



Newspapers Across Country Fail To Identify Oil Money Behind Op-Ed Columnist

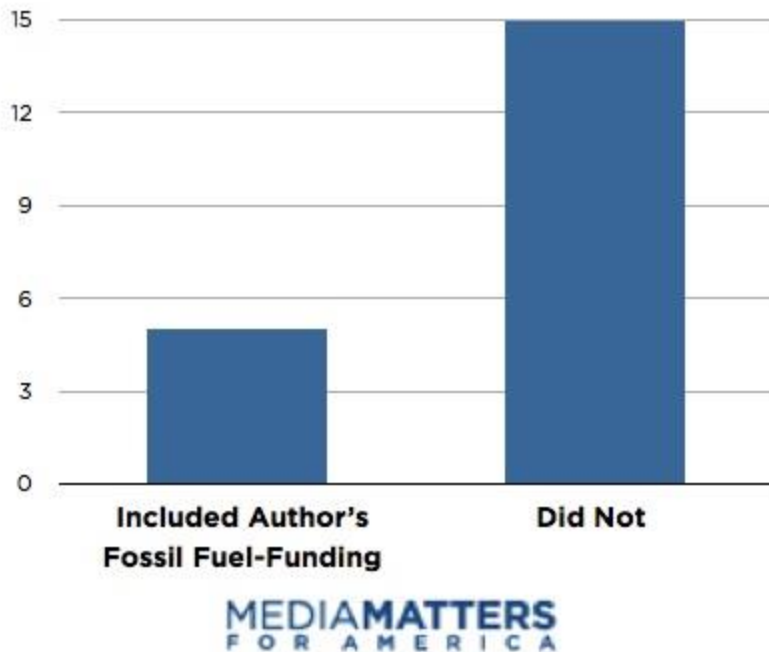
[Research](#) »» February 26, 2014 3:44 PM EST »» SALVATORE COLLELUORI & DENISE ROBBINS

Numerous local newspapers failed to identify the fossil fuel funding behind Thomas Pyle, president of the American Energy Alliance, while allowing him to publish op-eds across the country misleadingly attacking a potential tax credit for wind power, while ignoring subsidies for the oil and gas industries.

President Of Fossil Fuel Funded Group Publishes Op-Eds Across Country Without Disclosure

75 Percent Of Newspapers Surveyed Did Not Identify Funding Behind Thomas Pyle. At least 20 papers across the country published an op-ed by Thomas Pyle, president of the fossil fuel-funded American Energy Alliance, attacking wind power, and a currently expired tax credit for wind power. Of the 20 papers that ran the op-ed and *Media Matters* was able to access, only 5 papers -- *The Des Moines Register*, *Harrisburg Patriot-News*, *Desert Sun*, *Providence Journal*, and *Altoona Herald* -- disclosed Pyle's ties to either the Koch brothers or fossil fuel companies. The other 15 outlets -- *The Deseret Morning News*, *Casper Star Tribune*, *Corpus Christie Caller-Times*, *Roanoke Times*, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, *OC Register*, *Tampa Tribune*, *Mobile Press-Register*, *Huntsville Times*, *Evansville Courier & Press*, *Arizona Republic*, *NH Union Leader*, *Wichita Eagle* and the *Las Cruces Sun-News* -- failed to disclose any ties to corporate backing and simply labeled him as the president of the American Energy Alliance or pulled a description from the American Energy Alliance's "About" page:

Anti-Renewable "Copy-Paste" Op-Eds In State Newspapers



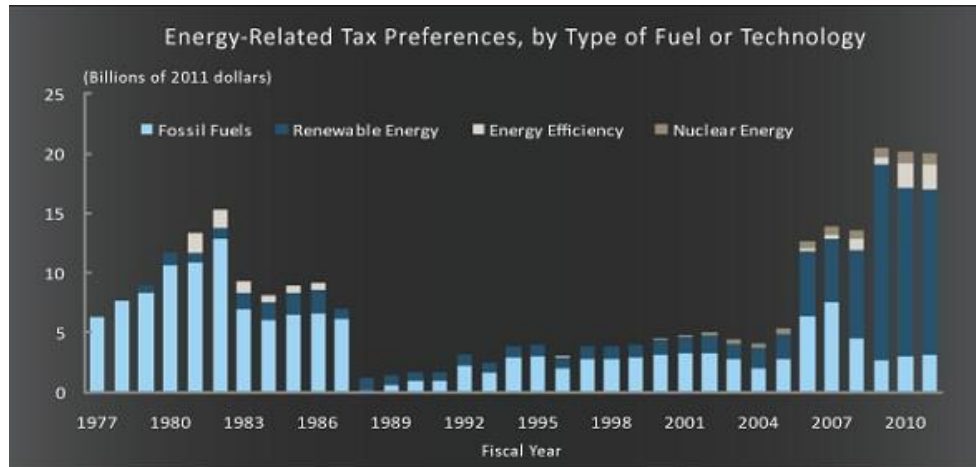
[*The Des Moines Register*, [1/22/14](#); *The Harrisburg Patriot-News*, [1/24/14](#); *The Desert Sun*, [2/22/14](#); *The Providence Journal*, [2/26/14](#); *The Altoona Herald*, [1/22/14](#); *Deseret Morning News*, [1/31/14](#); *Casper Star Tribune*, [2/2/14](#); *Corpus Christie Caller-Times*, [2/3/14](#); *Roanoke Times*, [2/4/14](#); *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, [2/6/14](#); *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, [2/6/14](#); *OC Register*, [2/7/14](#); *Tampa Tribune*, [2/7/14](#); *Mobile Press-Register*, [2/5/14](#); *Huntsville Times*, [2/5/14](#); *Evansville Courier & Press*, [2/8/14](#); *Arizona Republic*, [2/10/14](#); *NH Union Leader*, [2/18/14](#); *Wichita Eagle*, [2/21/14](#); *Las Cruces Sun-News*, [2/25/14](#)]

Thomas Pyle's Op-Eds Misleadingly Attack Wind Energy

Pyle Says Expired Wind Tax Credit Is "Unfair," Ignores Fossil Fuel Subsidies. Pyle's op-eds criticized those who are calling for Congress to renew the recently expired federal wind production tax credit, saying it is a "case study of an unfair federal handout." This tax credit for wind is "the main policy tool in the deployment of U.S. wind power," according to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, yet policymakers have frequently allowed it to expire (introducing uncertainty into the market). Meanwhile, permanent oil subsidies have not been eliminated, as the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office explained:

Tax preferences for energy were first established in 1916, and until 2005 they were primarily intended to stimulate domestic production of oil and natural gas. Beginning in 2006, the cost of energy-related tax preferences grew substantially, and an increasing share was aimed at encouraging energy efficiency and energy produced from renewable sources, such as wind and the sun, which generally cause less environmental damage than would result from producing and consuming fossil fuels. Provisions aimed at energy efficiency and renewable energy accounted

for 78 percent of the budgetary cost of federal energy-related tax preferences in 2011. However, four of those provisions, including the one with the greatest budgetary impact, expired at the end of calendar year 2011. Only four major tax preferences are permanent, three of which are directed toward fossil fuels and one of which is directed toward nuclear energy.



[Congressional Budget Office, [March 2012](#); Congressional Research Service, [9/23/11](#); *The Des Moines Register*, [1/22/14](#)]

Pyle Cited Thoroughly Debunked Study Attacking Green Energy. Pyle's anti-renewable argument relies strongly on a Spanish study that he claims found that "each new 'green job' costs the rest of the economy 2.2 other jobs because of the necessary subsidies." But the 5-year-old study has been debunked by everyone from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to *The Wall Street Journal*, as gathered by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC):

1. The U.S. government has trashed the study. The US National Renewable Energy Laboratory has weighed in with a [white paper](#) that notes that the Spanish study used a questionable methodology, lacks transparency and supporting data, and ignored several pieces of key information. In NREL's words: "The recent report from King Juan Carlos University deviates from the traditional research methodologies used to estimate jobs impacts ...The primary conclusion made by the authors - policy support of renewable energy results in net jobs losses - is not supported by their work."

2. The Spanish Government has trashed the study. Teresa Ribera Rodriguez, Spain's Secretary of State for Climate and Minister of the Environment for Rural and Marine Affairs, wrote a [detailed letter](#) explaining the factual and methodological flaws in the analysis. Pretty much along the lines of what NREL noticed, so I won't repeat them.

3. The study's conclusions are contradicted by the Spanish government's job data on renewable energy. As [the American Wind Energy Association points out](#): "The Spanish Ministry of Labor has found that, contrary to the Spanish study, renewable energy industries have created 175,000 jobs and the European Commission found that aggressive renewable policy would create a net increase of over 400,000 in the European Union by 2020, giving a 'significant boost to the economy and the number of jobs in the EU.'"

4. Even the Wall Street Journal doesn't buy the "destructive green jobs" myth in the report. As the Journal points out in a highly skeptical account: "[... the study doesn't actually identify those jobs allegedly destroyed by renewable-energy spending.](#)" [The Wichita Eagle, [2/21/14](#); NRDC, [9/23/09](#), emphasis original]

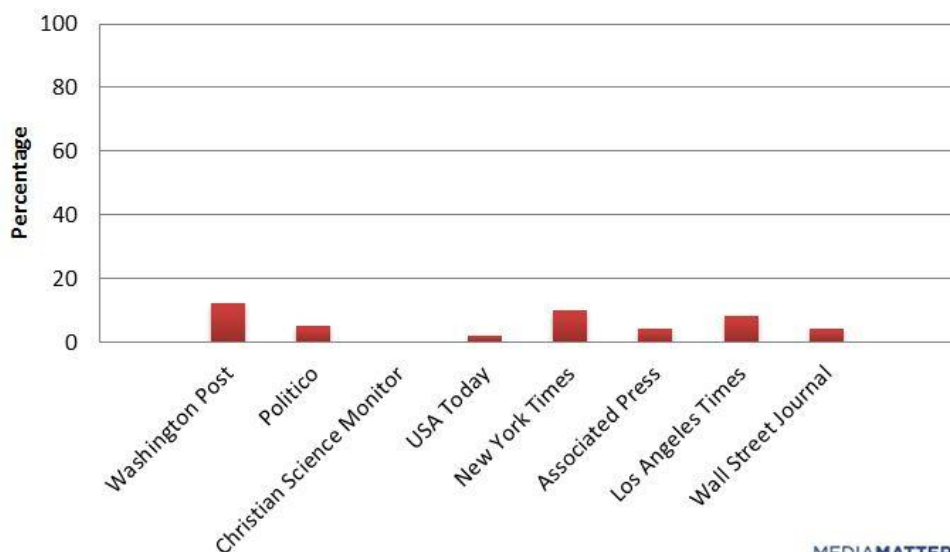
Pyle Has Deep Ties To Fossil Fuel Industry And Koch Brothers

Pyle And The American Energy Alliance Have Deep Connections To Fossil Fuel Companies. Thomas Pyle is the President of the American Energy Alliance (AEA), listed as the "grassroots" arm of the Institute for Energy Research (IER), where he is also the President. Pyle and those organizations have many connections to the fossil fuel industry:

- Pyle was formerly a lobbyist for Koch Industries, a large company with fossil fuel interests. [Center for Public Integrity, [1/15/14](#)]
- IER has received \$307,000 in funding from ExxonMobil since 1998, and has received donations from the Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundation, which is run by executives of Koch Industries. [[exxonsecrets.org](#), accessed [2/26/14](#); Sourcewatch, accessed [2/26/14](#)]
- IER's CEO, Robert Bradley Jr., formerly worked at Enron (the now-bankrupt company with fossil fuel interests), and is an adjunct scholar at both the Cato Institute and Competitive Enterprise Institute, both of which have connections to Koch Industries. [Sourcewatch, accessed [2/26/14](#); IER, accessed [2/26/14](#)]
- According to Politico, both AEA and IER are partly funded by "the Koch brothers and their donor network." [*Politico*, [3/29/12](#)]

Study Found Pyle And Other Fossil Fuel Pundits Given Free Platforms In Newspapers. A study from the Checks and Balances Project found that newspapers have been citing "experts" from fossil fuel-funded think tanks over the past several years including Pyle, largely without disclosing their fossil fuel ties. *Media Matters* expanded on this study by adding data from *Wall Street Journal*, finding that the paper quoted industry-funded think tanks more than any other paper studied, and -- like the other papers -- rarely disclosed fossil fuel funding (click to enlarge):

How Often Did Print Media Disclose Fossil Fuel Ties?



MEDIAMATTERS [Media

Matters, [12/20/12](#); Checks and Balances Project, [December 2012](#); Mother Jones, [12/13/12](#)]

Methodology

Media Matters searched US Newspapers and Wires in LexisNexis for all mentions of "Thomas Pyle" since January 1, 2014. We also conducted a Google search of "Thomas Pyle" and the states "Wyoming," "Pennsylvania," "Virginia," "Iowa," "Texas," and "Alabama" -- states identified by the [American Wind Energy Association](#) as states which had papers running the op-ed. *Media Matters* was able to identify 21 instances where Pyle's op-ed ran, but only included the 20 pieces which *Media Matters* was able to access and determine the disclosure by the outlet.

Posted in

[Energy](#), [Environment & Science](#), [Ethics](#)

Network/Outlet

[Arizona Republic](#), [Des Moines Register](#), [New Hampshire Union Leader](#), [South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#), [The Desert Sun](#), [The Providence Journal](#)

Show/Publication

[Casper Star Tribune](#), [Corpus Christi Caller Times](#), [Deseret Morning News](#), [Evansville Courier & Press](#), [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#), [Huntsville Times](#), [Las Cruces Sun-News](#), [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#), [OC Register](#), [Roanoke Times](#), [Tampa Tribune](#), [Wichita Eagle](#)

Stories/Interests

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