

GOP House Rep Issues Subpoenas To AGs And Green Groups Targeting Exxon

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July 13, 2016

A top House Republican issued subpoenas Wednesday to the attorneys general and environmental groups conservatives argue are depriving companies and other organization of free speech rights.

Texas Rep. Lamar Smith issued subpoenas to Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, and eight environmental groups focusing on nonprofit groups for supposedly hiding information related to global warming.

“The attorneys general have appointed themselves to decide what is valid and what is invalid regarding climate change. The attorneys general are pursuing a political agenda at the expense of scientists’ right to free speech,” Smith, who chairs the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, said in a press statement Wednesday.

“The Committee has a responsibility to protect First Amendment rights of companies, academic institutions, scientists, and nonprofit organizations,” Smith said. The reason for subpoenas, Smith added, was because Schneiderman and Healey have refused to give the committee information.

Smith added: “What are they hiding? And Why?”

Smith’s subpoena comes two days after Rhode Island Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse and Democratic Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid created a Senate schedule for Monday and Tuesday, requesting 19 senators lambaste groups like Americans for Prosperity, Reason Foundation, and Cato Institute for supposedly creating a “web of denial” on so-called man-made global warming.

Reid, and Democratic Sens. Chuck Schumer of New York, Tim Kaine of Virginia, and others, were tasked with firing volleys Monday against the groups. Schumer, for his part, is slated to target libertarian group Mercatus Center, and the Nevada senator will attack conservative group Americans for Prosperity.

Sens. Al Franken of Minnesota, Barbara Boxer of California, and Whitehouse planned Tuesday to needle groups like the Heritage Foundation and the Hoover Institute.

The Heritage Foundation, Heartland Institute, American Legislative Exchange Council, and Americans For Tax Reform, lashed out at the senators Tuesday in a letter obtained by The Daily Caller News Foundation.

“We hear you,” the letter read. “Your threat is clear: There is a heavy and inconvenient cost to disagreeing with you. Calls for debate will be met with political retribution. That’s called tyranny. And, we reject it.”

After activists with Greenpeace and 350.org found out House Republicans intended on subpoenaing them, they sent a letter to lawmakers demanding they disclose their ties to ExxonMobil – the activists suggested subpoenas violate their free speech.

“As we have explained in detail in our prior letters to the Committee, the Committee’s requests violate basic First Amendment protections, fall outside the proper jurisdiction of the Committee, and are impermissibly vague, overbroad, and burdensome,” they wrote in the letter addressed to Smith.