



## Trump's cabinet choices reflect deep Koch influence

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President-elect Donald Trump vowed to “drain the swamp” and rid Washington D.C. of lobbyists, corporations and industry influence. But with each new appointment, it becomes clearer that many his transition team members, cabinet picks and close staffers are the very types he said he would steer clear of.

**According to an ongoing analysis** by the left-leaning Washington D.C.-based policy research and advocacy organization Center for American Progress, nearly a third of Trump's transition team has ties to Charles and David Koch, the billionaire brothers that own the second largest privately held company in the country, Koch Industries, and have founded and funded many conservative organizations. That's 72 of the 236 people the organization researched, including those on Trump's transition team for the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Interior, and Department of Energy.

The attention is on high level cabinet picks, but those people working under the Trump administration on the ground, leading or working with transition teams inside each agency, are important to watch, too, says Jenny Rowland, research and advocacy associate for public lands at the Center for American Progress. “Historically, these people have been tapped for undersecretaries or leading smaller departments within agencies. We wanted to keep an eye on where they've been.”

Many of Trump's picks have ties to Koch Industries and Koch Enterprises, which are corporations founded by Charles and David Koch that own a variety of manufacturing, energy, technology and distribution companies. Koch Industries executives and lobbyists have also given to Democrats, too, including the Clintons – though not nearly as much as Republicans.

Some of these people are also tied to the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a conservative nonprofit organization that pushes principles of free-market enterprise, limited federal control, and more power for state governments. Based in Arlington, Virginia, it is funded largely by the Koch family and its corporate advisory board includes ExxonMobil and tobacco

giant Altria. ALEC is closely affiliated with the State Policy Network, a right-wing network of conservative organizations and think tanks, many of which are funded by Koch money.

**ALEC has also become a leader** in the land transfer movement by providing bill templates, research and public support to state legislators. For example, Utah Rep. Ken Ivory sponsored the Transfer of Public Lands Act, which demanded that Congress give states control of public lands. It passed in 2012, but little action has been taken to fulfill the bill's goals. About a year later, ALEC wrote a similar model bill for land transfer laws, urging “all executive officers of this State, to exert their full powers to cooperate and assist Utah and the other States” to sell public land to state governments.

It's not clear what the Trump administration public lands agenda is or whether these links will come into play. Trump himself has made comments both in support and against public land transfers. However, based on these choices, it is clear that one priority of this administration will be fossil fuel development and the oil and gas industry.

Below is a list of members of Trump's transition team and cabinet picks so far who are tied to the Koch brothers, ALEC or the land transfer movement in some way. We will update as more people are named or appointed.

**Vice President Mike Pence** has had Koch ties for many years. *The Nation* reported that in 1991, Pence became president of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation, which is part of the State Policy Network. Koch Enterprises and Koch Industries have been **big campaign donors** throughout his career.

**Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State nominee**, is the CEO of Exxon Mobil, a corporation that advises and is a top sponsor of ALEC. He has no experience in the public sector, having worked for Exxon since 1975. The company has acknowledged the issue of climate change, **but it's unclear** what his political stance is on most environmental and climate issues.

**Rick Perry, Energy Secretary nominee**, is on the board of Energy Transfer Partners, which is funding the Dakota Access Pipeline. Energy Transfer Partners **has agreements** with subsidiaries of Exxon, a member of ALEC. In July 2016, Perry **gave a speech** at ALEC's annual meeting.

**Mike Pompeo, CIA director nominee**, is a **longtime ally** of Koch Industries. He has business ties with the Koch brothers: they've invested in his firm Thayer Aerospace and Sentry International, a company that sells pumping units for oil and gas development, of which he is the president, partnered with Koch Industries through its Brazilian distributor. Pompeo also received campaign contributions from Koch Industries and is involved with Americans for Prosperity, a Tea Party group founded by David Koch.

**Scott Pruitt, EPA administrator nominee**, is affiliated with the **Federalist Society**, a nonprofit organization of conservatives and libertarians. The Koch Foundation **has funded** the society. Koch Industries has **contributed** to Pruitt's Attorney General campaigns in Oklahoma, as have many other companies with ties to ALEC. Pruitt is **currently suing the EPA**, and is a proponent of looser federal regulations on the oil and gas industry and **increased drilling** on federal lands.

**Jeff Sessions, Attorney General nominee**, has received **campaign contributions** from Koch Industries.

**Ryan Zinke, Interior Secretary nominee**, currently sits on the House Natural Resources Committee. He has opposed land transfer legislation in his state of Montana, but is **a proponent** of pipelines and the recipient of large oil and gas-linked campaign donations.

**Wilbur Ross, Commerce Department Secretary nominee**, is a billionaire who has been cited multiple times as a friend of David Koch.

**Nikki Haley, United Nations Ambassador nominee**, is a **former ALEC member** and has pushed many of ALEC-sponsored model legislation, including one about voter identification laws and a charter school bill.

**Tom Price, Health and Human Services Secretary nominee**, led a campaign for representative in Georgia that was partly **funded by** Koch Industries.

**Betsy DeVos, Department of Education head nominee**, is a billionaire who has given millions of dollars to Republican candidates and super PACs. According to the **Center for Responsive Politics**, she has attended many Koch fundraisers and has donated to Americans for Prosperity and other Koch-funded organizations. DeVos has also pushed legislation for the privatization of school systems – which ALEC is a **proponent of** and has model legislation for.

**Myron Ebell, who is leading Trump's EPA transition team**, works for the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a libertarian think tank that is funded by Exxon and the Kochs and a member of ALEC's State Policy Network. Ebell is **affiliated with** the Heartland Institute, which has **partnered with ALEC** in the past.

**Elaine Chao, Transportation Secretary nominee**, is **affiliated with** the Heritage Foundation, which is a member of the State Policy Network.

**Doug Domenech, who is leading Trump's Interior transition team**. He was a George W. Bush administration as the deputy chief of staff to the Secretary of Interior who now works at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a conservative think tank **partially funded** by the Koch brothers and member of the State Policy Network. Domenech has reportedly brought up lawsuits against BLM over public land ownership issues.

**Ned Mamula, on the Interior transition team**, works for the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. Cato has long pushed for the **privatization of public lands**. More recently, the institute sent representatives to speak at FLAG (Federal Land Action Group), a Congressional group with the goal of seizing public lands.

**Scott Cameron, a member of the Interior transition team**, wrote a **blog post** during Cliven Bundy's Bunkerville standoff in 2014 that proposed it is time to "fundamentally reconsider land ownership in the West." He wrote: "Wouldn't everyone be better off if the Western states were to be given more authority over much of this multiple use real estate?"

**Thomas Pyle, who has been leading Trump's transition team for the Energy Department,** is a former Koch Industries and National Petrochemical and Refiners Association lobbyist. He is also the president and founder of the American Energy Alliance, an affiliate of the Institute for Energy Research, which supports free market energy policies.

There are many other transition team staffers involved with Koch-funded ventures and ALEC members. Quite a few work for or have been funded by state, regional, or local conservative think tanks and organizations affiliated with the State Policy Network. For example, **Daniel Simmons**, who is working for the Energy Department transition team, works for the Institute for Energy Research and previously ran the ALEC task force on energy issues. **David Kreutzer**, who is working on the EPA transition team, was a senior research fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation, and **Austin Lipari, on the EPA transition team,** was deputy director of the student division at the Federalist Society.