability distribution.

95 The expert elicitation studies provide forecasts of the costs and efficiencies of the five  
96 technologies, conditioned on R&D investments<sup>11</sup>. The studies were undertaken independently by  
97 three teams (Harvard, UMass, FEEM) in 2008-2013 and harmonized in Baker et al. 2015<sup>25</sup>. For  
98 model uncertainty we use the three cost-benefit models, DICE<sup>26</sup>, FUND<sup>27</sup>, and PAGE<sup>28</sup>. The

99 technologically detailed Global Change Analysis Model (GCAM)<sup>29</sup>, with its detailed energy  
100 module, is used to estimate the impact of assumptions about technology cost and efficiency on  
101 emission abatement costs, temperature, and CO2 emissions and concentration. GCAM does not  
102 model climate change damages; instead, we estimate damages using the cost-benefit IAMs by soft  
103 linking GCAM to DICE, PAGE, and FUND (See supplementary S1 for descriptions of the  
104 models). Finally, we perform this analysis under three global climate policies: a USD 125/tCO2  
105 carbon tax, a USD 50/tCO2 carbon tax (both growing by 3% per year starting in 2025), and a  
106 business-as-usual scenario with no global policy (See Method).

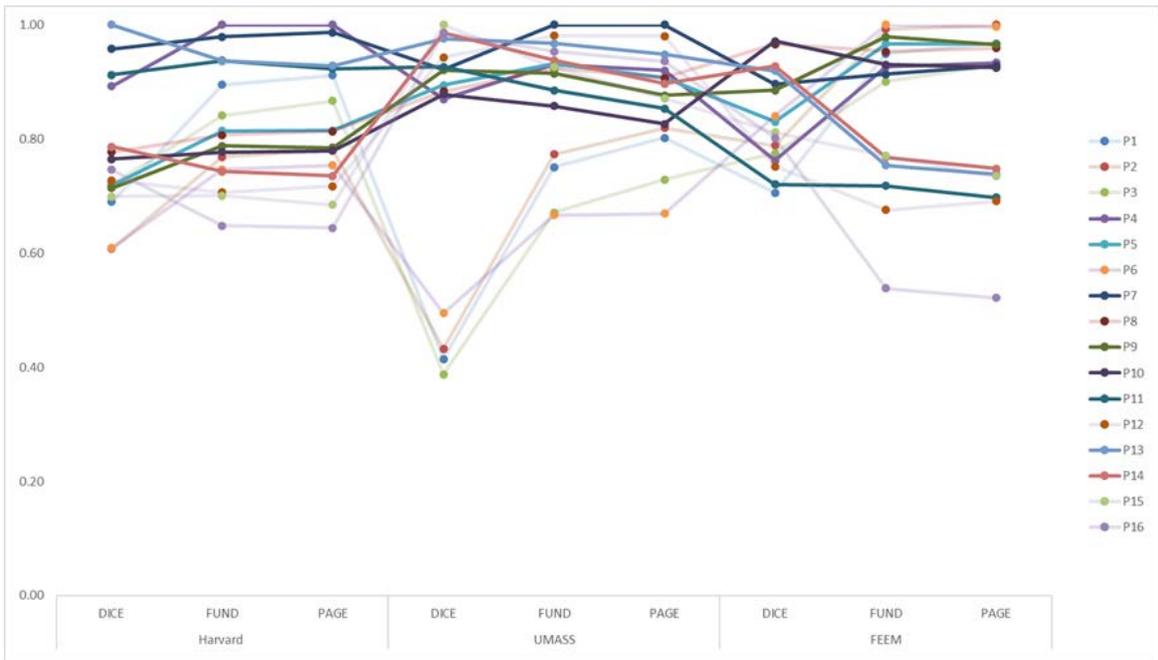
## 107 **Results**

### 108 **Non-dominated portfolios under a stringent carbon tax**

109 Under the \$125/tCO2 tax policy, we find that, out of the 243 possible portfolios, 16  
110 portfolios are non-dominated across the probability distributions and the models. Figure 1  
111 represents the normalized objective values under each of the nine combinations of probability  
112 distributions and IAMs. The objectives in this case are the sum of the expected value of the cost  
113 of abatement, the cost of damages, and the opportunity cost of the R&D portfolio. The values have  
114 been normalized, with zero being the portfolio that performs worst (i.e., has highest total cost)  
115 under the specific combination of models and elicitations, and one being the best (lowest cost).  
116 We have highlighted the eight portfolios that appear to be good compromises among the complete  
117 set of beliefs: They are never below 70% of the highest possible value for any of the combinations.  
118 See Table 1 below for the 16 portfolios ranked in ascending order of the R&D expenditure, where  
119 each row represents one portfolio.

120 The importance of model uncertainty can be seen by looking at the variation of the objective values  
121 within an elicitation team. For example, we see that when using the UMass elicitations, the DICE  
122 model can lead to very different objective values than the other two models. The importance of

123 disagreements over parametric uncertainty can be seen by comparing across the teams. For  
 124 example, we see some portfolios, such as Portfolio 2 and 6, consistently at the top under the FEEM  
 125 elicitation but toward the bottom of the non-dominated group for UMASS.



126 Figure.1. Normalized objective values of the non-dominated portfolios across nine combinations of  
 127 probability distributions and IAMs, Harvard-DICE/FUND/PAGE, UMASS-DICE/FUND/PAGE, FEEM-  
 128 DICE/FUND/PAGE. P1-P16 correspond to the different portfolios. The values are normalized with 1  
 129 being the best objective value, that is the lowest total cost and 0 the worst, i.e., highest cost.  
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 132 **Insights into individual Technologies**

133 Looking at Table 1, we see that under the \$125/tCO2 tax policy, it is robust to invest in  
 134 R&D at a high level in both Solar and Bioelectricity, regardless of the elicitation team, the damage  
 135 model, or the investment in other technologies. On the other hand, we see investments at all levels  
 136 (Low, Mid, and High) for Nuclear, CCS, and Biofuel among the non-dominated portfolios,  
 137 suggesting that disagreement across elicitation teams and models is more relevant for these  
 138 technologies under this policy. We note some relationships between technologies. For example,  
 139 there are no non-dominated portfolios that recommend a high investment in both CCS and

140 Biofuels, and in fact a high investment in CCS is always accompanied by low investment in  
 141 Biofuels, and a high investment in Biofuels is accompanied by low to medium investment in CCS,  
 142 suggesting a kind of substitution between them.

143 We explore to what degree the disagreement is driven by the structure of the models or by  
 144 disagreement over the distributions from the elicitation teams. Figure 2 provides a visualization of  
 145 how the different models and elicitation teams lead to different investments in individual  
 146 technologies through a ternary diagram for each technology under each model. Each ternary shows  
 147 the optimal level of investment for each weighting of the elicitation teams.

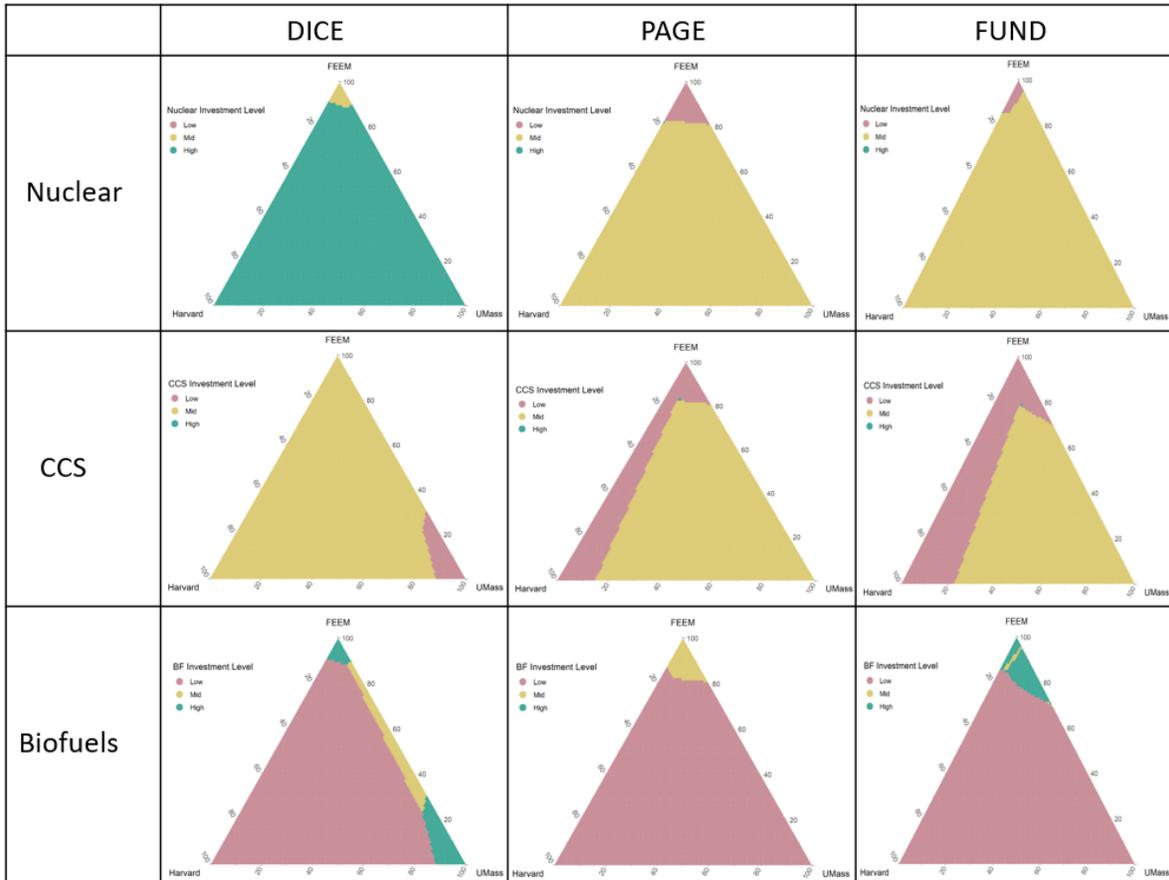
148 Table 1: Table 1: Non-dominated portfolios. Columns 2-6 indicate the level of R&D investment for each  
 149 technology, classified as Low, Mid, or High. Column 7 shows the total annual investment in R&D for each  
 150 portfolio.

Portfolio	Technologies					Total R&D (In million USD \$2019)
	Solar	Nuclear	Biofuels	Bio-elec	CCS	
1	High	Low	Low	High	Low	80.75
2	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	83.66
3	High	Low	Low	High	Mid	95.88
4	High	Mid	Low	High	Low	97.42
5	High	Mid	Mid	High	Low	100.33
6	High	Low	High	High	Low	105.02
7	High	Mid	Low	High	Mid	112.55
8	High	Mid	Mid	High	Mid	115.47
9	High	Mid	High	High	Low	121.69
10	High	Mid	High	High	Mid	136.82
11	High	High	Low	High	Low	301.69
12	High	Mid	Low	High	High	306.56
13	High	High	Low	High	Mid	316.82
14	High	High	Mid	High	Mid	319.73
15	High	High	High	High	Low	325.96
16	High	High	Low	High	High	510.82

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153 To explore the importance of model uncertainty, read each row from left to right. Here we  
154 see the most striking difference between the models for Nuclear. Almost all combinations of  
155 elicitation teams lead to a high investment in Nuclear under DICE, whereas almost all  
156 combinations of beliefs point to a mid-investment under PAGE and FUND. This is somewhat  
157 surprising, as DICE is often considered to be in between the other two models. However, we note  
158 that below 2.5C warming, DICE has the highest damages, as the DICE damages are a quadratic  
159 function of temperature that increases smoothly with warming. PAGE responds much stronger to  
160 warming above 3°C, “when the risk of a discontinuity is present, and adaptation capacity is  
161 reduced. FUND projects net *benefits* below 2.5 °C, and impacts increase only gradually with  
162 temperature”<sup>30</sup>. The \$125/tCO<sub>2</sub> tax policy implemented here limits temperature change to less  
163 than 2.5°C under all the portfolios. This, combined with the fact that GCAM considers nuclear  
164 energy to be particularly effective at reducing emissions, may explain why the DICE results lead  
165 to more aggressive R&D investment in Nuclear energy than the other models.

166 In the case of biofuels and CCS, a different narrative unfolds. There is a great deal more  
167 agreement between the models regarding R&D expenditure on these technologies. While there are  
168 some non-dominated portfolios with moderate or high investment in Biofuels, most combinations  
169 of models and elicitation result in a low-level investment in Biofuels. Similarly, the majority of  
170 possible combinations of beliefs and model result in a mid-level investment in CCS.



171 Figure 2. Each ternary diagram for DICE, PAGE and FUND across the three elicitation Harvard. UMASS  
 172 and FEEM shows the optimal investment level in Nuclear, CCS and Biofuels, respectively, for each  
 173 combination of elicitation teams and models, given the specific technology and model.  
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176 **Disagreement is more important under less stringent policies**

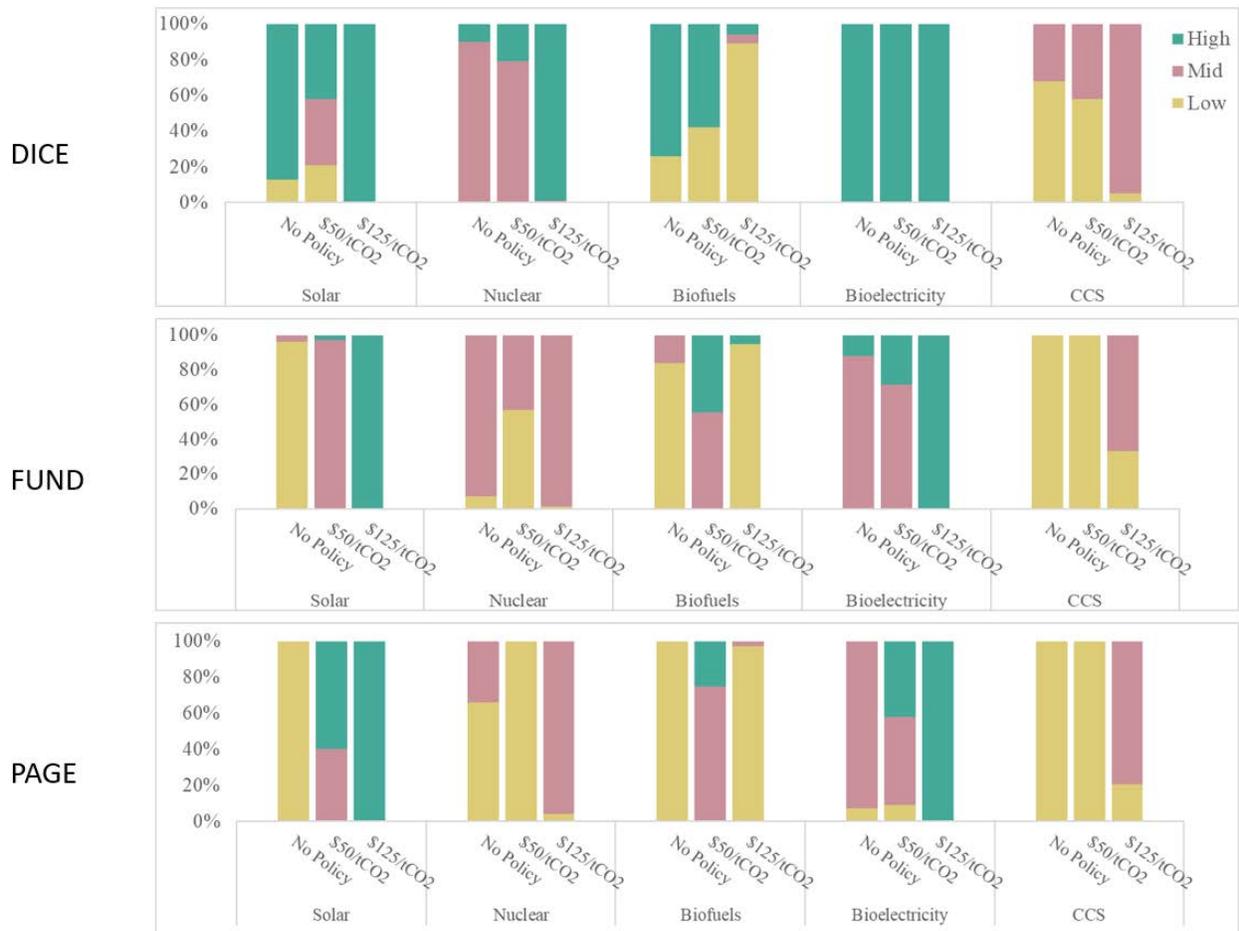
177 Less stringent policies result in a larger number of non-dominated portfolios across all  
 178 elicitation teams and models (See Supplementary table S3). For instance, under the \$125/tCO2 tax  
 179 policy, 16 portfolios are non-dominated, whereas there are 37 and 56 non-dominated portfolios,  
 180 respectively, under the \$50/tCO2 tax policy and under the BAU assumption. This happens because  
 181 as policy gets less stringent, emissions increase, and damages become more significant. This  
 182 creates more space for model disagreement about the damages.

183 We identified four portfolios that are present in the non-dominated groups for each of the  
 184 three policies: portfolios 5, 7, 13, and 15. We highlight portfolios 7 and 13 in particular because

185 they contain the investment levels that are most prevalent across all teams and models as seen in  
186 Table 1, namely high investments in solar and bioelectricity; low investment in biofuels; moderate  
187 investment in CCS; and either moderate or high investment in nuclear. This finding suggests that  
188 independent of policy stringency, these portfolios and investment levels in these individual  
189 technologies reflect reasonable agreement among experts, models and policies.

190 Investment tends to increase with the severity of the climate policy, albeit this relationship  
191 is not consistent. Figure 3 depicts the proportion of each investment level in the optimal portfolio  
192 for each technology based on the elicitation teams' weightings. This is demonstrated over three  
193 policies and three damage models. Each bar is identical to the ternary diagrams above but  
194 emphasizes the aggregate share. We see a general trend toward increased investment as we  
195 increase the stringency of the climate policy. One notable exception is biofuels, which is  
196 dominated by a low investment under the most stringent policy under all three models. At very  
197 high price, biofuels become less competitive in GCAM and hence the technology's impact on  
198 mitigation is gradually reduced.

199 We observe several areas of consistency across policies and models, such as a lack of  
200 "high" investment in CCS and constant high investment in solar and bioelectricity under the  
201 \$125/tCO<sub>2</sub> tax policy. The upshot from this analysis is that, while the stringency of policy  
202 objectives is crucial for the level of investment in specific technologies, we can still discover areas  
203 of agreement across all policies and models, as illustrated in portfolios 5,7,13, and 15. These  
204 portfolios are non-dominated across all policies, models, and expert elicitation, and can serve as a  
205 starting point for stakeholder discussions about R&D investment in low carbon energy  
206 technologies.



207  
208 Figure 3: Non-dominated portfolios across different policies for all combination of models and elicitation.

209 **Discussion**

210 Over the last decade, expert elicitation and integrated assessment models have become  
 211 integral to analysts and decision-makers as they formulate policy responses to climate change. For  
 212 example, the IPCC AR5 <sup>31</sup> recommends expert elicitation to characterize uncertainty to provide  
 213 insights into specific risks and understand and create effective strategies and policies to address  
 214 climate change. The US government calculates the social cost of carbon, a monetary estimate of  
 215 the societal costs of the climate damage caused by an extra unit of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emitted  
 216 into the earth's atmosphere, by averaging the three highly aggregated, integrated assessment  
 217 models we use here. These models have long histories and have produced most of the SCC  
 218 estimates in the recent scientific literature. However, while averaging is perfect for capturing

219 central tendency, according to the law of averages by Savage <sup>32</sup>, “decisions based on the  
220 assumption that average conditions will occur are wrong on average.”

221 In this paper, we combined multiple representations of parametric uncertainty, as captured  
222 in three expert elicitation studies about the future cost and efficiency of energy technologies, with  
223 structural uncertainty, as captured in three cost-benefit IAMs, to address the problem of designing  
224 a portfolio of publicly funded R&D investment in low carbon energy technologies. We expanded  
225 on the RDPA<sup>20</sup> approach, identifying all non-dominated portfolios of R&D investment across all  
226 beliefs and models. Under a \$125/tCO<sub>2</sub> tax on emissions, we find common ground among the  
227 expert beliefs and the models, indicating that high investment in Bioelectricity and Solar are robust  
228 to all beliefs and the models given the climate policy.

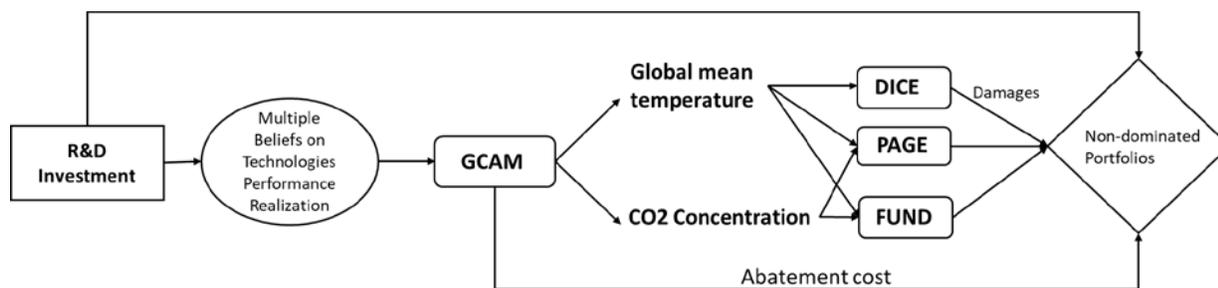
229 We did not see the same level of consensus about investment in Nuclear, Biofuels, and  
230 CCS. We investigate the technologies individually across the models and beliefs to identify the  
231 source of the disagreement. We find that the disagreement about investment in Biofuels and CCS  
232 are largely parametric, while Nuclear is largely structural. For Biofuels and CCS, even though  
233 each investment level shows up in some non-dominated portfolios, most combinations of the  
234 beliefs lead to low investment in Biofuels and mid investment in CCS across the three models. For  
235 Nuclear, the damage models play an important role. Almost all combinations of beliefs lead to a  
236 high investment in Nuclear under DICE and mid investment under PAGE and FUND. The  
237 implication here is that our understanding of the structure of damages is particularly important for  
238 allocating investment into Nuclear, especially under stringent climate policies. If we believe that  
239 the DICE damage formulation is more relevant than the formulations of PAGE and FUND, at least  
240 at lower temperatures, then a high investment in nuclear is warranted; if PAGE or FUND are better  
241 representations, then this investment does not pay off since they are mainly allocating mid-

242 investment. Finally, we find that the disagreement between expert beliefs and models is less  
 243 important for more stringent climate policy.

244 **Methods**

245 We employ a multi-model framework comprised of four IAMs and the RPDA<sup>20</sup> framework to  
 246 uncover non-dominated R&D portfolios across cost-benefit IAMs. Figure 4 is a schematic diagram  
 247 representing the decision framework. The main decision, shown by the rectangular node, is the  
 248 amount of R&D to allocate to each technology. The oval node represents the uncertainty around  
 249 the performance of technologies in 2030. As illustrated by the arrow leading into the oval node,  
 250 the probability distributions over technological performance are conditional on R&D spending.  
 251 For each set of technology performance metrics and climate policy, the technologically detailed  
 252 GCAM selects technology deployment and estimates abatement costs and climate variables. The  
 253 cost-benefit IAMs (DICE, PAGE, and FUND) take the GCAM climate variables as input and  
 254 estimate the climate damages (See supplementary Table S1 for damage description). Despite their  
 255 similarities, the models significantly differ in their input assumptions and structure, most notably  
 256 in their degree of regional and sectoral disaggregation, damage function, and the management of  
 257 adaptation and uncertainty.

258 The main objective is to minimize the cost of abatement, the cost of climate damages, and the cost  
 259 of R&D investment. We implement RPDA framework previously employed by Baker and  
 260 colleagues<sup>20</sup> to identify the non-dominated portfolios for each of three policies: BAU and the two-  
 261 carbon tax policy cases (USD 125/tCO<sub>2</sub> and USD 50/tCO<sub>2</sub>) each increasing at 3% annually  
 262 beginning 2025. Below we discuss how expert elicitations are implemented into GCAM and  
 263 provide more detail on the objective and decision framework.



264  
 265 Figure. 4. A schematic diagram representing the decision framework. Rectangle nodes represent decisions;  
 266 oval nodes represent uncertainties; rounded rectangles represent model calculations and the diamond  
 267 represent the objective values.

268 **Implementing the Expert Elicitation into GCAM**

269 Technology competition in GCAM is based on the performance metrics of each technology, i.e.,  
 270 cost and efficiency of the technology (See supplementary S1 GCAM description and technology  
 271 competition). The performance metrics used as inputs are sampled from the harmonized  
 272 probability distribution from Baker et al.<sup>25</sup> There is one distribution for each uncertain performance  
 273 metric: solar PV Levelized cost of electricity, nuclear power overnight capital cost, liquid biofuels

274 Levelized non-energy cost and conversion efficiency, bio-electricity non-energy cost and  
 275 conversion efficiency, and CCS capital cost and energy penalty. In total, these eight independent  
 276 probability distributions represent the cost and efficiency of the technologies in the year 2030.

277 We generated 1000 samples from each of the eight probability distributions using the Latin  
 278 Hypercube sampling method, making a total of 8000 sample points to be evaluated. Each of the  
 279 1,000 samples reflects a potential future state of the world in 2030, comprising a unique value for  
 280 each of the eight parameters. We implement each of the 1000 states of the world, one at a time, in  
 281 GCAM, repeated for all three policy cases: business-as-usual case, with no climate policy in place,  
 282 and the two carbon tax policy cases. The elicitation data set contains static values representing the  
 283 states of the world of technology in 2030. To run a state of the world in GCAM, spanning from  
 284 2015 to 2100, we account for the change in the performance metrics every five years between 2015  
 285 and 2030 and subsequent years after 2030 using a slight modification of Moore's law, shown in  
 286 equation (1) and (2). See Kanyako and Baker<sup>6</sup> for more detail.

$$287 \quad m_{ij} = -\frac{1}{2030 - 2015} \ln \left[ \frac{z_{ij}(2030) - z_j^{min}}{z_j(2015) - z_j^{min}} \right] \quad (1)$$

$$288 \quad z_{ij}(t) = z_j^{min} + (z_j(2015) - z_j^{min})e^{-m_{ij}(t-t_{2015})} \quad (2)$$

289 Let  $m_{ij}$  be Moore's constant associated with sample  $i$  and metric  $j$ . The constant is calculated  
 290 based on the elicitation data for year 2030.  $z_{ij}(t)$  is metric  $j$  (cost or efficiency) for sample  $i$ , at  
 291 time  $t$ . Each metric  $j$  has one lower, and one upper bound,  $z_j^{min}$ , and  $z_j^{max}$ . The lower bound is  
 292 the cost or efficiency with cumulative probability of  $10^{-6}$ ; the upper bound is the opposite tail.  
 293 We use the lower bound  $z_j^{min}$  for sample  $ij$ , when the sample indicates cost decreasing after 2015;  
 294 and an upper bound  $z_j^{max}$  if the sample indicates cost increasing after 2015. The base year value  
 295 for each metric  $j$  for 2015,  $z_j(2015)$  is constant across all samples; this value is taken from  
 296 GCAM default assumptions for all the performance metrics<sup>33</sup>. Note, Equation (1) & (2) represent  
 297 a case where the metric decreases in value approaching 2030, i.e., the metric's value is lower in  
 298 2030 than in 2015. The approach is similar in the case where metrics are higher in 2030, with a  
 299 ceiling in the place of a floor.

### 300 **Decision Framework**

301 Here we describe the variables, objectives, and constraints of the decision problem. We note that  
 302 we extend the original RPDA framework by including model disagreement. Let  $h = \{1,2,\dots,5\}$   
 303 index the five technologies (note there are five technologies, indexed by  $h$ , and eight performance  
 304 metrics, indexed by  $j$ ) and  $d$  funding level. We define portfolio  $x$  as a vector of binary variables  
 305 such that  $x_{hd} = 1$  if technology  $h$  is invested in at the  $d^{th}$  funding level, and 0 otherwise. Each  
 306 technology in portfolio  $x$  can be invested in at one of the three levels of investment ( $d =$   
 307 *low, mid, high*). Therefore, for the five technologies with three levels of investment, we have a  
 308 total of  $3^5 = 243$  possible portfolios. The total cost of R&D investment  $B(x)$  for portfolio  $x$  is  
 309 the sum of the individual R&D investments in each technology in the portfolio, multiplied by the  
 310 opportunity cost multiplier  $k = 4$  (See Baker et al. 2020<sup>20</sup> for details on the opportunity cost  
 311 multiplier). Table 2 shows the R&D cost assumptions for different levels of investment.

312 Let  $md = \{1,2,3\}$  be the index for the three cost-benefit models: DICE, PAGE, and FUND and  
 313  $\tau = \{Harvard,UMass,FEEM\}$  index the individual elicitation teams. For a sample  $z_i =$   
 314  $\{z_{i1}, z_{i2}, \dots, z_{i8}\}$ , the probability of realization is  $f_\tau(z_i|x)$ , based on elicitation team  $\tau$  given the  
 315 portfolio  $x$  <sup>25</sup>. The damages depend on the model  $md = \{1,2,3\}$ . The overarching objective,  
 316 represented by  $H(x; md; \tau)$  is to minimize the expected cost of abatement ( $TAC$ ) plus the climate  
 317 damages ( $D_{md}$ ) and the cost of R&D investment in portfolio  $x$ , given a policy scenario  $s$ :

$$318 \quad H(x; md; \tau) \equiv \left[ \sum_{i=1}^{1000} f_\tau(z_i|x) \{TAC(z_i, s) + D_{md}(z_i, s)\} \right] + kB(x) \quad (3)$$

$$319 \quad s. t. \sum_d x_{hd} = 1 \quad \forall t$$

320 The constraint assures that each technology is only invested in once. In order to find the non-  
 321 dominated set across all models and teams, we begin by calculating the total expected cost,  $H$ , for  
 322 each of the 243 portfolios using equation (3). Then, using Yukish's simple cull method <sup>34</sup>, we find  
 323 the non-dominated sets. A portfolio  $x$  belief dominates  $x'$  if  $H(x; md; \tau) \leq H(x'; md; \tau) \quad \forall md, \tau$   
 324 with strict inequality for at least one of the beliefs. A portfolio  $x$  is non-dominated if it is not  
 325 dominated by any other feasible portfolio.

326 Table 2: Annual R&D expenditures cost of each project, in millions of dollars, assumed constant over a 20-  
 327 year period.

Investment Level	Nuclear	Solar PV	Bioelectricity	Bioliquids	CCS
Low	6.2	1.7	1.4	1.4	5.3
Mid	19.2	4.0	3.0	3.7	17.1
High	178.3	33.0	16.9	20.3	168.1

328

### 329 **Total Abatement cost (TAC)**

330 The cost of reducing CO2 emissions below the BAU level is the abatement cost in the objective  
 331 function above. The cost of abatement is calculated by GCAM as the area under the marginal  
 332 abatement curve (MAC). The cost of reducing emissions by one ton is referred to as the MAC <sup>35</sup>.  
 333 By applying a real discount rate of 5% per year to future values, the discounted sum of the annual  
 334 abatement costs from 2020 to 2100 equals the total present value of the total abatement costs  
 335  $TAC(z_i, s)$  under policy  $s$  and scenario  $z_i$

$$336 \quad TAC(z_i, s) = \sum_t \delta^t AC(z_i, s)_t \quad (4)$$

337 Where  $AC(z_i, s)_t$  is the annual abatement cost (in trillions of 2015 USD) under policy  $s$  and state  
 338 scenario  $z_i$  at time  $t$ , and  $\delta$  is the discount factor. Note in the BAU case, the cost of abatement is,  
 339 by definition, zero. Hence in Equation (4) above,  $TAC(z_i, BAU) = 0$ .

### 340 **Damages ( $D_m$ )**

341 Each of the 1000 states of the world implemented in GCAM leads to different emissions and  
342 temperature paths and hence different estimates of damages in each IAM. Therefore, the climate  
343 variables that drive damage estimation in each IAM are replaced with the GCAM output for each  
344 scenario to account for the impact of technological change on these variables. For example, the  
345 global mean temperature estimate in DICE and PAGE is replaced by the global mean temperature  
346 change estimated from GCAM from 2010 to 2100 for each scenario. FUND is slightly more  
347 complicated. For each of the 14 sectors in FUND, the main drivers for each sector are replaced by  
348 either the global mean temperature change or the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration from GCAM, depending on  
349 the variable that drives the damage estimate for that sector. For each climate policy: USD  
350 125/tCO<sub>2</sub> and USD 50/tCO<sub>2</sub> (each increasing at 3% annually beginning 2025) and a business-as-  
351 usual case, damages are estimated for all 1000 scenarios for each IAM. The damages calculated  
352 from the cost-benefit IAMs, and the abatement cost estimated from GCAM are used as inputs into  
353 the decision framework.

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### 357 **Author Contributions**

358 F.K and E.B designed the research. F.K and D.A developed the modelling framework and  
359 performed the numerical simulations. F.K and E.B conducted the analysis, made figures and wrote  
360 the manuscript. All authors discussed the results and implications and provided critical feedback  
361 that helped shape the final manuscript.

### 362 **Data availability**

363 The specific model runs and expert elicitation data for this study are archived under  
364 <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5748125> under a CC-BY-4.0 license.

### 366 **Code availability**

367 The code for the integrated assessment modelling framework used in this study, Mimi-DICE,  
368 Mimi-FUND and Mimi-PAGE and documentation are available in a public GitHub repository at  
369 <https://github.com/mimiframework/Mimi.jl>. The technical documentation is available at  
370 <https://www.mimiframework.org/>. The source code and documentation for the global change  
371 analysis model (GCAM) are publicly available at <https://github.com/JGCRI/gcam-core> and  
372 <http://jgcri.github.io/gcam-doc/> respectively.

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