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Lawson's deniers handed \$177k by US donors

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The Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF) received hundreds of thousands in US donations in 2017, recently published tax returns show.

The UK's premier climate science denial campaign group, the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), received hundreds of thousands of dollars of US donations in 2017, recently published tax returns show.

The money was received at a time when the GWPF was allegedly coordinating with eight other right-wing thinktanks based in and around offices at 55 Tufton Street to push for a hard Brexit.

Another of the groups, the Taxpayers' Alliance, received at least \$286,000 (£223,300) from US-based donors in the last five years, the Guardian recently revealed.

Life chairman

This fuels concerns about the influence of foreign money at a time when lobby groups are pushing to cut regulation to secure trade deals with major polluters such as India, China and the US.

Public tax returns filed by the GWPF's US-fundraising arm, American Friends of the GWPF, show the organisation received \$177,001 in grants and gifts in 2017 (worth approximately £137,900 at the time of writing). That includes a single \$124,884 donation (worth approximately £97,265), according to the documents.

The 2017 donations were a significant increase on the amount the GWPF received in 2016 — \$128,016 (approximately £99,735).

US tax regulations only require the organisation to declare how much it has received in grants, without disclosing the source of the donations.

Nigel Lawson, the GWPF founder and chairman for life is also listed as chairman of the American Friends of the GWPF. Benny Peiser, the GWPF's director in the UK, is listed as secretary.

Key organisation

Both spend approximately three hours per week working for the US organisation, the documents declare. Neither were paid for this work, according to the filing.

Major US Republican donor David Herro is listed as the group's treasurer, and apparently spends about five hours per week working for the group.

Herro told the Financial Times in 2015 that he was a funder of the GWPF. One week prior to the FT's article being published, Herro donated to the Heartland Institute's appeal to fund its trip to the Paris climate conference in December of that year.

Herro has also donated to the Cato Institute, another U.S. climate science denying think tank. The Cato Institute is a key organisation in a transatlantic web of lobby groups pushing for environmental deregulation post-Brexit.

DeSmog UK recently revealed how this network of US libertarian campaign groups with links to fossil fuel magnates the Koch brothers and data analytics guru Robert Mercer increased their European and UK activities around the time of the Brexit referendum.