



EASTERN MIRROR

Google funding climate change deniers

Mirror Desk

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Internet giant Google is funding some of the most notorious climate change deniers in Washington, USA—which is in sharp contrast to the firm’s repeated public calls to take urgent action against the climate crisis.

According to a report published by *The Guardian* on Friday, the company helps bankroll more than a dozen organisations and conservative think-tanks that have pushed against moves to combat climate change.

“Among hundreds of groups the company has listed on its website as beneficiaries of its political giving are more than a dozen organisations that have campaigned against climate legislation, questioned the need for action, or actively sought to roll back Obama-era environmental protections.

“The list includes the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), a conservative policy group that was instrumental in convincing the Trump administration to abandon the Paris agreement and has criticised the White House for not dismantling more environmental rules. Google said it was disappointed by the US decision to abandon the global climate deal, but has continued to support CEI,” it reported.

Google is also listed as a sponsor for an upcoming annual meeting of the State Policy Network (SPN), an umbrella organisation that supports conservative groups including the Heartland Institute, a radical anti-science group that has chided the teenage activist Greta Thunberg for “climate delusion hysterics”.

SPN members recently created a “climate pledge” website that states “our natural environment is getting better” and “there is no climate crisis”.

However, Google has defended its contributions, saying that its “collaboration” with organisations such as CEI “does not mean we endorse the organisations’ entire agenda”.

A spokesperson for Google told *The Guardian* that it sponsored organisations from across the political spectrum that advocate for “strong technology policies”.

“We’re hardly alone among companies that contribute to organisations while strongly disagreeing with them on climate policy,” the spokesperson said. Amazon has, like Google, also sponsored a CEI gala, according to a programme for the event reported in the *New York Times*.

But environmental activists and other critics say that, for a company that purports to support global action on climate change, such tradeoffs are not acceptable.

On its website, Google says it is committed to ensuring its political engagement is “open, transparent and clear to our users, shareholders, and the public”.

But the company declined to answer *The Guardian*'s questions on how much it has given to the organisations. On a webpage devoted to “transparency”, it describes the groups – among hundreds of others, including some progressive advocates such as the Center for American Progress – as having received “substantial” contributions.

Apart from CEI, they include the American Conservative Union, whose chairman, Matt Schlapp, worked for a decade for Koch Industries and shaped the company's radical anti-environment policies in Washington; the American Enterprise Institute, which has railed against climate “alarmists”; and Americans for Tax Reform, which has criticised companies who support climate action for seeking out “corporate welfare”.

It has also donated undisclosed sums to the Cato Institute, which has voiced opposition to climate legislation and questioned the severity of the crisis. Google has also made donations to the Mercatus Center, a Koch-funded thinktank, and the Heritage Foundation and Heritage Action, a pressure group that said the Paris agreement was supported by “cosmopolitan elites” and part of Barack Obama's “destructive legacy”.