Value versus *Values*: Can Stock Liquidity Save the Planet? [*]

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Abstract

One fundamental challenge to the literature of sustainable investing is to disentangle value from values (Starks 2023). While *values* investors are willing to sacrifice financial returns to prioritize nonpecuniary objectives, *value* investors concern about whether environmental issues drive firm value, that is, improve the firm's risk-return prospects. By leveraging an exogenous liquidity shock, the tick size pilot (TSP) program, that disproportionately affects the financial prospects of *value* investors vis-à-vis *values* investors in the treated firms, we show that *value* investors play a significant role in driving environmental policies. During the TSP, treatment firms show a decline in their environmental rating. Green institutional investors divest in response to portfolio firms' environmental incidents. Such divesting intensity becomes less pronounced for treatment firms after TSP increases the transaction costs for treatment firms. The TSP-induced decline in environmental ratings is larger for firms with an ex-ante greater exposure to exit threats.

Keywords: Stock liquidity, Environment, Institutional investors, Divest, Voice

(JEL: G1, G2, G3, Q5)

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1. Introduction

The centerpiece of Laura Starks' (2023) presidential address to the American Finance Association, delivered in New Orleans, LA, on January 7, 2023 was outlining the fundamental challenge to the literature of sustainable investing: the difficulty of separating *value* from *values. Values* investors might prioritize nonpecuniary objectives, potentially prompting them to sacrifice returns to achieve environmental goals. In contrast, *value* investors who assess environmental factors for their implications on risks and returns can also influence corporate environmental policies when environmental considerations hold financial significance. Without an explicit identification of these motives, it becomes challenging to grasp the impact of sustainable investing on investors, corporations, and asset markets.

Clearly identification, however, is complicated by the fact that sustainable investing can be motivated by a combination of *values* and *value*. It is insufficient to categorize investors based solely on their investment strategy, as similar strategies can be used by both *values* investors and *value* investors, albeit from different perspectives. For instance, Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) investors, motivated by their *values*, typically avoid supporting companies that do not align with their ethical beliefs. They employ negative screening as their primary investment strategy. Conversely, *value* investors, who prioritize financial returns, may also divest from firms if they believe environmental issues pose significant financial risks, potentially leading to stranded assets.

In this paper, we address the challenge by leveraging an exogenous liquidity shock, and demonstrate that *value* investors play a significant role in driving corporate environmental initiatives. Specifically, we conduct our analysis within the context of a laboratory-like

experiment called the Tick Size Pilot Program (TSP)[2], which exogenously reduced the liquidity of 1,200 randomly selected treatment firms during the pilot period of Oct 2016-Sept 2018. Because *values* investors vis-à-vis *value* investors exhibit a high willingness to pay to meet their nonpecuniary objectives, we are able to distinguish two groups of investors based on their revealed sensitivity to TSP-induced increases in transaction costs. To the extent that *value* investors are plausibly those whose trading behavior is responsive to the TSP-induced changes in transaction costs, TSP thus offers a unique opportunity to examine the efficacy of *value* investors in shaping corporate environmental policies of their portfolio firms.

Leveraging the TSP offers four distinct advantages in differentiating between two groups of investors. First, by identifying investors whose trading behavior is sensitive to exogenous changes in transaction costs, our approach relies on revealed preferences and does not suffer from the widely discussed concern that some asset managers brand themselves as *values* investors for advertisement purposes without giving up returns to make sustainable investments. Second, as an exogenous liquidity shock, TSP affects the financial return of investing in treatment firms without muddling with risk considerations. We thus circumvent the reliance on theoretical models, often constrained by restrictive assumptions, to gauge whether investor responses stem from optimizing risk-return trade-offs (*value* investors) or prioritizing nonpecuniary motives over returns (*values* investors).[3] Third, TSP-induced increases in

[2] During the TSP, the SEC randomly selected 1200 stocks (treatment stocks) from the universe of 2399 small- and mid-cap stocks and increased the tick size for those stocks from 1 cent to 5 cents for two years starting in October 2016. The tick size for the remaining 1199 stocks (control stocks) remained unchanged at 1 cent.

[3] As postulated by Starks (2023), *value* investors vis-à-vis *values* investors are more sensitive to financial payoffs of their investments. Thus, compared to *values* investors, *value* investors should be more responsive to quantitative mispricing signals. Cao, Titman, Zhan, and Zhang (2023) show that abnormal returns associated with these mispricing signals are greater for stocks held more by green investors. However, identifying *values* or *value* investors *ex-ante* by measuring investor-level sensitivity to mispricing signals may suffer from two limitations. First, widely used mispricing proxies, such as the Stambaugh, Yu, and Yuan (2015) score, often do not account for a firm's environmental performance. Second, even asset pricing models that explicitly incorporate environmental performance (e.g., Pedersen, Fitzgibbons, and Pomorski 2021; Pastor, Stambaugh, and Taylor 2022) face ongoing debate. It remains unclear whether return deviations from these models represent temporary mispricing or simply reflect model misspecification.

transaction costs are independent of firm fundamentals. In contrast, methods that rely on firm characteristics or fundamentals may not clearly disentangle *value* from *values* investors, as fundamentals can be relevant to both groups. Finally, leveraging a natural experiment that exogenously affects stock liquidity ,we address the potential concern of reverse causality that ESG expenditure and performance may increase firm's stock liquidity as they help reduce information asymmetry, improve reputational capital, and enhance corporate innovation ability.

We first find a positive *causal* effect of stock liquidity on corporate environmental policies. Compared to control firms, the implementation of TSP decreased treatment firms' environmental rating by, on average, 0.132 on a scale from 0 to 10. The negative impact of TSP on environmental ratings was most pronounced for stocks with a smaller pre-TSP quoted spread, for which the TSP imposes a more binding constraint for liquidity.[4] The results hold when we implement a 2SLS analysis with the initiation of TSP used as an instrument for changes in stock liquidity over time. We show that one standard deviation increase in stock illiquidity, proxied by the relative effective spread, causes a 0.259 deterioration in a firm's environmental rating in the following fiscal quarter.

We also identify the *real* environmental impact of stock liquidity. Since the TSP became enacted, treatment firms exhibited an increase of up to 9.13% in their emission levels and a 7.64% rise in intensity. This suggests that a worse stock liquidity can exacerbate firm-level emission activities.

[4] Albuquerque, Song, and Yao (2020) find that TSP has a disproportionately greater impact on small-spread stocks' stock liquidity.

Next, we show that exit threats are the main driver of the TSP-induced decline in environmental ratings, and the exit threat mostly comes from investors who factor environmental concerns into their investment strategies (hereafter referred to as "green investors").

First, we find that green investors tend to divest around environmental incidents, whereas non-green institutions are not responsive. A TSP-induced reduction in liquidity, however, decreases green investors' exit threat. Specifically, for a median firm facing an environmental incident, its green institutional investor tends to fully divest after the incident, whereas non-green investors are insensitive to such incidents. However, as TSP significantly raises transaction costs for treatment firms with a small pre-TSP spread, green investors under-divest their equity holdings in those firms by about 3.16 basis points compared to control firms following an environmental incident. The magnitude of constrained trading is economically significant given that the sample median portfolio weight is only 0.52 basis points.

After showing that a TSP-induced reduction in stock liquidity compromised the exit threat as a governance mechanism, we move our analysis from investors to firms. If exit the channel for the reduction in the environmental rating, the effect should be larger when management's wealth is more closely tied to the stock price. We measure the manager's sensitivity to the stock price using the dollar change in the CEO's wealth for a 100-percentage point change in the stock price, scaled by annual pay (Edmans, Gabaix, and Landier 2009). We find that the negative effect of TSP on environmental ratings was more pronounced in firms with a stronger managerial focus on stock prices. High-WPS firms experienced an additional decline in environmental ratings by 1.952 points, representing a significant change equivalent to 1.07 standard deviations in environmental rating.

The second measure of the firm-level exposure to exit threats is the level of coordination risk for blockholders to engage on environmental issues with the management. Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019) show that an increase in the coordination level among investors strengthens governance via voice by increasing votes against low-quality management proposals but weakens the exit threats by reducing the trading intensity. We find that TSP adversely affected firms whose institutional investors likely face a high coordination risk on environmental issues. These firms experienced an additional decrease in their environmental ratings by an average of 1.162 points.

We find that both low- and high-turnover green investors face divestment constraints following environmental incidents under the TSP. The exit threat channel also holds after controlling for exposures to changes in the cost of capital.

In addition to governing through trading a firm's shares, known as "exit", institutional investors can also engage in "voice" via a public shareholder proposal or voting against directors. Stock liquidity may help improve corporate environmental profile as it allows shareholders to enjoy a lower cost of activism by purchasing shares at a price that does not yet reflect the future increase in company value created by their privately known actions (Maug 1998; Kahn and Winton 1998; Winton and Li 2006). We find that voice is, however, less likely to be main driver of the results.

TSP firms have historically had low exposure to shareholder activism on environmental issues. Throughout the 2013-2018 sample period, only two environmental activist campaigns were documented. None of these proposals were successful at the annual shareholder meetings. We also assess how TSP affects the probability of a green investor acquiring a block for activism

reasons, namely their 13D filing intensity. During the 2013-2018 period, green investors made 84 13D filings, with only 13 targeting TSP firms. However, none of these targeted firms had a small pre-TSP quoted spread. This limited number of activism-related filings is unlikely to explain the decline in environmental ratings, which is most pronounced among firms with smaller spreads. In contrast, the filing intensity of 13G forms, a type of block acquisition without the option of engaging in voice, declined by 17.2% among green institutions.

Furthermore, we find a reversal in green institutions' trading activities as TSP concluded in October 2018. First, we show that after the TSP ended, there was a 20.1% (14.7%) increase in the filing intensity of 13G forms—a type of block acquisition that does not involve engaging in voice—among green investors (all investors) in treatment firms compared to the TSP period. Second, green investors significantly increased their divestment intensity from treatment firms in response to environmental incidents. This increase in divestment intensity amounted to 4.94 basis points of portfolio weight in the quarter of the incident, 3.73 basis points in the subsequent quarter, and 4.44 basis points when accounting for the quarter before the incident. These results suggest that as TSP ended in 2018, the exit threats imposed by green investors also recovered.

As exit threats increased post-TSP, firms more vulnerable to exit threats began implementing policies to enhance their environmental performance. Specifically, we observed improvements in environmental ratings by 0.412 points and 0.454 points in treatment firms with greater managerial focus on equity prices and higher coordination risk, respectively. Additionally, after the TSP ended in October 2018, treatment firms improved their environmental profiles by reducing emission levels by 7.02% and emission intensity by 12.5%.

Past literature have shown that pension funds, universities, and religious organizations are more norm-constrained than other types of institutional investors owing to their public visibility, diverse constituencies, and vulnerability to public scrutiny (e.g., Hong and Kacperczyk 2009; Barber, Morse, Yasuda 2021). We show that *value* green investors, identified using our methodology, are less likely to be norm-constrained, compared to other green investors. This result further supports our method's validity in effectively distinguishing between *value* investors, who prioritize financial objectives, and *values* investors, who prioritize ethical goals.

Additionally, we show that *value* green investors show similar turnover rates but lower mean flows, compared to other green investors, supporting literature that links rising ESG fund flows to values-driven motives (e.g., Białkowski & Starks, 2016). Both groups display comparable historical returns, highlighting the difficulty of distinguishing *value* investors from *values* investors based solely on realized returns. These results also align with Van der Beck (2022), who suggests that returns on funds explicitly signaling a commitment or willingness-to-pay for sustainable investing are largely driven by price pressures from increased fund flows into sustainable assets, leading to realized returns above expected levels.

We contribute to the literature on sustainable investing. As stressed by Starks (2023), understanding the distinct roles of *values* investors and *value* investors is crucial for interpreting the implications of sustainable investing on investment behavior, thereby informing relevant regulatory measures. By leveraging an exogenous liquidity shock that disproportionately affects the financial outlook of *value* investors vis-à-vis *values* investors, we disentangle *value* investors from *values* investors and present novel findings on the significant role of *value* investors in driving environmental initiatives.

Our paper also contributes to the literature that examines the effect of exit on corporate performance. A challenge of directly measuring the impact of exit threats on general corporate decisions, such as CEO compensation or board composition, is that the preferences of institutional investors regarding these issues are ex-ante unknown. Without a clear measure of investors' prior opinions on firm policies, it is difficult to connect changes in an institution's investment decisions to an exogenous event, thereby drawing plausible causal inferences. Thus, many past studies have relied on only indirect measures of the effectiveness of exit threats, such as the number of blockholders or the managerial interest in equity prices (e.g., Bharath, Jayaraman, and Nagar 2013; Edmans, Fang, and Zur 2013; Roosenboom, Schlingemann, and Vasconcelos 2014). In this paper, we provide direct evidence on whether, and how, green investors respond to environmental incidents by credibly divesting, by exploiting negative environmental events that disproportionately affect green investors who prioritize these issues in their investment agenda. Also, by utilizing an exogenous shock to the effectiveness of divestment threats, the TSP-induced liquidity shock, posed by green investors on environmental issues, we are the first to provide a causal analysis on the effectiveness of exit threats on shaping corporate environmental policies.

The United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchanges (UN SSE) Initiative conjectures that stock exchanges can enhance ESG performance through improved liquidity. Yet the positive correlation between stock liquidity and ESG performance can come from omitted variables or reverse causality: firms with higher ESG performance may be more liquidity. We are the first to show the causal evidence that increased stock liquidity improves environmental performance. Previous studies have primarily focused on managerial characteristics, private benefits, and financial constraints within firms to explain environmental sustainability (e.g., Masulis and

Reza 2014; Cronqvist and Yu 2017; Cheng, Hong, and Shue 2023). We show that the secondary market also significantly influences environmental sustainability.

2. Institutional Background and Data

2.1. Institutional Background

We consider all 2,399 stocks that were subject to TSP.[5] They were randomly selected from the universe of Regulation National Market System (Reg NMS) securities upon meeting specific criteria, including a market capitalization of $3.0 billion or less, a closing price of at least $2.00, and a consolidated average daily volume of one million shares or less. The SEC announced the list of TSP securities on Sep 3, 2016. The list can be found on the websites of the listing exchanges and FINRA.

Amongst the 2,399 TSP stocks, 1,199 stocks were randomly assigned to the control group, and will continue quoting at their current tick size increment of one cent. The rest 1,200 stocks were assigned to the treatment group, which were further categorized into three treatment groups (G1, G2, and G3), each comprised of 400 treatment stocks. While all treatment stocks were subject to an increase in their minimum quote increment from one cent to five cents, stocks in groups 2 and 3 are required to trade in five-cent increments. Furthermore, group 3 stocks are subject to a "trade-at" prohibition, which increases the trading cost for non-displayed liquidity on lit exchanges and dark pool trades. The two-year Trading Sequence Program (TSP) was fully implemented in October 2016, at which point all treatment stocks began trading with

[5] The enactment of the JOBS Act on April 5, 2012 mandated the SEC to undertake a study examining the repercussions of decimalization on both the number of initial public offerings and the liquidity of securities for small and middle capitalization companies. This directive was prompted by the apprehension of American lawmakers and regulators who were alarmed by the diminishing interest of small firms in raising equity capital from public markets over the preceding decade, as highlighted by Doidge, Karolyi, and Stulz (2017). In response to these concerns, the SEC instructed both FINRA and the National Securities Exchanges to collaboratively devise an experimental pilot program. The resultant TSP gained approval from the SEC in May 2015.

a tick size of five cents. The program concluded officially on September 30, 2018.[6] Chung, Lee, and Rösch (2020), as well as Albuquerque, Song, and Yao (2020), illustrate that subsequent to the introduction of the TSP, liquidity diminished for all stocks undergoing treatment, as evidenced by various metrics, in contrast to stocks in the control group. As the treatment of TSP is designed to be completely orthogonal to firms' characteristics, it suffices the requirement to generate causal inferences regarding whether stock liquidity affects firms' environmental decisions via affecting the governance effectiveness of *value* investors vis-à-vis *values* investors.

2.2. Measuring Firms' Greenness

We derive environmental ratings at the individual firm level using data from MSCI ESG Intangible Value Assessment (IVA) (thereby referred to as MSCI) rating database. Serving as a successor to the MSCI KLD data commonly utilized in academic research, MSCI IVA data offers several distinct advantages. First, as pointed out by Eccles and Stroehle (2018), MSCI IVA holds the position as the largest global provider of ESG ratings. With roughly 200 research analysts, it covers over 7,000 companies and more than 650,000 equity and fixed income securities worldwide.[7] Second, MSCI IVA crafts its ratings by synthesizing information from diverse sources and maintains a consistent schedule of regular updates, with monthly adjustments. In contrast, alternative raters like Asset4 and KLD only compute their ratings annually. MSCI updates its environmental rating up to a monthly basis, compared to other

[6] The TSP was enacted around the same time the Paris Agreement was signed in April 2016 and became effective in December 2016, which heightened public awareness of environmental issues. This timing makes the TSP a more relevant instrument for studying the effect of liquidity on corporate environmental policies compared to other historical liquidity-related regulations, such as the 2001 Decimalization.

[7] As plotted in Figure A1, the coverage of small U.S. stocks by MSCI IVA commenced at the close of 2012. Precisely, the count of U.S. stocks with available lagged MSCI ratings experienced a substantial surge, rising from approximately 500 to over 2000 by the conclusion of 2012. The broad coverage of firms in MSCI IVA far exceeds that of other ESG raters, such as Sustainalytics, as shown in Berg, Koelbel, and Rigobon (2022).

rating agencies. The increased frequency of updates by MSCI allows for a more precise assessment of the impact of stock liquidity events on corporate environmental policies.

We employ the MSCI IVA data element known as the "Environmental pillar score," hereinafter referred to as the environmental rating, as the primary metric for evaluating corporate sustainability. The environmental rating, ranging from 0 to 10, signifies the weighted average of all Theme scores falling under the Environmental Pillar.[8]

We further support our analysis with firms' carbon emissions data from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP). In October 2009, the EPA introduced the GHGRP, requiring sources emitting 25,000 metric tons or more of CO2 greenhouse gases annually to report their emissions using EPA-prescribed estimation methodologies. Once the submitted information undergoes verification by the EPA, it becomes publicly accessible through the Facility Level Information on GHGs Tool (FLIGHT). FLIGHT provides details at the plant level, including identity, geographical location, parent company ownership, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industry code, and the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions from the plant on an annual basis, starting in 2010.

To measure a firm's environmental profile using carbon emissions, we employ two proxies. The first the log of thousands metric tons of Scope 1 carbon emissions (*Ln(emission level)*), namely the emission level. The second measure is the carbon intensity (*Ln(emission intensity)*),

[8] The Environmental Pillar encompasses four crucial themes: 1) Climate Change, 2) Natural Capital, 3) Pollution & Waste, and 4) Environmental Opportunities. Climate Change encompasses issues such as carbon emissions, climate change vulnerability, financing environmental impact, and product carbon footprint. Natural Capital explores biodiversity and land use, raw material sourcing, and water stress. Pollution Waste evaluates performance in addressing concerns related to electronic waste, packaging material and waste, and toxic emissions and waste. Lastly, Environmental Opportunities assesses a firm's effectiveness in seizing opportunities in clean tech, green building, and renewable energy.

calculated by dividing metric tons of carbon emissions by firm revenue (in dollar) before taking a log transformation. We present and discuss the regression results of using GHGRP's emission data in Subsection 7.1.

2.3. Sample Construction and Summary Statistics

The sample period spans from October 2013 to September 2018 — three fiscal years preceding the TSP enactment and extends to the end of the TSP. We illustrate how the sample period is defined in Figure 1. We use quarterly fundamentals data from Compustat, supplemented by data from the annual fundamentals database when necessary. We source stock market data, including prices, returns, and liquidity, from CRSP, with TAQ utilized for a more detailed analysis of liquidity, employing the intraday effective spread measured in percentage terms. We collect institutional holdings data from Thomson Reuters S34 database. We retrieve environmental incident news from RepRisk. Activist campaigns data came from FactSet SharkRepellent. We obtain CEO's scaled wealth-performance sensitivity (WPS) data from http://alexedmans.com/data/, with WPS representing the dollar change in CEO wealth for a hundred-percentage point change in firm value, divided by annual flow compensation.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Initial data filtering involved excluding firms operating in the financial (SIC codes 6000-6999) and utility (SIC codes 4200-4299) industries, as well as removing firms with missing values in control variables. In the context of the Tick Size Pilot Program (TSP) analysis, the study commenced with 2,481 stocks, encompassing those added to and dropped from TSP during its course. Subsequent integration of TSP data with the CRSP/Compustat Merged database and exclusion of financial and utility industry stocks resulted in 752 treatment stocks and 735 control stocks. Restricting the sample to stocks maintaining consistent treatment status from October 2016 through September 2018 yielded 655 treatment stocks and 669 control stocks.

After integration with MSCI IVA data, the sample comprised 418 treatment stocks and 405 control stocks. After excluding stocks with missing firm-fundamentals control variables and those that have changed their fiscal year-end, the final TSP sample comprised 346 treatment stocks and 331 control stocks, resulting in a total of 9,423 firm-quarter observations. Table 1 presents summary statistics for firm-fiscal quarter observations in our sample. Firms in the TSP are smaller than the greater universe of U.S. stocks; The median asset size in our sample is $809.956 million. In terms of environmental ratings, the sample median is 4.4.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

3. Impact of Stock Liquidity on Environmental Ratings

We exploit the TSP as the natural experiment to generate an exogenous liquidity shock, which disproportionately affects the investment decision of *value* investors vis-à-vis *values* investors. We employ the following model as our main regression specification, using firm-quarter observations:

$$Env_{i,t+1} = \beta_1 TREAT_i \times POST_t + Firm_i + Quarter_{t+1} + C_{i,t} + \epsilon_{i,t+1} \quad (1)$$

where $Env_{i,t+1}$ represents firm i's environmental rating in fiscal quarter $t+1$, $TREAT_i$ is a dummy variable that takes value of one for firms in the TSP treatment group and zero otherwise. $POST_t$ equals one if the fiscal quarter *t* began during the TSP (i.e., between Oct 2016 and Sept 2018), and zero otherwise. $Firm_i$ and $Quarter_{t+1}$, respectively, denote firm fixed effects and fiscal quarter fixed effects. Therefore, β_1 captures the causal effect of TSP-induced liquidity shock on the corporate environmental ratings. $C_{i,t}$ represents a vector of firm-fundamentals control variables. Control variables encompass the size of firm (proxied by the log of total assets), cash ratio, dividend yield, book-to-market ratio, sales growth, leverage ratio, the amount of investments, analyst coverage, and stock return volatility. These control variables consider the potential impact of firms' growth and financial positions on environmental ratings,

and the potential effect of TSP on firms' cost of capital. The definitions of control variables are presented in Table A1.

Table 2 Column (1) presents the regression estimate of Equation (2) over a sample period that spans Oct 2013 – Sept 2018. The negative β_1 estimate indicates that firms that experienced a negative stock liquidity shock tend to receive worse environmental score, resulting in a lower environmental rating. More specifically, we show that the implementation of TSP decreased treatment firms' environmental rating by, on average, 0.132, compared to control firms.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

The coefficients of control variables are consistent with the literature. Cash reserves tend to negatively predict future environmental ratings. This suggests that companies might incur abatement expenses to enhance their environmental ratings, thereby reducing their contemporary cash reserves. Dividend yields tend to positively predict environmental initiatives, while leverage ratios predict negatively. This is in line with Xu and Kim (2022); firms with relatively unconstrained financial conditions and less immediate financial liabilities are more capable of adopting better environmental policies. Additionally, we find that higher stock return volatility often correlates with lower environmental ratings.

To further strengthen this causal inference, we conduct a series of robustness checks. First, we verify whether the assumption of parallel trend prior to the treatment period is satisfied. We estimate in a panel regression the temporal evolution of the TSP effect on treatment firms in Table 2 Column (2). Specifically, we extend the pre-treatment period backward to include up to three fiscal years prior to the start of TSP and make the baseline year the fiscal year with two years prior to the start of TSP. For the treatment period, we include indicators representing the two fiscal years that began during the TSP (i.e., between Oct 2016 and Sept 2018). It is

evident that the changes in environmental ratings of control and treatment firms are statistically indifferent from each other until the start of TSP, after which we witness a statistically significant and negative impact of TSP.

4. Conditional Impact of Stock Liquidity: Small Spread V.S. Large Spread

Albuquerque, Song, and Yao (2020) discover that the decline in stock liquidity induced by TSP is predominantly observed in stocks with a smaller quoted spread in dollars before the implementation of TSP. The reason is that the increased tick size serves as a more effective binding constraint on the bid-ask spread of stocks that have small bid-ask spreads before TSP starts. To further isolate the TSP's effect on environmental ratings through liquidity, we examine whether this effect is more pronounced within the subset of stocks with a smaller pre-TSP quoted spread. We follow Albuquerque, Song, and Yao (2020) and divide the sample into two groups. Stocks are categorized into the small-spread (large-spread) group if their average dollar quoted spread between March 1, 2016, and August 31, 2016, is less than or equal to (greater than) three cents.

Columns (1) and (2) of Table 3 show the results for the two groups of stocks after including control variables used in Table 2. While the impact of TSP on environmental ratings is negative for both groups, it is statistically significant only for stocks with a smaller pre-TSP quoted spread. To further validate this estimation, we test the pre-treatment parallel-trend assumption for each pre-TSP quoted spread group by examining the dynamic effect of TSP up to three fiscal years before the treatment year. Examining TSP's dynamic effects, Columns (3) and (4) indicate that the environmental ratings of treatment and control firms are not significantly different from zero at any point before the treatment period. The statistically significant and negative impact of TSP on environmental ratings is evident only among stocks with a small

dollar quoted spread before the adoption of TSP. Following the TSP's enactment, firms with a bid-ask spread constrained by the new tick size experience a drop in environmental ratings by 0.445. The dynamic effects for both groups are illustrated in Figure 2.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

Overall, the finding of a statistically significant and negative effect of TSP exclusively among small-spread stocks reinforces our identification of the stock liquidity's positive effect on corporate environmental decisions.[9] In the following sections, we focus on firms with a small pre-TSP spread, as those firms are effectively influenced by the TSP, owing to the TSP setup. In Sections 5 and 6, we examine how the governance strategies of, respectively, voice and exit employed by *value* investors vis-à-vis *values* investors are affected by TSP.

5. Mechanism Analysis: Voice

We next explore potential mechanisms through which deteriorated stock liquidity leads to a decline in environmental ratings. Improved stock liquidity can enhance a firm's environmental profile through two primary channels. First, liquidity can strengthen the threat of selling shares, as the act of gathering and trading on information by blockholders serves as a governance mechanism in itself (engaging in "exit") (Admati and Pfleiderer, 2009; Edmans, 2009; Edmans and Manso, 2011; Edmans, Fang, and Zur, 2013). Second, liquidity mitigates the free-rider problem for blockholders engaged in monitoring activities. It facilitates the formation of a block (Kyle and Vila, 1991; Kahn and Winton, 1998; Maug, 1998) and reduces the cost of

[9] A competing hypothesis, which our results reject, suggests that higher illiquidity would discourage the exit of *short-term* investors in particular. As a result, managers would face less pressure to prioritize short-term stock prices and could instead focus more on long-term performance, including areas like ESG performance. While Chang, Tan, Yang, and Zhang (2018) find empirical support for this hypothesis, their findings are limited to the period of 1994-2013, which precedes the 2016 Paris Agreement—an event that brought environmental sustainability to the forefront of many fund managers' decision-making criteria. Moreover, their study relies on the 2001 decimalization of stock trading as the primary identification instrument. Unlike the 2016 TSP, the 2001 decimalization lacked an ex-ante control group of firms affected by the change in tick size, raising concerns about its ability to fully address issues of endogeneity and reverse causality.

activism for active blockholders, allowing them to purchase shares at a price that does not yet reflect the future increase in company value driven by their privately known actions (Maug, 1998; Kahn and Winton, 1998; Winton and Li, 2006).

In this section, we investigate whether voice explains the TSP-induced decline on environmental ratings. We first focus on activist campaigns that have related to environmental issues. We collect activist campaigns from FactSet Shark Repellent and identify environment-related campaigns following the methodology of He, Kahraman, and Lowry (2023).[10]

TSP firms have historically had low exposure to shareholder activism on environmental issues. During the 2013-2018 sample period, only two environmental proposals were recorded, all initiated by the same activist group, As You Sow, against a large-spread control firm, Sanderson Farms, Inc. These proposals focused on reducing the routine use of medically important antibiotics in poultry and addressing water resource risks. The campaigns were launched annually starting in January 2017 and 2018. All two proposals have failed to pass in the annual shareholder meeting. Given this limited exposure to environmental campaigns, the data does not support the idea that shareholder "voice" plays a significant role in influencing the observed TSP-induced decline in environmental ratings.

Furthermore, we examine the impact of the TSP-induced liquidity shock on the probability of a green institutional investor acquiring a block (a stake of at least 5%) in a firm initially.

[10] We focus on "environmental" shareholder proposals, which have one of the following words in campaign_synopsis of the FactSet SharkRepellent Database: "Environment", "Green", "Climate", "Reserve", "Sustainability", "Food", "Waste", "Wasting", "GHG", "Toxic", "Emission", "Fossil fuel", "Greenhouse", "Water", "Carbon", "Energy", "Renewable", "coal", "Packaging", "Chemical", "Hydraulic fracturing", "Wood", "Sea level", "Pipeline controversy", "Flood', "Methane", "Warm", "Warming", "ESG", "Petrochemical", "Livestock", "Agriculture", "Plastic", "Paris agreement", "Neonicotinoids", "Paris goals", "Pollution", "Paris aligned", "Genetically engineered", "Deforestation", "Pesticide", "2 degree", "Net zero", "Natural gas", "Use of fur", "IEA 2ºC", "2-degree", "Nuclear power", "Ecosystem".

Subsequently, we analyze the green institutional investor's choice of governance mechanism (Schedule 13D and Schedule 13G) upon acquiring the stake.[11] Blockholders intending to engage in intervention must file a Schedule 13D, as it legally empowers them to participate in the specified form of activism outlined in Item 4 of the filing. Those aiming to maintain a passive stance can opt for a 13G filing, likely doing so due to the associated benefits, such as reduced litigation risk and a less adversarial management team in the target firm. Consequently, the voice theory posits that liquidity promotes jawboning and, consequently, a 13D filing, while the exit theory predicts that liquidity will favor a 13G filing.

We follow Cao, Titman, Zhan, and Zhang (2023) by adopting a revealed preference approach to capture institutional investors' different preferences towards environmental policies.[12] Green institutional investors are identified as those with a portfolio-level environmental rating above the median among all 13F institutional investors, according to the Thomson Reuters S34 database, based on holdings and environmental ratings as of the current quarter. To classify an institution's portfolio as environmentally rated, we require that at least 30% of its portfolio value is assessed under the MSCI IVA environmental rating. The sample median (10th percentile) [90th percentile] institution has 69% (27%) [90%] of its portfolio value being

[11] To obtain institutional filings (13D & 13G), we manually collect historical 13D/G filings (and their amendments) to construct a comprehensive dataset of block acquisitions for all U.S. firms between 2013 and 2018. Then, we remove historical 13D/G filers report under the identity of individual investor ("in"). Next, I match the filer names with the names of institutional investors in Thomson Reuters S34 database. Similar to what we did in the Section 4.1, we focus on green institutions. Out of 18,494 institutions, 2,505 are matched to 3,272 historical 13D/G filers. Out of 6,557 green institutional investors, 1,165 are matched to 1,559 historical 13D/G filers. The number of matched 13D/G filers is higher than the number of 13F institutional investors because 13F forms are reported at the family level whereas 13D/G forms can be reported at the subsidiary level. Also, 13D/G filer names tend to change over time. This steps yields a total number of 15,927 13D/G filings by all institutions and 2,173 by green institutions between October 2013 and September 2018, after removing amendments. Then, for each firm, we retain the first Schedule 13 filing within a two-year window because subsequent filings could be influenced by the initial filing rather than liquidity, or the first filing could jointly drive both liquidity and a subsequent filing. This steps lead to a database that comprise of 609 13D filings and 10,188 13G filings by all institutions and 57 13D filings and 1,859 13G filings by green institutional investors during 2013-2018.

[12] By measuring the sustainability of an investor's past asset holdings, this approach does not suffer from the widely discussed concern that some asset managers brand themselves as sustainable without actually pursuing sustainable investments (e.g., Dumitrescu, Gil-Bazo, and Zhou 2022).

environmentally rated, so our ranking method effectively covers about 90% of institutional investors. Conversely, non-green institutional investors are characterized by having either a below-median environmental rating for their portfolio or an insufficient proportion of their stocks carrying an environmental rating.[13]

Consistent with our findings regarding activist campaigns, TSP firms have experienced limited activism-driven block acquisitions from green institutional investors. During the 2013-2018 period, green investors filed 57 13D forms, with only 13 directed at TSP firms.[14] None of the targeted TSP firms had a small pre-TSP quoted spread, however. This limited incidence of green investor activism suggests it may not be significant enough to account for the decline in environmental ratings, which is most pronounced among firms with smaller spreads.[15]

Moreover, we find that TSP has constrained the ability of investors to purchase shares in a form without the option of engaging in voice. In Table 4, we examine the impact of TSP on general block acquisition activities, which include both 13D and 13G filings, as well as on block acquisition activities specific to 13G filings alone. To account for the common end-of-year reporting associated with 13G filings, we employ fiscal year-firm level regressions, adjusting quarterly control variables in Table 2 to their annual equivalents.[16]

[13] By focusing on the response of green investors and defining them in this manner, we are likely including some environment-aware *value* investors but *all values* investors. This approach, if anything, makes our identification of the effect of *value* investors on environmental performance using TSP more conservative.

[14] Of these 13 Schedule 13D filings directed at TSP firms by green investors, 6 targeted treatment firms and 7 targeted control firms. This scarcity of 13D filings also restricts us from conducting valid regression analyses.

[15] Non-green investors might also engage with environmental issues by filing 13D forms if the issues are financially material enough. However, the number of 13D filings by all investors against small-spread treatment firms (hereafter referred to as treatment firms), if any, have increased during the TSP period. During 2013-2018, there were 18 13D filings targeting small-spread TSP firms. Of these, 7 targeted control firms, while 11 were aimed at treatment firms. During the TSP period, treatment firms recorded seven 13D filings: six were motivated by general undervaluation concerns with plans to engage with management, and one was intended to express concerns or provide advice on business strategy and strategic alternatives. This marked an increase from the pre-TSP period, which saw four 13D filings.

[16] There are distinct reporting timelines for 13D and 13G filings. A 13D form must be filed within 10 days of the transaction, whereas a 13G form has a 45-day post-year-end filing deadline. Consequently, the "Post-Enacting" indicator in Panel A is set to one for all fiscal years beginning from March 2017 onward, capturing transactions

[Insert Table 4 about here]

The dependent variable for Column (1) ((3)) in all panels indicates whether there has been a block acquisition by a green institutional investor (an institutional investor).[17] It equals one if there has been either a 13D filing or 13G filing by a green institutional investor (an institutional investor) against the firm in the current fiscal year, and zero otherwise. For Colum (2) ((4)), the dependent variable is one if there has been a 13G filing by a green institutional investor (an institutional investor) in the current fiscal year, and zero otherwise.

Table 4 demonstrates that the implementation of TSP results in a decline by around 17.2% (19.6%) in the propensity of green investors (all institutional investors) to acquire equity blocks under 13G forms in treatment firms. The regression results are close between 13D/G and 13G filings, owing to the limited occurrences of 13D filings. Overall, results in this section suggest that the TSP-induced increase in transaction costs for treatment firms led to a decline in their exposure to institutional investors who do not intend to directly engage through voice.

6. Mechanism Analysis: Threat of Exit

In this section, we investigate whether exit threat drives the TSP-induced decline on environmental ratings. In Section 6.1, we first show that investors' ability to exert exit threats becomes constrained by TSP. In Section 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4, we present firm-level evidence on whether the TSP-induced decline on environmental ratings becomes more pronounced for firms with an ex-ante greater exposure to exit threats.

immediately affected by TSP, and zero for prior years. This timing ensures the allocation of blocks acquired during the calendar year 2016 to the pre-TSP period. The analysis spans fiscal years from January 2013 to December 2018. The end date of December 2018 is specifically chosen to include fiscal years beginning in January 2018, thereby ensuring that many block acquisitions occurred in 2017 are covered in our analysis.

[17] We proceed with the use of two-way fixed effect OLS regression, rather than non-linear models like Logit or Probit. This choice is based on Wooldridge (2002, Chap 15), which suggests that a linear probability model adequately approximates the average partial effect when the main variable of interest is within a limited range (in our case, [0,1]). Additionally, employing a linear probability model is less prone to estimation convergence issues when accounting for a substantial number of firm and fiscal quarter fixed effects.

6.1. Blockholders' Portfolio Response

In the exit theory, blockholders are important monitors as they have strong incentives to gather costly information and sell shares upon negative information. For such governance mechanism to be effective, blockholders' exit threats should be credible to force management to undertake productive effort and dissuade blockholders from potential exiting. Therefore, we investigate the impact of TSP on the way institutional investors adjust their portfolio holdings in response to negative information events that increase the discontent of investors about a firm's environmental policies.

To the extent that *values* investors, as opposed to *value* investors, tend to have a greater willingness to pay for sustainability investments, those investors who are sensitive to TSP-induced changes in transaction costs are plausibly *value* investors. If TSP increases the transaction costs associated with exiting a firm, thereby reducing the credibility of the threat, we expect *value* investors to *under-divest* from treatment firms compared to control firms in response to negative environmental events during the TSP period.

We measure negative environmental events using the negative news coverage of a company's environmental policies sourced from RepRisk, a prominent business research provider specializing in the assessment of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks.[18] In RepRisk, news items are categorized into three main areas: environmental, social, and

[18] RepRisk provides intelligence services to the world's largest investors, delivering insights into any adverse information related to companies' business practices, including environmental degradation, child labor, corruption, and other related risks. RepRisk conducts daily screenings of over 80,000 media, stakeholder, and third-party sources. These sources include print and online media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government bodies, regulators, think tanks, newsletters, and social media platforms like Twitter and blogs, all focused on firms' ESG practices. Since 2007, RepRisk has compiled daily updates of negative news counts on company-specific issues. Each incident is counted only once, and its impact is categorized based on the most influential source where it appears.

governance. RepRisk captures significant and dramatic incidents, like the BP Gulf of Mexico oil spill, as well as more routine infractions. Our analysis focuses on environmental-related incident news, while including the occurrence of social- or governance-related incident news as control variables.

We test whether green institutions are more likely to reduce their holdings when a firm experiences an environmental incident, and the extent to which TSP has restricted green institutions' ability to response to negative information events, using the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} PortWeight_{i,j,t+1} = {} & \beta_1 Green\ Investor_{j,t+1} + \beta_2 TREAT_i \times POST_t \\ & + \beta_3 Green\ Investor_{j,t+1} \times TREAT_i \times POST_t \\ & + \beta_4 NonGreenInvestor_{j,t+1} \times Env.Incident_{i,t+1} \\ & + \beta_5 NonGreenInvestor_{j,t+1} \times Env.Incident_{i,t+1} \times TREAT_i \times POST_t \\ & + \beta_6 Green\ Investor_{j,t+1} \times Env.Incident_{i,t+1} \\ & + \beta_7 Green\ Investor_{j,t+1} \times Env.Incident_{i,t+1} \times TREAT_i \times POST_t \\ & + C_{i,t} + C_{j,t} + Firm_i + Investor_j + Quarter_{t+1} + \epsilon_{i,j,t+1} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where $PortWeight_{i,t+1}$ is the firm i's weight (%) in a 13F investor j's portfolio in quarter $t+1$. $Green\ Investor_{i,t+1}$ ($NonGreenInvestor_{j,t+1}$) equals one for green (non-green) institutional investors, and zero otherwise. $Env.Incident_{i,t+1}$ is the environmental incident indicator. We first construct an incident indicator denoting whether an environmental incident occurred during the current quarter (event window of [0]). Then, we construct the second incident indicator to account for the possibility of a staggered response by including the following quarter (event window: [0,1]). To see if there is any run-up in investor trading before and after the event window, we also consider the event window of [-1,1]. $C_{i,t}$ includes all control variables as in Table 2 and other possible combinations between $Green\ Investor_{j,t+1}$,

$NonGreenInvestor_{j,t+1}$, $Env.Incident_{i,t+1}$, $TREAT_i$, and $POST_t$. We also control for any incident that is related to social or governance issues. $C_{j,t}$ additionally encompasses institutional investor-level characteristics, including log portfolio size, turnover ratio, portfolio return, portfolio-level environmental rating, and portfolio flow, as of the last quarter. $Firm_i$, $Investor_j$, $Quarter_{t+1}$, respectively, denotes firm, investor, and fiscal quarter fixed effects.

Green institutional investors are more inclined to decrease their equity holdings in response to an environmental incident of a firm, compared to their non-green counterparts. Specifically, in Table 5, the dependent variable is the percentage of shares held by an institution as of a calendar quarter end, using the TSP sample spanning from October 2013 to September 2018. As captured by β_6, Column (1) shows that green institutions tend to reduce their portfolio weight by approximately 2.6 basis points when a portfolio firm experiences an environmental incident in the current quarter. Columns (2) and (3) show that this divestment response by green investors starts one quarter before the incident and persists for one quarter after the incident, resulting in a divesting intensity of 2.42 basis points and 2.83 basis points, respectively. These divestments are economically significant, particularly given the sample median portfolio weight of 0.52 basis points and mean portfolio weight of 16.2 basis points.[19] Put differently, for a median firm upon exposing to an environmental incident, its green institutional investor tends to fully divest after the incident. Conversely, non-green investors are insensitive to environmental incidents, as evidenced by the statistical insignificance of β_4.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

[19] The sample median of 0.52 basis points seems small because our sample is primarily constituted by small and median-sized firms owing to the TSP setup. For these TSP firms, even minor adjustments in portfolio weights by institutional investors can result in significant shifts in shareholdings. In comparison, large firms tend to require greater shifts in investment to impact ownership significantly, making smaller firms more susceptible to corporate governance influence through trading.

More importantly, with the initiation of TSP, green institutions tend to *under-divest* their equity holdings in response to an environmental incident, compared to control firms. Specifically, as demonstrated by β_7, they under-divest by 3.16 basis points in the current quarter (Column 1), 3.15 basis points one quarter after the incident (Column 2), and 2.13 basis points if we also account for one quarter before the incident (Column 3). This result supports the notion that TSP restricted green investors' ability to exert exit threats during the TSP period.

Taken together, the findings in Section 6.1 indicate that TSP has substantially constrained green investors' capacity to divest upon receiving negative information about a portfolio firm's environmental policies. Consequently, the TSP-induced decline in stock liquidity has impaired the effectiveness of exit threats as a governance tool.

6.2. Firm-Level Evidence: Managerial Interest in Equity Prices

In this subsection, we investigate whether the decline in environmental ratings induced by TSP is more pronounced for firms with higher levels of exposure to exit threats. We utilize the feature that an effective threat of exit relies on the manager's concern for the firm's stock price. Specifically, the threat of exit is stronger if the manager is more sensitive to the stock price. To assess this characteristic, we investigate if our main findings are more significant for companies where the management has a greater stake in the firm's stock price.

To compute management sensitivity to the stock, we use the scaled wealth-performance measure of Edmans, Gabaix, and Landier (2009). It captures the dollar change in CEO's wealth for a 100-percentage point change in the stock price, scaled by annual pay (WPS). We then construct a high-WPS indicator which equals one (zero) for those firms with WPS values above (below) in the highest sample tercile.

Table 6 shows that, among companies whose liquidity has been significantly affected by TSP (i.e., those with a narrow spread before TSP), the adverse impact of TSP on environmental ratings is primarily found in companies with higher WPS. The coefficient for the interaction term *Treat X Post* is statistically insignificant, whereas the interaction between *Treat X Post* and the high-WPS indicator shows a significant and negative coefficient. In terms of economic impact, those with a high sensitivity to stock prices tend to experience a 1.922 (=1.952 - 0.030) decrease in environmental ratings. In contrast, companies with low price sensitivity do not show such a decline. This result lends credence to the effectiveness of threat of exit in affecting portfolio firms' environmental policies.

[Insert Table 6 about here]

6.3. Firm-Level Evidence: Coordination Risk Among Investors

In this subsection, we continue to assess the conditional effect of TSP based on different firm-level vulnerabilities to exit threats. The mechanism variable is whether institutional investors can effectively coordinate their actions and values against the management. The coordination risk is lower when institutional traders are more connected or when they share similar preferences.

Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019) identify coordinating groups of investors (cliques) as those connected through the network of institutional holdings. They show that an increase in clique ownership strengthens governance via voice by increasing votes against low-quality management proposals but weakens the exit threats by reducing the trading intensity. We construct two measures of clique ownership following Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019).

The first measure is the aggregate ownership by all institutional investor cliques for each firm. The second measure is the total ownership in each firm by the single institutional investor clique with the largest ownership stake. To identify these cliques, we follow Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019)'s methodology, using year-end holdings from the Thomson Reuters 13F database to identify the network structure of institutional investors, where a connection exists between two investors if each owned at least 5% in one common firm at the end of the prior year. After constructing the measure of cliques, we construct a High-Coordination Risk indicator, which equals one for those firms with the lagged measure in the lowest sample tercile, and zero otherwise.

We also measure the coordination risk based on the dispersion of environmental preferences among institutions. Following Hwang, Titman, and Wang (2022), Cao, Titman, Zhan, and Zhang (2023), and Dasgupta, Huynh, and Xia (2023), we construct a continuous measure of environmental preferences of blockholders by computing the value-weighted average environmental rating at the end of each quarter for each institutional blockholder, considering their quarter-end holdings in each portfolio company and each company's MSCI IVA environmental rating, and then calculating the holdings-weighted standard deviation of these environmental ratings, i.e., $\sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^{n}\left(w_j E_j - \overline{wE}\right)^2/(n-1)}$, where E_j denotes investor j's portfolio-level value-weighted environmental rating and w_j denotes the percentage of shares held by investor j in a given quarter.[20] The High-Coordination Risk indicator now equals one

[20] When using the third measure, we also control for the Herfindahl–Hirschman index to account for the concentration of institutional investor ownerships. We additionally control for the holdings-weighted average environmental rating of all institutions, "Average Env. Rating of All Inst.", which is calculated using $\overline{wE} = \sum_{j=1}^{n} w_j E_j$ where E_j denotes institution j's portfolio-level value-weighted environmental rating, and w_j denotes the lagged percentage of shares held by institution j as of the most recent quarter.

for those firms with the lagged opinion dispersion measure in the highest sample tercile, and zero otherwise.

Table 7 shows that the negative effect of enacting TSP is significantly greater for firms with high investor coordination risk: the coefficients for the interaction term between Treat X Post and High-Coordination Risk are negative for all three measures. Specifically, Column (1) indicates that firms with low total (top) investor clique ownership experience an additional reduction in their environmental ratings by 1.043 (1.014) points. Similarly, Column (3) shows that firms with institutional investors holding relatively divergent opinions on environmental issues see a further downgrade of 1.162 points in their environmental ratings. These findings support the exit theory in explaining the decline in environmental ratings following TSP. Increased transaction costs hinder institutional investors from making credible exit threats, especially in firms with higher ex-ante exposure to exit threats.

[Insert Table 7 about here]

Overall, the results in Section 6 suggest two key findings. First, the TSP-induced decline in stock liquidity has weakened the effectiveness of exit threats as a governance tool. Second, during the TSP period, firms with a greater ex-ante sensitivity to exit threats experience a more pronounced deterioration in their environmental performance. Since *values* investors vis-à-vis *value* investors tend to have a greater willingness-to-pay for sustainable investments, those with a greater revealed trading sensitivity in response to the TSP-induced changes in transaction costs are likely *value* investors. Therefore, results this section suggest that the decline in exit threats from *value* investors contributes to the TSP-induced decline in environmental performance. They provide direct evidence of the significant role that *value* investors play in influencing environmental policies.

7. Robustness Check

7.1. Reversals Upon Lifting TSP

If TSP constrains investors' capacity to freely trade stocks, then we anticipate a reversal in green institutions' block acquisition activities as we move from the TSP period to the post-TSP period. We examine this hypothesis in Table 8 Panel A, using the same model specification as in Table 4. We substitute the Post indicator with the Lifting indicator and adjust the sample period to include all fiscal years from 2017 to 2020. We exclude fiscal years beginning before March 2017 to avoid the confounding effect of a large cluster of block acquisitions made in 2016 but only filed in February 2017. The Lifting indicator is assigned a value of one for fiscal years starting from October 2018 onwards, and zero otherwise. The results in Columns (1)-(2) ((3)-(4)) indicate that following the end of the TSP, there is an increase in the filing of 13G forms—a type of block acquisition without the option to engage in voice—among green institutional investors (all institutional investors) in treatment firms compared to the TSP period. In contrast, the filing of 13D forms remains economically insignificant. During the 2018-2020 period, both treatment and control firms had only three 13D forms filed by institutional investors, with none filed by green investors.

[Insert Table 8 about here]

Next, we assess whether there has been a reversal in green investors' divestment intensity in response to negative environmental events following the end of TSP in October 2018. To do this, we estimate Equation (3) with a revised sample period that spans from October 2016 through September 2020, covering the enactment of TSP through two fiscal years after its conclusion. The timeline for this sample period is illustrated in Figure 1. We also substitute the Post indicator with the Lifting indicator, which equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2018, and zero otherwise. We report the regression results in Table 8 Panel B.

We find that in the post-TSP period, compared to the TSP period, green investors significantly increase their divestment intensity from small-spread treatment firms more than from small-spread control firms in response to an environmental incident. Specifically, Table 8 Panel B shows that this escalation in divestment intensity amounts to 4.94 basis points of portfolio weights in the incident quarter, 3.73 basis points one quarter following the incident, and 4.44 basis points after accounting for one quarter before the incident.

Furthermore, we investigate whether there is a recovery in environmental performance among treatment firms that were ex-ante vulnerable to exit threats, as green investors' exit threats recover post-TSP. Specifically, we use the same model specification as in Tables 6 and 7, with a revised sample period and the Post indicator replaced by the Lifting indicator.[21] In line with Table 8 Panel B, the sample period now includes all fiscal quarters from October 2018 to September 2020. We represent the regression results in Table 8 Panel C.

In Table 8 Panel C Column (1), we observe a 0.412-point improvement in environmental ratings among treatment firms with higher managerial interest in equity prices. This finding is consistent with our results in Table 6, where the TSP-induced decline in environmental ratings was seen exclusively in firms with higher scaled wealth-performance sensitivity.

In Table 8, Panel C Columns (2), (3), and (4), we find that, following the conclusion of TSP, treatment firms with high coordination risk among institutional investors tend to adopt policies that improve environmental performance. This trend holds across all three measures of coordination risk.

[21] As the yearly WPS database from http://alexedmans.com/data/ only extends to the fiscal year 2018, the most recent fiscal year with WPS data in our regressions would be 2019 without any imputation. To address this data availability challenge in studying the conditional effect of lifting TSP, we carry the latest available WPS of a firm forward to the end of our sample period.

Taken together, in this subsection, we first provide investor-level evidence supporting our earlier conclusions from Sections 5 and 6.1 that the TSP has limited green investors' ability to use exit threats against treatment firms. During the TSP period, green investors demonstrated a reduced propensity to acquire blocks without engaging in voice and showed lower divestment intensity following environmental incidents in their portfolio firms, compared to the post-TSP period. Then, by leveraging firm-level differences in exposure to exit threats, we demonstrate that as divestment intensity recovers post-TSP, firms with greater sensitivity to exit threats begin implementing policies that improve environmental performance.

7.2. Real Impact of TSP

We now assess the *real* impact of TSP by employing a more direct measure of a firm's environmental profile—carbon emission levels and emission intensity. Firms' carbon emission levels and intensity are crucial environmental metrics for institutional investors, providing a clear estimate of the likelihood of violating U.S. environmental policies and the subsequent legal enforcement costs (Seltzer, Starks, and Zhu, 2023). According to Kruger, Sautner, and Starks (2020), a majority of institutional investors (at least 55%) consider regulatory risk related to carbon emissions and its financial implications as their foremost concern today.

We collect emission data from the GHGRP, which is reported by firms as mandated and later verified by the EPA for plants emitting 25,000 metric tons or more of CO2. During the sample period of 2013-2018, the initial GHGRP dataset covers approximately 9,700 unique plants. To establish firm-level emission data, we match the EPA plant-level dataset with annual financial fundamentals data from Compustat based on the names of parent companies. After removing firms with missing total assets and sales and firms in the financial industry (Standard Industrial

Classification code (SIC) 6000-6999) and utility industry (SIC 4900-4999), our EPA emission sample comprises of 433 firms over the sample period of 2013-2018. Restricting to the TSP sample results in 605 firm-quarter observations for 23 treatment stocks and 17 control stocks. To measure a firm's environmental profile using carbon emissions, we employ two proxies. The first the log of thousands metric tons of Scope 1 carbon emissions (*Ln(emission level)*), namely the emission level. The second measure is the carbon intensity (*Ln(emission intensity)*), calculated by dividing metric tons of carbon emissions by firm revenue (in dollar) before taking a log transformation. The sample median log of emission levels is 4.36. The sample median log of emission intensity in our sample is 4.21.

Table 9 Columns (1) and (2) replicate the analysis from Table 3, using carbon emissions (Column (1)) and carbon intensity (Column (2)) as the dependent variables. We find significant effects of the TSP. On average, treatment firms increased their emission levels by up to 9.13% and their emission intensity by 7.64%. The limited availability of emission data, however, prevents us from conducting subsample analyses, such as splitting data based on pre-TSP bid-ask spreads.

Next, in Table 9 Columns (3) and (4), we examine the effect of lifting TSP on treatment firms' emission policies. We replace the Post indicator with the Lifting indicator and adjust the sample period to span from October 2016 through September 2020. The results show that as the TSP concluded in October 2018, treatment firms began improving their environmental profile, reducing their emission levels by 7.02% (Column (3)) and emission intensity by 12.5% (Column (4)). Overall, these findings suggest that stock illiquidity has a *real* negative impact on corporate environmental policies.

[Insert Table 9 about here]

In Table A2, we estimate the impact of TSP on both Scope 1 and Scope 2 carbon emission levels, as well as emission intensity. Scope 2 emission data is sourced from Asset4. Despite the smaller sample size with available Scope 1 and 2 emission data, the conclusions hold: treatment firms' carbon profiles deteriorated during the TSP but improved once the TSP was lifted.

7.3. Instrumental Variable Analysis

In this subsection, we draw a direct causal inference regarding the effect of stock liquidity on corporate environmental policies. Specifically, we use the enactment of TSP as an instrument for stock illiquidity in a two-stage least squares (2SLS) analysis. This approach can isolate and estimate the portion of TSP's effect that operates exclusively through its impact on stock liquidity. It also enables a direct quantification of the sensitivity of environmental performance to changes in stock liquidity—a quantification that has long been complicated by potential reverse causality concerns.[22]

We estimate the following regression:

$$Illiquidity_{i,t} = \gamma_1 TREAT_i \times POST_t + C_{i,t} + Firm_i + Quarter_{t+1} + \eta_{i,t+1} \quad (3)$$

$$Env_{i,t+1} = \beta_1 \widehat{Illiquidity}_{i,t} + C_{i,t} + Firm_i + Quarter_{t+1} + \epsilon_{i,t+1} \quad (4)$$

where $Env_{i,t+1}$represents firm i's environmental rating in fiscal quarter $t+1$. $Illiquidity_{i,t}$ is our illiquidity measure, and $\widehat{Illiquidity}_{i,t}$ is the fitted illiquidity value obtained from estimating Equation (3), where $TREAT_i \times POST_t$ serves as an exogenous instrumental variable. β_1 is our variable of interest. A statistically significant and negative β_1 implies that greater liquidity in the stock market enhances the influence of investors, particularly *value* investors

[22] The reverse causality concern complicates direct quantification, as ESG investments and performance might enhance stock liquidity by reducing information asymmetry, bolstering reputational capital, and fostering innovation.

who are more sensitive to financial payoffs, on corporate governance, potentially leading to improved long-term environmental policies.

We employ three illiquidity proxies.[23] The first measure is the time-weighted percent quoted spread from the intraday TAQ database. Specifically, at each time instance, it is calculated as the difference between the prevailing ask price and bid price divided by the midpoint. For each security, the average quoted spread for the day is defined as a weighted average across all spreads during the day, where each spread is weighted by the number of seconds it is in place. The quarterly percent quoted spread for each security is obtained by averaging the daily estimates across all trading days within the fiscal quarter.

The second measure is the relative effective spread from the intraday TAQ database. Specifically, for each executed intraday trade, the relative effective spread is the ratio of the difference between the execution price of a trade and the midpoint of the prevailing bid-ask spread (the effective spread) divided by the midpoint of the prevailing bid-ask spread. To convert intraday data into fiscal-quarterly measures of stock illiquidity, we take a quarterly arithmetic average of daily relative effective spread for a stock. The daily relative effective spread is a share-volume-weighted average of the relative effective spread of all trades taken place during the day for a given stock.

Our third measure of stock illiquidity is the share-volume-weighted average of the percent price impact. For a given stock, the percent price impact of each trade is calculated as twice the

[23] All three measures are constructed based on high-frequency data. Utilizing high frequency-founded measures has merits in that illiquidity measures calculated using low frequency stock returns are often compared to benchmark illiquidity measures computed using the high frequency data to gauge their effectiveness (e.g., Hasbrouck 2009; Goyenkom Holden, and Trzcinka 2009).

signed difference between the midpoint available five minutes after the trade and the midpoint at the time of the trade, divided by the midpoint at the time of the trade. To convert intraday data into fiscal-quarterly measures of stock illiquidity, we calculate the quarterly arithmetic average of the daily percent price impact for a stock. The daily price impact is a share-volume-weighted average of the price impact of all trades occurring during the day for that stock. Albuquerque, Song, and Yao (2020) show that TSP significantly increased quoted and effective spreads as well as price impacts.

Table 10 Panel A displays the first-stage regression results from estimating Equation (3) using our TSP sample, including both small-spread and large-spread firms, over the sample period of 2013-2018. Consistent with Albuquerque, Song, and Yao (2020), we identify a significant and negative impact of TSP on stock liquidity across all three liquidity measures.

Furthermore, Table 10 Panel B presents the second-stage regression results. The regressions across Column (1)-(3) show a statistically significant and negative effect of stock illiquidity on the environmental rating of a firm. Specifically, for one standard deviation increase in the relative effective spread in the last fiscal quarter, the firm tends to experience a drop in environmental rating by around 0.259 (i.e., -1.735×0.149). Similarly, a one standard deviation increase in the price impact measure predicts a 0.302 (i.e., -3.558×0.085) worsening in environmental rating. Therefore, firms with more illiquidity stocks often perform poorly in environmental sustainability.

[Insert Table 10 about here]

7.4. Are We Identifying Short-Term *Value* Investors?

In Section 6.1, we demonstrate that the TSP has restricted green investors' capacity to divest following environmental incidents. Given that *value* investors, as *opposed* to values investors, prioritize financial returns over ethical considerations, we would expect the TSP to constrain *value* investors' corporate governance effectiveness more significantly. This leads to a question: are we actually observing shifts in the trading behavior of *value* investors who are primarily focused on short-term financial gains? To investigate further, we now examine how the level of portfolio turnover among investors influences their divestment behavior.

In Table 11, we categorize investors based on their portfolio turnover. An investor is classified as having "high portfolio turnover" if their turnover ratio for the previous quarter is above sample median; otherwise, they are labeled as "low portfolio turnover." Our analysis focuses on an incident window of [0,1], though conclusions remain qualitatively intact across other window choices. We find that incident-induced divestment and TSP-induced constraints on divestment are observed among both low- and high-turnover green investors. If anything, the economic magnitude of incident-induced divestment, and hence the TSP-induced constraint on divestment, is greater among low-turnover green investors.

[Insert Table 11 about here]

7.5. Cost of capital as an alternative channel

Albuquerque, Song, and Yao (2020) find that small-spread stocks affected by the larger tick size experienced a stock price decline of between 1.75% and 3.2% relative to a control group. This suggests that even without changes in the effectiveness of institutional investors' corporate governance, firms subject to the tick size pilot (TSP) may still opt for less environmentally friendly projects if TSP increased their cost of capital, given that such projects are often more

capital-intensive. This could occur even if the total level of investment, which we control for in our main regressions, remains unchanged.

In Table 12, Panel A, Column (1), we explore this alternative channel by estimating the conditional effect of TSP based on whether a firm's total assets are below the sample median. Ex ante, we expect that the effect of TSP on the cost of capital would be more pronounced for smaller firms, which are typically younger, less well-known, and more vulnerable to capital market imperfections (e.g., Gilchrist and Himmelberg 1995). In Columns (2)-(5), we also examine whether the variation in TSP's effect, based on different exposures to exit threats, can be explained by changes in capital costs. Our results show that, across most specifications, the interaction of the small-firm indicator with the Treat × Post variable is significantly negative. This suggests that smaller firms, which are generally more sensitive to changes in capital costs, experienced a more significant decline in their environmental ratings. Furthermore, the significant negative coefficient on the high-exposure indicator in interaction with Treat × Post across most models indicates that the decline in environmental performance, driven by reduced exit threats, cannot be fully attributed to changes in capital costs.

[Insert Table 12 about here]

Furthermore, if changes in the cost of capital are the primary channel through which treatment firms adopt less environmentally friendly policies, we would expect this effect to be more pronounced among firms that experienced a larger share price decline around the TSP implementation date. In Table 12 Panel B, we examine this possibility by dividing the sample based on whether a firm experienced a relatively larger price drop during the implementation period. Specifically, we construct a large-price-decrease indicator, which equals one if the firm's abnormal return within one month of the TSP implementation date (October 17, 2016) is below the median of the negative-abnormal-return subsample, and zero otherwise. Abnormal

returns are calculated using the Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM), with parameters estimated over the sample period from September 2015 to August 2016.

Our findings show that firms with a larger change in the cost of capital do not appear to adopt less environmentally friendly policies. Columns (2)-(5) demonstrate that the decline in environmental performance, driven by changes in the effectiveness of exit threats, remains statistically significant.

Overall, we find mixed evidence regarding the extent to which the TSP-induced decline in environmental performance is driven by changes in the cost of capital. While smaller firms tend to experience a more significant decline, firms that saw a larger drop in share price around the implementation date do not appear to adopt worse environmental policies. The exit threat channel holds after controlling for exposures to changes in the cost of capital.

7.6. Alternative Control Group

Rindi, and Werner (2019) have uncovered a spillover effect of TSP on the control group, where stock liquidity also deteriorated for control stocks, albeit to a lesser extent compared to treatment firms, post-TSP, even without a change in tick size for these stocks. While neglecting this spillover effect would make our results more conservative by reducing the relative TSP-induced liquidity change, we assess the robustness of our findings concerning the selection of the control group.

We construct an alternative control group by matching treatment firms with companies in the Compustat universe that are not control firms of TSP. Matching criteria is the propensity score generated based on firm characteristics, including lagged environmental rating, lagged liquidity

(proxied by yearly relative effective spread) and yearly counterparts of all control variables used in Table 2, two fiscal years prior to the treatment year. The coefficients used for generating propensity scores are estimated through a firm-fiscal year Logit regression for the Compustat sample, spanning from three years before the treatment year to one year prior to the treatment year. We perform one-to-one matching without replacement, using a caliper of 0.048 (0.25 of the standard deviation of the estimated propensity score). Subsequently, we estimate Equation (2) based on this control group and our treatment group, further segmenting the sample based on pre-TSP quoted spread size to reinforce our identification of liquidity-induced changes in environmental ratings. The results are presented in Table A3. We consistently observe a statistically significant and negative impact of TSP on the environmental ratings of treatment firms, with the effects concentrated among stocks with a small pre-TSP spread. The difference between the decline in environmental ratings of small- and large-spread firms is statistically significant.

7.7. Descriptive Statistics of Plausibly-*Value* Green Investors versus Other Green Investors

In this subsection, we present a summary of 13F portfolio-level characteristics for green investors conditional on whether an investor is likely a *value* investor. We argue that a green investor is plausibly a *value* investor if, according to investor-level regression, s/he divests in response to environmental incidents, with divestment behavior constrained during the TSP.[24]

In Table 13, we first examine whether the TSP-induced increase in transaction costs disproportionately affects norm-unconstrained investors—such as investment companies (type 3) and independent investment advisors, including hedge funds (type 4)—as compared to

[24] In investor-level regressions, we regress an investor's portfolio weight in a stock against the same set of control variables used in Table 5, without fixed effects, against the TSP sample over the period of Oct 2013-Sept 2018. A green investor j is classified as a value investor if its coefficient on $Green\ Investor_{j,t+1} \times Env.Incident_{i,t+1}$ is negative and the coefficient on $Green\ Investor_{j,t+1} \times Env.Incident_{i,t+1} \times TREAT_i \times POST_t$ is positive.

norm-constrained investors, which include bank trusts (type 1), insurance companies (type 2), corporate/private pension funds, public pension funds, university and foundation endowments, and miscellaneous (type 5).[25] Several studies, including Hong and Kacperczyk (2009) and Barber, Morse, Yasuda (2021), have shown that pension funds, universities, and religious organizations are more norm-constrained than other types of institutional investors because of the public nature of their investments, their diverse constituencies, and their heightened exposure to public scrutiny (e.g., protests or picketing by dissatisfied groups). We demonstrate that those investors who responded to TSP—plausibly *value* investors rather than *values* investors —are less likely to be a norm-constrained investor than green investors who do not respond to TSP. This finding provides further support for the validity of our method in effectively distinguishing between *value* investors, who are driven by financial considerations, and *values* investors, who prioritize ethical objectives.

[Insert Table 13 about here]

Table 13 also compares some other characteristics between *value* green investors and other green investors. Turnover rates are similar, with *value* green investors at 0.049 and other green investors at 0.047 (p-value = 0.132). However, flow differs significantly: *value* green investors have a lower mean flow (0.004) compared to other green investors (0.011), with a p-value of 0.085. This difference aligns with literature that attributes the rising demand for ESG funds to non-financial considerations, or *values*-driven motives, over the past decade (e.g., Białkowski and Starks 2016).

Both groups report comparable returns, with *value* green investors at 2.702% and other green investors at 2.502%, showing no statistically significant difference (p-value = 0.329). This

[25] We thank Brian Bushee for making the institutional investor classification data available via his website: https://accounting-faculty.wharton.upenn.edu/bushee/.

similarity underscores the challenge of distinguishing *value* investors from *values* investors by relying solely on realized returns. This also aligns with findings by Van der Beck (2022), who suggests that returns on green funds explicitly signaling a commitment or willingness-to-pay for sustainable investing in their names are largely driven by price pressures from increased fund flows into sustainable assets, leading to realized returns that exceed expected returns.

8. Conclusion

By leveraging an exogenous liquidity shock, the tick size pilot (TSP) program, we find that a more liquid stock market positively affects environmental policies for firms. We then show that the threat of exit by blockholders drives the TSP-induced decline in environmental ratings. Specifically, green institutional investors tend to divest those firms when the firms experience events that increase investors' discontent with a firm's environmental policies. For a median firm facing an environmental incident, its green institutional investors tend to fully divest following the event. During the TSP period, however, such divesting intensity becomes significantly restricted when trading TSP treatment firms experience an increase in transaction costs. We also present firm-level evidence: the TSP-induced decline in environmental ratings is greater among firms with an ex-ante greater exposure to exit threats. Above all, because *value* investors have a lower willingness-to-pay to enhance non-pecuniary goals thereby having a greater sensitivity to TSP-induced increases in transaction costs, these results present novel evidence that *value* investors play a significant role in shaping corporate environmental policies.

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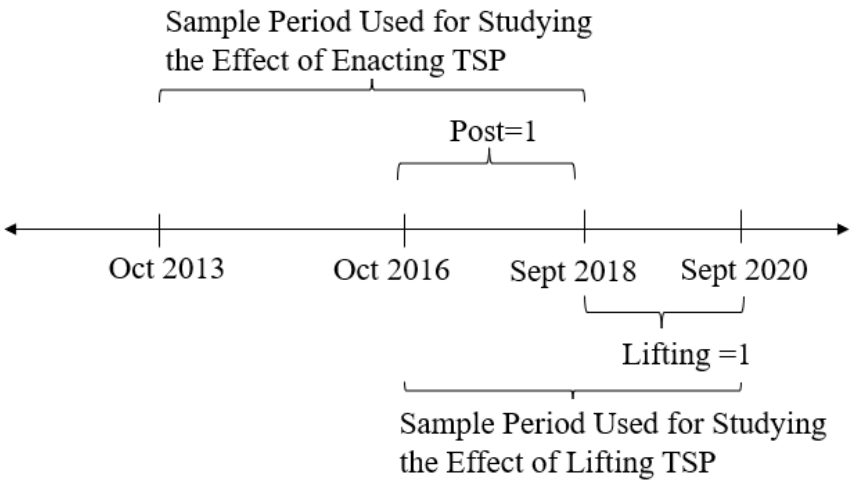

Fig 1: Timeline for Sample Periods. The figure plots the timeline for the different dates used to define the sample period. The study comprises of two parts. The first part studies the impact of implementing TSP, using a sample period from October 2013 to September 2018 —three fiscal years preceding the TSP enactment and extends to the end of the TSP. In the second part, we examine the effect of lifting TSP, based on a sample period from October 2016 to September 2020, covering the TSP enactment year until two years after TSP becomes lifted.

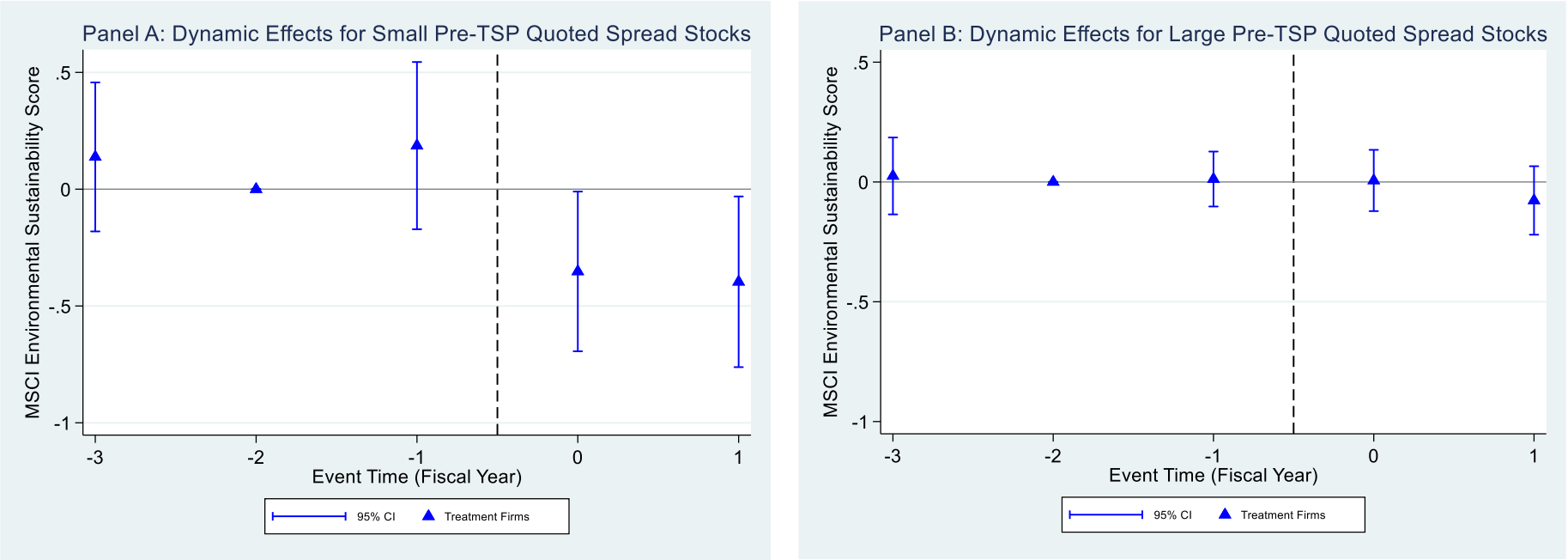

Fig 2: Dynamic Effects of TSP on MSCI Environmental Sustainability Score Conditional on Pre-TSP Quoted Spread. The figure displays the dynamic effect of TSP through time based on whether the stock has a small or large pre-TSP quoted spread. The stock has a small pre-TSP quoted spread if the average daily quoted spread between March 1, 2016 and August 31, 2016 is smaller than or equal to 3 cents. Both left and right figures plots the follow β_k of the dynamic difference-in-difference analysis : $Y_{i,t} = \beta_{-3}D_{i,t-3} + \beta_{-1}D_{i,t-1} + \beta_0 D_{i,t} + \beta_{+1}D_{i,t+1} + Firm_i + Quarter_t + C_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{i,t}$ where $Y_{i,t}$ denote the environmental rating of firm i at fiscal quarter t, $D_{i,t+k}$ indicates whether the fiscal quarter t is in the kth fiscal year after the firm i became treated. The omitted benchmark year is year $t-2$. The x-axis is k and the y-axis is $\widehat{\beta_k}$, with their corresponding 95% pointwise confidence intervals. $Firm_i$ and $Quarter_t$, respectively, denote firm fixed effects and fiscal quarter fixed effects. $C_{i,t-1}$ represents a vector of control variables, including the firm size, cash ratio, dividend yield, book-to-market ratio, sales growth, leverage ratio, investment, analyst coverage, and stock return volatility. The detailed definitions of control variables are presented in the Appendix. The left (right) figure plots the estimation for a sample of stocks with a small (large) pre-TSP quoted spread. The dashed vertical line indicates the start of TSP.

Table 1. Summary Statistics

In this table, we present descriptive statistics for treatment and controls firms included in the program. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. The definition of each variable is presented in the Appendix.

	N	Mean	SD	p25	Median	p75
Environmental Rating	9423	4.493	1.825	3.2	4.4	5.9
Ln(Emission Level)	573	4.746	1.503	3.642	4.295	5.407
Ln(Emission Intensity)	573	4.331	1.729	2.855	3.946	5.637
Quoted Spread ($)	7330	0.122	0.147	0.047	0.076	0.136
Quoted Spread (%)	7330	0.324	0.261	0.176	0.257	0.386
Effective Spread (%)	7330	0.2	0.149	0.113	0.16	0.236
Price Impact (%)	7330	0.145	0.085	0.09	0.123	0.178
Total Assets ($mil)	9423	1273.316	1429.989	423.276	809.956	1656.2
Ln(Total Assets)	9423	6.71	0.950	6.048	6.697	7.412
Cash	9423	18.308	19.610	3.636	11.423	25.432
Dividend Yield	9423	0.012	0.022	0	0	0.015
B/M Ratio	9423	0.474	0.375	0.251	0.41	0.622
Sales Growth	9423	22.94	77.116	-2.177	10.192	29.092
Leverage	9423	21.403	20.630	0.699	17.905	33.746
Investment	9332	0.629	2.748	-0.125	0.245	1.474
Analyst Coverage	9423	3.655	1.582	3	4	5
Stock Volatility	9423	5.685	3.977	3	5	8
Env. Incident	6796	2.019	0.772	1.503	1.862	2.363
WPS	9423	0.016	0.127	0	0	0
Total Clique Ownership	6678	28.468	98.158	1.994	4.445	11.32
Top Clique Ownership	9423	11.771	10.468	4.119	8.505	16.258
Holdings-Weighted SD	9423	8.293	8.416	2.325	5.438	11.445
HHI(Inst. Ownership)	9310	0.103	0.046	0.079	0.093	0.114
Average Env. Rating of Inst.	9053	0.34	0.185	0.221	0.274	0.364

Table 2. Impact of 2016 Tick Size Pilot on Corporate Environmental Rating

This table reports the effect of 2016 tick size pilot on the corporate environmental rating. The dependent variable is the MSCI IVA environmental rating for each firm and fiscal quarter. In Column (1) (Column (2)), we estimate the overall (dynamic) impact of TSP on the corporate environmental rating. The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. *Pre3* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are three fiscal years prior to the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. *Pre1* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are one fiscal year prior to the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. *Post1* equals one for the enactment quarter and the subsequent three fiscal quarters, and zero otherwise. *Post2* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are one fiscal year after the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. We control for firm fundamentals, including firm size, cash ratio, dividend yield, book-to-market ratio, sales growth, leverage ratio, investments, analyst coverage, and stock return volatility. All control variables lagged by one fiscal quarter. We include both firm and fiscal quarter fixed effects. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. Standard errors are clustered at the 2-digit industry-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Dep Var: Environmental Rating	(1)	(2)
Treat X Post	-0.132***	
	(-3.194)	
Treat X Pre3		0.0458
		(0.638)
Treat X Pre1		-0.0530
		(-0.927)
Treat X Post1		-0.137**
		(-2.422)
Treat X Post2		-0.179***
		(-2.797)
Ln(Total Assets)	0.321***	0.321***
	(4.342)	(4.338)
Cash	-0.00445**	-0.00454**
	(-2.100)	(-2.139)
Dividend Yield	1.973***	1.874***
	(2.855)	(2.710)
B/M Ratio	-0.0505	-0.0500
	(-0.859)	(-0.849)
Sales Growth	-0.000346	-0.000345
	(-1.226)	(-1.213)
Leverage	-0.00370*	-0.00357*
	(-1.892)	(-1.840)
Investment	0.000781	0.000994
	(0.204)	(0.260)
Analyst Coverage	0.00731	0.00726
	(1.097)	(1.085)
Stock Volatility	-0.0535**	-0.0535**
	(-2.499)	(-2.492)
Observations	6,714	6,714
Adj. R^2	0.848	0.848
Constant	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes

Table 3. Impact of TSP on Environmental Rating Conditional on Pre-TSP Quoted Spread
This table reports the effect of 2016 tick size pilot on the corporate environmental rating conditional on the size of pre-TSP quoted spread. We estimate the overall and dynamic impacts of TSP on the corporate environmental rating, utilizing a sample split based on whether the firm's average pre-TSP daily quoted spread (between March 1, 2016 and August 31, 2016) is smaller than or equal to 3 cents. Column (1) and (3) ((2) and (4)) present regression results for stocks with a small (large) pre-TSP spread. The dependent variable is the MSCI IVA environmental rating for each firm and fiscal quarter. The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. *Pre3* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are three fiscal years prior to the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. *Pre1* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are one fiscal year prior to the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. *Post1* equals one for the enactment quarter and the subsequent three fiscal quarters, and zero otherwise. *Post2* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are one fiscal year after the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. The illustration of Column (3) and (4) estimates is presented in Figure 2. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 2. The sample spans from 2013 through 2018. Standard errors are clustered at the 2-digit industry-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Null: Small Spread = Large Spread
Dep Var: Environmental Rating	Small Spread	Large Spread	Small Spread	Large Spread	
Treat X Post	-0.445***	-0.0508			P = 0.002
	(-3.382)	(-1.084)			
Treat X Pre3			0.138	0.0251	
			(0.851)	(0.307)	
Treat X Pre1			0.187	0.0122	
			(1.024)	(0.208)	
Treat X Post1			-0.352**	0.00611	P = 0.037
			(-2.023)	(0.0938)	
Treat X Post2			-0.396**	-0.0772	P = 0.075
			(-2.132)	(-1.059)	
Observations	977	4,193	977	4,193	
Adj. R^2	0.746	0.850	0.746	0.850	
Fiscal Quarter & Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Firm Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Table 4. Block Acquisition Activities of Institutional Investors

This table examines the effect of TSP on block acquisition activities of institutional investors when TSP becomes enacted. The dependent variable for Column (1) ((3)) indicates whether there has been a block acquisition by a green institutional investor (an institutional investor). It equals one if there has been either a 13D filing or 13G filing by a green institutional investor (an institutional investor) against the firm in the current fiscal year, and zero otherwise. The dependent variable for Column (2) ((4)) indicates whether there has been a 13G filing by a green institutional investor (an institutional investors). It equals one if there has been a 13G filing by a green institutional investor (an institutional investors) against the firm in the current fiscal year, and zero otherwise. Green institutional investors are those with an above-median portfolio-level value-weighted environmental rating amongst all 13F institutional investors as of the current quarter. The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal years starting from March 2017, and zero otherwise. The sample includes all fiscal years spanning from 2013 through 2018. Across all specifications, we include the fiscal-year counterparts of quarterly control variables as used in Table 2 and we lag these variables by one fiscal year. We include a full set of interactions between *Treat* and *Post*, but only present the key coefficients for brevity. Standard errors are clustered at the fiscal year level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	Green Inst. Investors		All Inst. Investors	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	Block Acquisition	13G Filing	Block Acquisition	13G Filing
Treat X Post	-0.172***	-0.172***	-0.194**	-0.196**
	(-3.967)	(-3.967)	(-2.454)	(-2.482)
Observations	261	261	261	261
Adj. R^2	-0.067	-0.067	0.016	-0.010
Fiscal Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 5. Institutional Investors' Portfolio Response to Environmental Incidents

This table examines how TSP limits 13F investors from divesting from firms that encounter a negative environmental event, which heightens investor discontent regarding the firm's environmental policies. The dependent variable in all panels is the percentage of shares held by an institutional investor as of a calendar quarter end. "Green Inst. Investor" equals one if the investor is a green institutional investor, and zero otherwise. Green institutional investors are those with an above-median portfolio-level value-weighted environmental rating amongst all 13F institutional investors as of the current quarter. The environmental incident is captured by the occurrence of an environmental incident reported on news sourced from RepRisk. We first construct an incident indicator denoting whether an environmental incident occurred during the current quarter (event window of [0]). We construct the second incident indicator to account for the possibility of a staggered response by including the following quarter (event window: [0,1]). To capture any run-up in investor trading, we also consider the event window of [-1,1]. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 2. We additionally control for institutional investor-level characteristics, including log portfolio size, turnover ratio, portfolio return, portfolio-level environmental rating, and portfolio flow, all lagged by one quarter. We also control for any incident that is related to social or governance issues. Institution fixed effects, firm fixed effects and fiscal quarter effects are included. Standard errors are clustered at the stock-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Dep. Var.: Portfolio Weight (%)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incident Event Window:	[0]	[0,1]	[-1,1]
Env. Incident X Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Post	0.0316**	0.0315**	0.0213*
	(2.059)	(2.363)	(1.745)
Env. Incident X Green Inst. Investor	-0.0260***	-0.0242***	-0.0283***
	(-2.887)	(-3.577)	(-3.409)
Env. Incident X Non-Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Post	0.0870*	0.120***	0.0740**
	(1.870)	(3.057)	(2.246)
Env. Incident X Non-Green Inst. Investor	-0.00832	0.0133	0.00731
	(-0.296)	(0.630)	(0.351)
Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Post	-0.0194	-0.0171	-0.0182
	(-1.558)	(-1.357)	(-1.426)
Treat X Post	0.0110	0.00826	0.00925
	(0.909)	(0.671)	(0.741)
Green Inst. Investor	-0.00341	-0.00217	-0.00147
	(-0.480)	(-0.303)	(-0.205)
Observations	148,528	148,528	148,528
Adj. R^2	0.718	0.718	0.718
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
13F Inst. Investor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inst. Investor Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social/Governance Incident News	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 6. Threat of Exit: Scaled Wealth-Performance Sensitivity

This table reports the conditional effect of TSP on environmental ratings based on whether the firm CEO has a higher scaled wealth-performance sensitivity. The High-WPS indicator equals one for those firms with scaled wealth–performance sensitivity (dollar change in CEO wealth for a one percentage point change in firm value, divided by annual pay as in Edmans, Gabaix, and Landier (2009)) values in the highest tercile, and zero otherwise. WPS is taken at the end of the prior year. The dependent variable is the MSCI IVA environmental rating for each firm and fiscal quarter. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. We include control variables as used in Table 2. Standard errors are clustered at the 2-digit industry-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Dep Var: Environmental Rating	(1)
Treat X Post X High WPS	-1.952***
	(-4.916)
Treat X Post	0.0303
	(0.192)
Treat X High WPS	-0.596
	(-1.308)
Post X High WPS	0.946***
	(3.292)
High WPS	0.261
	(0.725)
Observations	738
Adj. R^2	0.765
Controls	Yes
Constant	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes
Firm FE	Yes

Table 7. Threat of Exit: Coordination Risk

This table reports the conditional effect of TSP on environmental ratings based on whether there is a significant amount of coordination among investors. In Column (1), the High-Coordination Risk indicator equals one for firms with cliques' ownership (Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019)) in the lowest tercile before TSP, and zero otherwise. In Column (2), the indicator is based on the ownership of the largest clique. In Column (3), the High-Coordination Risk indicator equals one for those firms with the Opinion Dispersion on Env. Issues in the highest tercile, and zero otherwise. The dependent variable is the MSCI IVA environmental rating for each firm and fiscal quarter. treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 2. In Column (3), we additionally control for the Herfindahl–Hirschman index of institutional investor ownerships and the holdings-weighted average environmental rating of all institutions. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. Standard errors are clustered at the 2-digit industry-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dep Var: Environmental Rating			Opinion
Proxies for Coordination Risk:	Total Clique Ownership	Top Clique Ownership	Dispersion on Env. Issues
Treat X Post X High Coordination Risk	-1.043***	-1.014***	-1.162**
	(-3.134)	(-3.306)	(-2.259)
Treat X Post	-0.229	-0.219	-0.316**
	(-1.589)	(-1.513)	(-2.462)
Treat X High Coordination Risk	0.433	0.606**	0.667
	(1.520)	(2.242)	(1.534)
Post X High Coordination Risk	1.186***	1.020***	1.383***
	(4.416)	(4.026)	(3.081)
High Coordination Risk	-0.327	-0.491**	0.180
	(-1.354)	(-2.059)	(1.123)
Observations	977	977	967
Adj. R^2	0.751	0.750	0.766
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
HHI(Inst. Ownership)	No	No	Yes
Average Env. Rating of All Inst.	No	No	Yes

Table 8. Reversals Upon Lifting TSP

This table reports the reversal in the effect of TSP upon the conclusion of TSP. In Panel A, we examine the effect of lifting TSP on block acquisition activities. The dependent variable for Column (1) ((3)) indicates whether there has been a block acquisition by a green institutional investor (an institutional investor). It equals one if there has been either a 13D filing or 13G filing by a green institutional investor (an institutional investor) against the firm in the current fiscal year, and zero otherwise. The dependent variable for Column (2) ((4)) indicates whether there has been a 13G filing by a green institutional investor (an institutional investors). It equals one if there has been a 13G filing by a green institutional investor (an institutional investors) against the firm in the current fiscal year, and zero otherwise. Green institutional investors are those with an above-median portfolio-level value-weighted environmental rating amongst all 13F institutional investors as of the current quarter. The sample includes all fiscal years spanning from 2017 through 2020. The post-TSP period indicator (*Lifting*) equals one for all fiscal years starting from October 2018, and zero otherwise. *Treat* is the treatment firm indicator. Across all specifications, we include the fiscal-year counterparts of quarterly control variables as used in Table 2 and we lag these variables by one fiscal year. In Panel B, we assess the impact of lifting TSP on the divesting intensity of institutional investors, so the sample spans from October 2016 through September 2020. The dependent variable is the percentage of shares held by an institutional investor as of a calendar quarter end. The environmental incident is captured by the occurrence of an environmental incident reported on news sourced from RepRisk. We construct three incident indicators, respectively, denoting an event window of [0], [0,1], and [-1,1]. The sample spans from October 2016 through September 2020. The post-TSP period indicator (*Lifting*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2018, and zero otherwise. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 5. In Panel C, we examine the impact of lifting TSP on environmental ratings conditional on different level of exposure to exit threats. The dependent variable is the MSCI IVA environmental rating for each firm and fiscal quarter. In Column (1), the High-Exposure indicator equals one for those firms with scaled wealth–performance sensitivity (dollar change in CEO wealth for a one percentage point change in firm value, divided by annual pay as in Edmans, Gabaix, and Landier (2009)) values in the highest sample tercile, and zero otherwise. WPS is taken at the end of the prior year In Column (2), the High-Exposure indicator equals one for firms with cliques' ownership (Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019)) in the lowest tercile before TSP, and zero otherwise. In Column (3), the indicator is based on the ownership of the largest clique. In Column (4), the High-Exposure indicator equals one for those firms with the lagged Opinion Dispersion on Env. Issues in the highest tercile, and zero otherwise. Across all Column (1)–(3), we include control variables as used in Table 2. In Column (4), we control for variables as used in Table 7 Column (3). In Panel A, standard errors are clustered at the fiscal-year level. In Panel B and C, standard errors are clustered at the 2-digit industry-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Panel A: Reversal in Block Acquisition Activities Upon Lifting TSP

	Green Inst. Investors		All Inst. Investors	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	Block Acquisition	13G Filing	Block Acquisition	13G Filing
Treat X Lifting	0.201***	0.201***	0.147*	0.147*
	(11.35)	(11.35)	(1.889)	(1.889)
Observations	153	153	153	153
Adj. R^2	-0.075	-0.075	-0.142	-0.142
Fiscal Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Panel B: Reversal in Divesting Intensity Upon Lifting TSP

Dep. Var.: Portfolio Weight (%)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incident Event Window:	[0]	[0,1]	[-1,1]
Env. Incident X Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Lifting	-0.0494***	-0.0373***	-0.0444***
	(-3.443)	(-2.894)	(-3.816)
Env. Incident X Green Inst. Investor	-0.0384***	-0.0460***	-0.0438***
	(-4.943)	(-6.488)	(-6.025)
Env. Incident X Non-Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Lifting	-0.00590	0.00101	0.0295
	(-0.115)	(0.0243)	(0.813)
Env. Incident X Non-Green Inst. Investor	-0.00311	-0.0118	0.0244
	(-0.156)	(-0.806)	(1.572)
Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Lifting	0.0346***	0.0353***	0.0383***
	(3.449)	(3.463)	(3.734)
Treat X Lifting	-0.0227**	-0.0224**	-0.0244**
	(-2.407)	(-2.325)	(-2.496)
Green Inst. Investor	0.0190**	0.0198**	0.0232***
	(2.320)	(2.391)	(2.782)
Observations	128,477	128,477	128,477
Adj. R^2	0.829	0.829	0.829
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
13F Inst. Investor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inst. Investor Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social/Governance Incident News	Yes	Yes	Yes

Panel C: Reversal in Environmental Ratings Upon Lifting TSP

Dep Var: Environmental Rating	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Proxies for Exposure to Exit Threat:	WPS	Total Clique Ownership	Top Clique Ownership	Opinion Dispersion on Env. Issues
Treat X Lifting X High Exposure	0.412**	0.578**	0.432**	0.454*
	(2.330)	(2.514)	(2.125)	(1.694)
Treat X Lifting	-0.349***	-0.158**	-0.152*	-0.0620
	(-3.430)	(-1.967)	(-1.766)	(-0.708)
Treat X High Exposure	-0.205	-0.348**	-0.261*	-0.126
	(-0.947)	(-2.014)	(-1.775)	(-0.556)
Lifting X High Exposure	-0.427***	-0.255**	-0.265**	-0.341
	(-3.266)	(-1.986)	(-2.087)	(-1.486)
High Exposure	0.336**	0.0898	0.0880	0.211
	(2.481)	(0.904)	(1.044)	(1.082)
Observations	600	772	772	763
Adj. R^2	0.927	0.918	0.917	0.917
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HHI(Inst. Ownership)	No	No	No	Yes
Average Env. Rating of All Inst.	No	No	No	Yes

Table 9. Real Impact of TSP

This table reports the effect of 2016 tick size pilot on firm carbon emission activities. The dependent variable is the log transformed thousands of metrics tons of Scope 1 carbon emissions (*Ln(Emission Level)*) for Column (1) and the log transformed metrics tons of Scope 1 carbon emissions scaled by revenue in dollar (*Ln(Emission Intensity)*) for Column (2). Emission data is retrieved from EPA. In Panel A, we examine the effect of enacting TSP. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. In Panel C, we examine the effect of lifting TSP. The sample spans from October 2016 through September 2020. The main independent variable is the interaction terms between the treatment firm indicator (*Treat*) and treatment period indicator (*Lifting*). The treatment period indicator (*Lifting*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2018, and zero otherwise. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 2. Standard errors are clustered at the fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Variable:	Emission Level	Emission Intensity	Emission Level	Emission Intensity
Treat X Post	0.0913***	0.0764**		
	(3.054)	(2.581)		
Treat X Lifting			-0.0702**	-0.125***
			(-2.337)	(-4.525)
Ln(Total Assets)	-0.0624	-0.329***	0.355**	0.177
	(-0.590)	(-2.733)	(2.076)	(0.915)
Cash	-0.00260	0.000653	0.00442	0.00422
	(-1.102)	(0.240)	(1.326)	(1.206)
Dividend Yield	0.605***	1.434***	-0.667	-0.823
	(3.014)	(4.649)	(-1.200)	(-1.062)
B/M Ratio	-0.0451	-0.00422	0.0163	-0.00809
	(-0.581)	(-0.0552)	(0.299)	(-0.135)
Sales Growth	-0.00535***	-0.00847***	-4.16e-05	-0.00313***
	(-3.313)	(-4.797)	(-0.0576)	(-4.502)
Leverage	0.00897***	0.0105***	-0.00973***	-0.00772**
	(2.784)	(3.054)	(-2.818)	(-2.210)
Investment	-0.00934***	0.000375	0.00503	0.00891**
	(-2.755)	(0.110)	(1.202)	(2.035)
Analyst Coverage	0.0243*	0.0113	0.0384***	0.0347***
	(1.777)	(0.764)	(5.418)	(6.356)
Stock Volatility	0.0653**	0.0535*	0.0240	0.0292*
	(2.545)	(1.927)	(1.358)	(1.798)
Observations	605	605	498	498
Adj. R^2	0.949	0.964	0.976	0.981
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 10. 2SLS Estimates of Stock Illiquidity's Impact on Environmental Rating

This table reports the 2SLS estimates of stock illiquidity's effect on the corporate environmental rating. In Panel A, we present estimates of Equation (3), the first-stage regression of the two-stage least square analysis. The dependent variables for Column (1), (2), and (3) are, respectively, the percent quoted spread, the relative effective spread, and price impact. The main independent variables is the interaction term between the treatment firm indicator (*Treat*) and treatment period indicator (*Post*). The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. In Panel B, we display estimates of Equation (4), the second-stage regression. The dependent variable is the MSCI IVA environmental rating for each firm and fiscal quarter. The main independent variables for Column (1), (2), and (3) are three instrumented stock illiquidity proxies: the percent quoted spread, the relative effective spread, and price impact. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 2. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. Standard errors are clustered at the 2-digit industry-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Panel A: First-Stage Regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dep. Variable:	Quoted Spread (%)	Effective Spread (%)	Price Impact (%)
Treat X Post	0.0891***	0.107***	0.0260***
	(5.625)	(8.248)	(2.774)
Ln(Total Assets)	-0.423***	-0.405***	-0.176***
	(-12.32)	(-15.01)	(-9.479)
Cash	-0.00371***	-0.00308***	-0.000704
	(-4.017)	(-4.261)	(-1.477)
Dividend Yield	-1.587***	-0.591	0.296
	(-4.744)	(-1.424)	(0.921)
B/M Ratio	0.500***	0.409***	0.148***
	(12.90)	(11.89)	(7.825)
Sales Growth	-0.000414***	-0.000354***	-0.000199***
	(-4.072)	(-4.134)	(-4.200)
Leverage	0.00617***	0.00560***	0.00352***
	(6.999)	(7.870)	(8.127)
Investment	0.00487**	0.00339**	-0.000298
	(2.516)	(2.096)	(-0.278)
Analyst Coverage	-0.00268	-0.00279**	-0.000635
	(-1.504)	(-1.977)	(-0.768)
Stock Volatility	0.0632***	0.0467***	0.0252***
	(4.880)	(4.376)	(3.892)
Observations	8,176	8,176	8,176
Adj. R^2	0.857	0.848	0.646
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Panel B: Second-Stage Regression

Dep. Var: Environmental Rating	(1)	(2)	(3)
Proxies for Illiquidity:	Quoted Spread (%)	Effective Spread (%)	Price Impact (%)
$\widehat{\text{Illiquidity}}$	-1.694**	-1.735***	-3.558***
	(-2.546)	(-2.625)	(-2.603)
Total Assets)	-0.00908	0.0674	0.0115
	(-0.0756)	(0.647)	(0.0998)
Cash	-0.00397	-0.00387	-0.00391
	(-1.558)	(-1.522)	(-1.524)
Dividend Yield	1.614*	1.558*	1.721*
	(1.756)	(1.757)	(1.877)
B/M Ratio	0.0577	-0.0118	0.0388
	(0.458)	(-0.111)	(0.328)
Sales Growth	-0.000711	-0.000692*	-0.000724*
	(-1.636)	(-1.647)	(-1.699)
Leverage	0.00241	0.00227	0.00354
	(0.916)	(0.885)	(1.314)
Investment	0.00312	0.00243	0.00243
	(0.682)	(0.534)	(0.532)
Analyst Coverage	0.000924	0.00192	0.000433
	(0.114)	(0.240)	(0.0526)
Stock Volatility	-0.0489*	-0.0495*	-0.0277
	(-1.700)	(-1.748)	(-0.889)
Observations	5,177	5,177	5,177
Adj. R^2	-0.144	-0.101	-0.115
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 11. Low-Turnover Investors vs. High-Turnover Investors

This table examines how TSP limits 13F investors from divesting from firms that encounter a negative environmental event, conditional on whether the investor has had a high portfolio turnover. The sample is divided based on the investor's portfolio turnover. An investor is categorized as having "high portfolio turnover" if their turnover ratio for the previous quarter is above 13F sample median; otherwise, they are classified as having "low portfolio turnover." The dependent variable is the percentage of shares held by an institutional investor as of a calendar quarter end. "Green Inst. Investor" equals one if the investor is a green institutional investor, and zero otherwise. We focus on the incident indicator denoting an event window of [0,1]. In Col (1)-(2), the treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. In Col (3)-(4), the treatment period indicator (*Lifting*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2018, and zero otherwise. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. The sample spans from October 2016 through September 2020. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 5. Standard errors are clustered at the stock-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	Event Ind = *Post*		Event Ind = *Lifting*	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.: Portfolio Weight (%)	Low-Turnover	High-Turnover	Low-Turnover	High-Turnover
Incident Event Window: [0,1]	Investor	Investor	Investor	Investor
Env. Incident X Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Event Ind	0.0686**	0.0234*	-0.0615**	-0.0288**
	(2.129)	(1.663)	(-2.139)	(-2.298)
Env. Incident X Green Inst. Investor	-0.0354**	-0.0191***	-0.0734***	-0.0359***
	(-2.243)	(-2.687)	(-4.737)	(-4.842)
Env. Incident X Non-Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Event Ind	0.101	0.113***	0.0695	-0.0271
	(0.850)	(3.043)	(0.748)	(-0.570)
Env. Incident X Non-Green Inst. Investor	0.0185	0.00331	-0.0383	-0.00722
	(0.299)	(0.159)	(-0.691)	(-0.590)
Green Inst. Investor X Treat X Event Ind	-0.0452	-0.0162*	0.0206	0.0397***
	(-0.893)	(-1.735)	(0.633)	(4.697)
Treat X Event Ind	0.0485	0.00211	-0.0327	-0.0182**
	(0.916)	(0.268)	(-0.987)	(-2.275)
Green Inst. Investor	-0.0168	0.00176	0.0471*	0.0147*
	(-0.580)	(0.303)	(1.740)	(1.861)
Observations	40,680	107,509	32,268	95,911
Adj. R^2	0.707	0.745	0.856	0.805
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13F Inst. Investor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inst. Investor Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social/Governance Incident News	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 12. Cost of Capital As An Alternative Channel

We examine the impact of TSP on environmental ratings conditional on exposures to changes in the cost of capital. The dependent variable is the MSCI IVA environmental rating for each firm and fiscal quarter. In Panel A, we capture a firm's sensitivity to cost of capital changes using a small-firm indicator, which equals one if the firm's total assets are below the sample median, and zero otherwise. In Panel B, sensitivity is measured with a large-price-decrease indicator, assigned a value of one if the firm's abnormal return within one month of the TSP implementation date (i.e., 17 Oct 2016) is below the median for the negative-abnormal-return subsample, and zero otherwise. Abnormal returns are calculated using the Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM), with parameters estimated from the sample period of September 2015 to August 2016. Across both Panel A and B, in Column (2), the High-Exposure indicator equals one for those firms with scaled wealth–performance sensitivity (dollar change in CEO wealth for a one percentage point change in firm value, divided by annual pay as in Edmans, Gabaix, and Landier (2009)) values in the highest sample tercile, and zero otherwise. WPS is taken at the end of the prior year In Column (3), the High- Exposure indicator equals one for firms with cliques' ownership (Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019)) in the lowest tercile before TSP, and zero otherwise. In Column (4), the indicator is based on the ownership of the largest clique. In Column (5), the High-Exposure indicator equals one for those firms with the lagged Opinion Dispersion on Env. Issues in the highest tercile, and zero otherwise. Across all Column (1)–(4), we include control variables as used in Table 2. In Column (5), we control for variables as used in Table 7 Column (3). The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. Standard errors are clustered at the 2-digit industry-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Panel A: Small firm vs. large firm

Dep Var: Environmental Rating	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Proxies for Exposure to Exit Threat:		WPS	Total Clique Ownership	Top Clique Ownership	Opinion Dispersion on Env. Issues
Treat X Post X Small Firm	-1.112**	0.187	-1.281***	-1.318***	-1.450***
	(-2.510)	(0.422)	(-3.049)	(-3.054)	(-3.150)
Treat X Small Firm	-0.200	-0.795	-0.251	-0.255	0.165
	(-0.424)	(-1.338)	(-0.534)	(-0.540)	(0.346)
Post X Small Firm	1.018***	1.071***	1.126***	1.147***	1.160***
	(3.297)	(3.266)	(3.966)	(3.950)	(3.527)
Small Firm	-1.366***	-1.737***	-1.301***	-1.300***	-1.431***
	(-5.733)	(-4.963)	(-5.737)	(-5.707)	(-5.864)
Treat X Post X High Exposure		-2.083***	-1.062***	-1.006***	-0.304
		(-5.675)	(-3.192)	(-3.284)	(-0.649)
Treat X Post	-0.262**	0.0819	-0.00412	0.00974	-0.0808
	(-1.994)	(0.517)	(-0.0282)	(0.0651)	(-0.613)
Treat X High Exposure		-0.713*	0.464*	0.603**	0.552
		(-1.741)	(1.658)	(2.304)	(1.313)
Post X High Exposure		1.063***	1.235***	1.084***	0.551
		(4.017)	(4.671)	(4.316)	(1.367)
High Exposure		0.0159	-0.338	-0.460**	0.196
		(0.0496)	(-1.437)	(-1.984)	(1.176)
Observations	977	738	977	977	967
Adj. R^2	0.760	0.786	0.765	0.764	0.778
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HHI(Inst. Ownership)	No	No	No	No	Yes
Average Env. Rating of All Inst. Investors	No	No	No	No	Yes

Panel B: Large price decrease vs. small price decrease around the implementation date

Dep Var: Environmental Rating	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Proxies for Exposure to Exit Threat:		WPS	Total Clique Ownership	Top Clique Ownership	Opinion Dispersion on Env. Issues
Treat X Post X Large Price Decrease	0.307	-0.230	0.138	0.304	0.0753
	(1.190)	(-0.545)	(0.525)	(1.023)	(0.277)
Post X Large Price Decrease	0.0626	0.431	0.250	0.0650	0.190
	(0.289)	(1.129)	(1.132)	(0.272)	(0.842)
Treat X Post X High Exposure		-1.942***	-1.002***	-0.955***	-1.244**
		(-4.821)	(-2.970)	(-3.106)	(-2.371)
Treat X Post	-0.480***	0.0257	-0.255	-0.265*	-0.320**
	(-3.347)	(0.152)	(-1.609)	(-1.674)	(-2.322)
Treat X High Exposure		-0.588	0.412	0.585**	0.657
		(-1.291)	(1.448)	(2.163)	(1.516)
Post X High Exposure		0.975***	1.194***	1.011***	1.390***
		(3.365)	(4.424)	(4.001)	(3.065)
High Exposure		0.244	-0.322	-0.486**	0.186
		(0.681)	(-1.331)	(-2.038)	(1.152)
Observations	977	738	977	977	967
Adj. R^2	0.746	0.765	0.752	0.750	0.766
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HHI(Inst. Ownership)	No	No	No	No	Yes
Average Env. Rating of All Inst. Investors	No	No	No	No	Yes

Table 13. Plausibly-*Value* Green Investors vs. Other Green Investors

We summarise green investors' 13F portfolio-level characteristics, including the likelihood of being constrained by social norms, turnover level, flow rate, and return rate, conditional on whether an investor is plausibly a *value* investor. A green investor is classified as a *value* investor if, in an investor-level regression, they divest in response to environmental incidents, with divestment constrained during the TSP. The investor-quarter sample of the summary statistics spans from October 2013 through September 2020. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

13F Portfolio-Level Summary Statistics	*Value* Green Investors			Other Green Investors			Null: *Value* Green Investors = Other Green Investors
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	p-value
Norm-Constrained	1132	0.233	0.423	4375	0.372	0.483	P < 0.001
Turnover	1159	0.049	0.04	4508	0.047	0.044	P = 0.132
Flow	1156	0.004	0.126	4493	0.011	0.135	P = 0.085
Return (%)	1156	2.702	6.456	4493	2.502	6.121	P = 0.329

APPENDIX

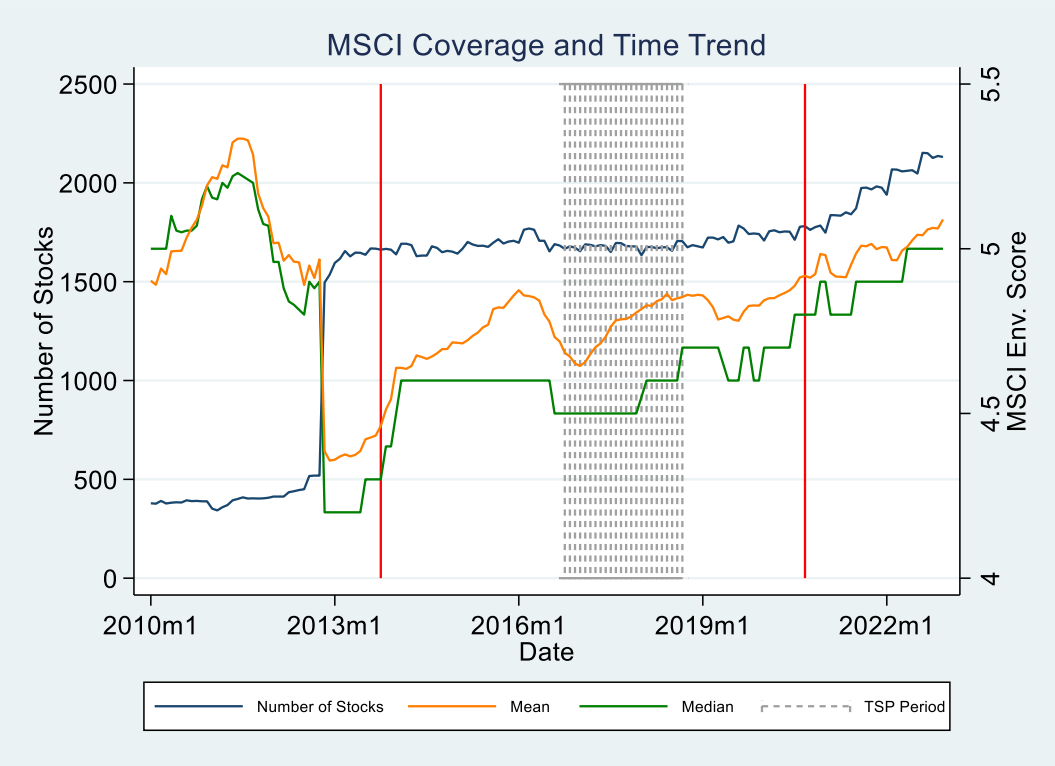

Fig A1: MSCI coverage and Time Trend. The figure displays the number of stocks in our sample with MSCI environmental scores at the end of each month, represented by the blue line. The left red line marks October 2013, the starting point of our sample when examining the effect of enacting TSP. The starting point is chosen to ensure a three-year pre-treatment period leading up to the enactment month of October 2016. When examining the effect of enacting TSP, our sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. The right red line indicates September 2020, which is the endpoint of our sample when examining the effect of lifting TSP. The end point is chosen to ensure a two-year period after TSP becomes lifted in September 2018. When examining the effect of lifting TSP, our sample spans from October 2016 through September 2020. The green and orange lines illustrate the sample's median and mean values over time, respectively. The grey dashed area represent the TSP period which spans from October 2016 through September 2018.

Table A1. Definitions of Variables

Variable	Definition
Environmental Rating	Environmental pillar score for each firm by the end of fiscal quarter provided by MSCI IVA. It ranges from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates a low environmental sustainability and 10 indicates a high environmental sustainability.
Ln(Emission Level)	The log of 1 plus thousands metric tons of Scope 1 carbon emissions based on hand-matched firms' carbon emissions data from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP).
Ln(Emission Intensity)	The log of 1 plus emission intensity based on hand-matched firms' carbon emissions data from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP). Emission intensity is computed by dividing metric tons of carbon emissions by firm revenue (in dollar).
Quoted Spread ($)	The time-weighted average of dollar quoted spread for each day. When computing pre-TSP small-spread indicator, we take a simple arithmetic mean over daily quoted spreads between March 1, 2016 and August 31, 2016.
Quoted Spread (%)	The time-weighted average of percent quoted spread for each day per fiscal quarter, lagged by one fiscal quarter
Effective Spread (%)	For each executed intraday trade, the relative effective spread is the ratio of the difference between the execution price of a trade and the midpoint of the prevailing bid-ask spread (the effective spread) divided by the midpoint of the prevailing bid-ask spread. To convert intraday data into fiscal-quarterly measures if stock illiquidity, we take a quarterly arithmetic average of daily relative effective spread for a stock. The daily relative effective spread is a share-volume-weighted average of the relative effective spread of all trades taken place during the day for a given stock. Our results hold if we use trade-weighted or share-weighted average when computing daily relative effective spread.
Price Impact (%)	For a given stock, the percent price impact of each trade is calculated as twice the signed difference between the midpoint available five minutes after the trade and the midpoint at the time of the trade, divided by the midpoint at the time of the trade. To convert intraday data into fiscal-quarterly measures of stock illiquidity, we calculate the quarterly arithmetic average of the daily percent price impact for a stock. The daily price impact is a share-volume-weighted average of the price impact of all trades occurring during the day for that stock.
Ln(Total Assets)	Log of total assets (Compustat atq) lagged by one fiscal quarter.
Cash	Cash and Short-term investment (Compustat cheq) scaled by assets (Compustat atq).
Dividend Yield	(Common dividend (Compustat dvc) + preferred dividend (Compustat dvp))/(market value of equity + preferred stock (Compustat pstk)). Every item is taken at the end of last fiscal year.
B/M Ratio	(Book value of equity (Compustat ceqq))/(market value of equity). Every item is taken at the end of last fiscal quarter.

Sales Growth	100 X sales (Compustat sale) by the end of last fiscal year minus the sales three fiscal years ago divided by the sales three fiscal years ago.
Leverage	100 X long-term debt (Compustat dlttq) plus debt in current liabilities (Compustat dlcq) scaled by the sum of long-term debt, debt in current liabilities, and total stockholders' equity (Compustat atq). Every item is lagged by one fiscal quarter.
Investment	The lagged changes in gross property, plant, and equipment (Compustat annual item PPEGTQ) plus lagged changes in inventory (item INVTQ), divided by lagged total assets (item ATQ). Every item is lagged by one fiscal quarter.
Analyst Coverage	The number of I/B/E/S analysts following the firm by the end of the last fiscal year.
Stock Volatility	Standard deviation of daily stock returns (%) over the last fiscal quarter.
Env. Incident	The occurrence of an environmental incident reported on news. All news is sourced from RepRisk.
Scaled WPS	The scaled wealth-performance sensitivity by the end of the last fiscal year. It captures the dollar change in CEO wealth for a 100 percentage point change in firm value, divided by annual flow compensation and measured at the end of the fiscal year. See Edmans, Gabaix, and Landier (2009).
Total Clique Ownership	The aggregate ownership by all institutional investor cliques for each firm as defined in Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019).
Top Clique Ownership	The total ownership in each firm of only the single institutional investor clique with the largest ownership stake in the firm, as defined in Crane, Koch, and Michenaud (2019).
Opinion Dispersion on Env. Issues	The holdings-weighted standard deviation of investor-level environmental rating is $\sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^{n}\left(w_j E_j - \overline{wE}\right)^2/(n-1)}$, where E_j denotes institution j's portfolio-level value-weighted environmental rating, w_j denotes the percentage of shares held by institution j, and $\overline{wE}$ the arithmetic mean of $w_j E_j$.
HHI (Inst. Ownership)	The Herfindahl–Hirschman index of institutional ownership, lagged by one fiscal quarter.
Average Env. Rating of All Inst. Investors	The holdings-weighted average environmental rating of all institutional investors for each firm is calculated using $\sum_{j=1}^{n} w_j E_j$ where E_j denotes blockholder j's lagged portfolio-level value-weighted environmental rating, and w_j denotes the lagged percentage of shares held by blockholder j.

Table A2. Impact of TSP on Scope 1 + 2 Emission Level and Performance

This table reports the effect of 2016 tick size pilot on firm carbon emission activities. The dependent variable is the log transformed thousands of metrics tons of Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions (*Ln(Emission Level)*) for Column (1) and the log transformed metrics tons of Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions scaled by revenue in dollar (*Ln(Emission Intensity)*) for Column (2). Scope 1 emission data is retrieved from EPA, and Scope 2 emission data is collected from Asset4. In Panel A, we examine the effect of enacting TSP. The sample spans from October 2013 through September 2018. The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. In Panel C, we examine the effect of lifting TSP. The sample spans from October 2016 through September 2020. The main independent variable is the interaction terms between the treatment firm indicator (*Treat*) and treatment period indicator (*Lifting*). The treatment period indicator (*Lifting*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2018, and zero otherwise. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 2. Standard errors are clustered at the fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Variable:	Emission Level	Emission Intensity	Emission Level	Emission Intensity
Treat X Post	0.111***	0.197***		
	(3.456)	(5.203)		
Treat X Lifting			-0.178***	-0.199***
			(-4.085)	(-4.658)
Ln(Total Assets)	0.199**	0.205*	0.506***	0.389***
	(2.563)	(1.905)	(5.413)	(3.765)
Cash	-0.00572*	-0.00206	-0.00176	-0.00510**
	(-1.968)	(-0.492)	(-0.834)	(-2.053)
Dividend Yield	-8.298***	-13.88***	-4.490***	-8.440***
	(-4.226)	(-3.005)	(-4.613)	(-6.500)
B/M Ratio	-0.00992	-0.0257	0.0580***	0.0882***
	(-0.503)	(-1.098)	(2.759)	(3.233)
Sales Growth	0.00322***	-0.00128	-0.000800	-0.00681***
	(4.798)	(-1.196)	(-0.777)	(-5.928)
Leverage	-0.00549	-0.00465	-0.00659**	-0.00396
	(-1.596)	(-1.461)	(-2.310)	(-1.315)
Investment	-0.00483**	0.00100	-0.00510*	-0.00531**
	(-2.308)	(0.304)	(-1.836)	(-2.235)
Analyst Coverage	-0.0125	-0.0340**	0.00264	-0.00683
	(-1.395)	(-2.391)	(0.194)	(-0.583)
Stock Volatility	0.0298**	-0.0209*	0.00753	0.00459
	(2.373)	(-1.856)	(0.590)	(0.304)
Observations	130	130	192	192
Adj. R^2	0.997	0.993	0.991	0.991
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Quarter FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table A3. Alternative Control Group

This table reports the effect of 2016 tick size pilot on the corporate environmental rating conditional on the size of pre-TSP quoted spread. We estimate the overall and dynamic impacts of TSP on the corporate environmental rating, utilizing a sample split based on whether the firm's average pre-TSP daily quoted spread (between March 1, 2016 and August 31, 2016) is smaller than or equal to 3 cents. Column (1) and (3) ((2) and (4)) present regression results for stocks with a small (large) pre-TSP spread. The dependent variable is the MSCI IVA environmental rating for each firm and fiscal quarter. The treatment period indicator (*Post*) equals one for all fiscal quarters starting from October 2016, and zero otherwise. *Pre3* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are three fiscal years prior to the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. *Pre1* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are one fiscal year prior to the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. *Post1* equals one for the enactment quarter and the subsequent three fiscal quarters, and zero otherwise. *Post2* equals one for all fiscal quarters that are one fiscal year after the enactment quarter, and zero otherwise. The sample includes all treatment firms in the TSP and control firms matched using one-to-one matching with replacement. Across all specifications, we include control variables as used in Table 2. The sample spans from 2013 through 2018. Standard errors are clustered at the 2-digit industry-by-fiscal quarter level. T-statistics are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Null: Small Spread = Large Spread
Dep Var: Environmental Rating	Small Spread	Large Spread	Small Spread	Large Spread	
Treat X Post	-0.410***	0.0572			P = 0.005
	(-2.831)	(0.765)			
Treat X Pre3			0.159	-0.186	
			(0.672)	(-1.332)	
Treat X Pre1			0.0897	0.0828	
			(0.408)	(0.722)	
Treat X Post1			-0.359*	0.0473	P = 0.089
			(-1.823)	(0.414)	
Treat X Post2			-0.428**	0.0948	P = 0.032
			(-2.066)	(0.804)	
Observations	868	1,796	868	1,796	
Adj. R^2	0.777	0.851	0.778	0.851	
Fiscal Quarter & Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Firm Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	