

Dems Assigned Conservative Groups to Attack on Senate Floor

List of 'web of denial' targets circulated ahead of climate resolution

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Democratic senators have been assigned conservative nonprofit groups to call out by name on the chamber floor in speeches on Monday and Tuesday criticizing corporations and advocacy groups for opposing Democratic climate policies, internal emails reveal.

Nineteen Senate Democrats will attack specific organizations in what they are calling a “web of denial,” according to a schedule of floor speeches circulated by Emily Enderle, a top environmental policy adviser to Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D., R.I.), who is spearheading the effort.

Internal emails about the effort obtained by the *Free Beacon* reveal a highly coordinated plan between members of Congress and environmental activist groups to fuel a public relations and legal offensive against fossil fuel companies and groups they support.

Enderle’s email also included graphics and suggested tweets to use “as guides as you craft digital content.”

According to her email, Whitehouse and his allies, including Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.), have crafted a schedule for floor speeches on Monday and Tuesday that assigns each participating Senator at least one group to go after by name.

Most of the groups have already been targeted by state Democratic officials that have undertaken a coordinated legal campaign against oil giant ExxonMobil since last year. Many were named in subpoenas sent to the company by state attorneys general as part of that effort.

Whitehouse has been a leading proponent of federal racketeering charges against Exxon and other oil companies over allegedly fraudulent statements to shareholders about the financial impact of climate change.

Environmental groups that Whitehouse has consulted on the effort have warned that such a strategy is unlikely to succeed. Attorney General Loretta Lynch recently referred the allegations to the FBI at Whitehouse's behest.

This week's floor speeches are part of a PR push for a resolution introduced by Whitehouse and other Senators involved in the effort. It seeks to tie climate policy to decades-old legal fights over the dangers of tobacco smoke and lead paint.

Enderle revealed that Whitehouse has been coordinating with leading environmental groups on the effort. "Thanks to LCV [the League of Conservation Voters], Sierra Club, Union of Concerned Scientists, Clean Water Action, and Public Citizen for supporting" the resolution, she wrote in an email before its text was publicly released.

The resolution "urges fossil fuel companies and allied organizations to cooperate with active or future investigations into their climate-change related activities."

The "tentative schedule" that Enderle circulated on Monday alerted offices to the following speeches and groups that would be targeted.

"The schedule has been adjusted a bit," she noted in a follow-up email. "Senator Cardin is now expected to kick things off around 4:45pm today and Leader Reid is tentatively going to give his remarks tomorrow morning.

Monday

Sen. Reid – ~4:10 (Leader Time) – Americans for Prosperity, Nevada Policy Research Institute

Sen. Cardin – 4:45 – Annapolis Center for Science-Based Public Policy

Sen. Coons – (tent.) 5pm – Group TBD

Sen. Udall – 5:15pm – Western Fuels Association

Sen. Kaine – 5:30pm – Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy

Sen. Schumer – 6pm – Mercatus Center (tent.)

Sen. Merkley – 6:15pm – Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine

Sen. Blumenthal – Time TBD (or Tuesday) – Americans for Prosperity, American Legislative Exchange Council

Sen. Whitehouse – Time TBD – The Advancement of Sound ScienceCenter, Chamber of Commerce, Committee for Constructive Tomorrow, Franklin Center for Government and Policy Integrity, James Madison Institute, John Locke Foundation, Locke Institute

Tuesday

Sen. Boxer – Time TBD – Hoover Institution, Reason Foundation, Pacific Research Institute

Sen. Coons – Time TBD (or Monday) – Group TBD

Sen. Schatz – 5pm – Center for Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change, Heartland Institute

Sen. Franken – 5:15pm – Heritage Foundation

Sen. Warren – 5:30pm – Science and Public Policy Institute

Sen. Heinrich – 5:45pm – American Legislative Exchange Council

Sen. Shaheen – 6pm – Competitive Enterprise Institute, Energy and Environmental Legal Institute

Sen. Reed – around 6pm – SEC climate change disclosures and the dangers of climate change denial from a national security perspective

Sen. Markey – 6pm to 6:30pm – Acton Institute, George C. Marshall Institute, Lexington Institute, Global Climate Coalition

Sen. Peters – 6:30pm – Cato Institute

Sen. Blumenthal – Time TBD – Americans for Prosperity, American Legislative Exchange Council

Sen. Whitehouse – Time TBD – The Advancement of Sound Science Center, Chamber of Commerce, Committee for Constructive Tomorrow, Franklin Center for Government and Policy Integrity, James Madison Institute, John Locke Foundation, Locke Institute