



## Environmental Groups Pushback on Exxon-Related Subpoenas

*Members of Congress, legal experts & environmental groups gather to push back on Rep. Lamar Smith's reckless subpoenas*

September 14, 2016

Ahead of a Congressional hearing held by House Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX), members of Congress, law experts, and environmental groups gathered at the Capitol to highlight all that Exxon knew and buried about climate change, and to pushback on the Chairman's overreaching subpoenas.

The event featured prominent members of Congress including Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA), Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT), who have been leading the charge against Exxon to hold the fossil fuel company for its role in orchestrating a decades-long campaign of deception and misinformation about climate change.

At the event, Sharon Eubanks, the former Department of Justice lawyer who led the historical suit against Big Tobacco, echoed the call for a federal investigation into Exxon. Representing the climate movement, May Boeve, [350.org](http://350.org) Executive Director, and Jesse Bragg, Corporate Accountability International Media Director, spoke to financial ties between Big Oil and the Science Committee, as well as climate impacts that likely could have been curbed if Exxon had told the truth when its scientists warned executives about climate change.

Rep. Smith's hearing is set to feature professors of law who are expected to exclusively focus on affirming the Committee's authority to subpoena environmental groups and the attorneys general of New York and Massachusetts. At least two of Rep. Smith's witnesses, Ronald Rotunda and Elizabeth Price Foley, have significant ties to fossil fuel industry-funded groups such as the Heartland Institute and the Koch-funded Cato Institute, both which have funding ties to "dark money" financial channels Donors Trust and Donors Capital.

Since 1998, Rep. Smith has received a total of \$675,597 from the fossil fuel industry, including \$24,770 over the course of his career which came directly from ExxonMobil -- making oil and gas his most generous industry contributor throughout his career.

This event took place the day after thousands across the country, with a large rally in Washington, DC, rallied in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux and Indigenous Peoples who are protecting people and planet from the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Just this week, NASA confirmed that August 2016 was the hottest month in history, marking it the sixteenth hottest consecutive month on record.

#### QUOTE SHEET:

May Boeve, [350.org](http://350.org) Executive Director said, "This hearing may as well be sponsored by ExxonMobil. Over his career, Rep. Smith has received nearly \$700,000 in campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry -- no surprise he's willing to trample our First Amendment rights in his mad dash to their defense. The bottom line is that this hearing is nothing but Smith's attempt to distract us from the real issue: Exxon knew the truth about climate change, and Exxon lied."

Representative Ted Lieu (D-CA) said, "Climate change is the biggest long-term threat to life as we know it. Global warming endangers the health of our families and creates national security risks. The historic flooding in Louisiana is just the latest example of extreme weather events that will only get more frequent and more destructive due to climate change. ExxonMobil knew for decades that its product was causing climate change. But instead of investigating ExxonMobil's decades-long deception on climate change, Republicans in charge of the House Science Committee are attacking attorneys general and nonprofits who are trying to protect the public by holding ExxonMobil accountable for their fraud and deceit. The American people -- who are facing the toll of climate change every single day -- deserve leaders in Congress who believe in science. We deserve leaders who will protect the people, rather than ExxonMobil."

Representative Katherine Clark (D-MA) said, "I usually am proud to sit on the Science Committee. Sadly, today, the Republican majority spends most of its time undermining scientific consensus on issues like global climate change and stripping down the very institutions that fuel innovation and scientific advancement. The Committee's overreaching subpoenas demonstrate the majority's reckless disregard of the Congress' constitutional and jurisdictional limits. Law abiding attorneys general, who are doing their jobs and serving the public and investigating potential violations of state law, should not be bullied into becoming pawns in the Republican's ongoing ideological assaults on science and fact. I urge the Committee and its leadership to remember what its job is, who it works for, and let's get back to work for the people."

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) said, “The really big question, and the one that needs answering here, is how far is the hand of the fossil fuel industry into the glove of this Committee? Because if in fact the true actor here is the fossil fuel industry, and if this committee is being nothing more than its agent, than that raises some very important questions about the subject of an investigation having a congressional tool to obstruct that investigation.”

Tamar Lawrence-Samuel, Corporate Accountability International said, “This hearing, orchestrated on behalf of ExxonMobil, is a perversion of this important congressional procedure, and a complete distraction. The only thing this hearing will prove is that Rep. Smith is capable of cherry-picking a panel of witnesses that validate his views. Mr. Smith and his denialist colleagues on the House Science Committee are once again using our government to carry out the head-in-sand agenda of their Big Oil campaign funders and it needs to stop. It’s time for Rep. Smith to end this charade and let AGs do what they were elected to do.”