



BLOG: About that UN climate petition

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In the comment section of a recent wire story we picked up, I noticed someone mention a letter to the UN from 500 "climate scientists" claiming there is no climate emergency and urging a debate about the science.

The poster mentioned the fact that it has not gotten any mainstream media coverage, which I realized was true, and wanted to know why we weren't talking about it. I hadn't heard anything about this petition and it seems like something that would make the news.

So, I did a little digging. Who are these scientists? Why hasn't this huge group of experts gotten their due?

After about 20 minutes it became obvious. The full list of names, which can be found [here](#), includes some scientists sure, but many are from other disciplines such as psychology or engineering and others are simply listed as advisers at institutions such as The Heartland Institute.

For those of you who don't know, [The Heartland Institute](#) is a think tank that helped tobacco companies obscure the truth around harms of secondhand smoke and has [received huge sums](#) of cash from companies such as ExxonMobil.

By 10 p.m. Saturday night I had been awake and doing balloon festival related reporting for about 16 hours straight.

It isn't worth the time or effort it would take to look into every name on the list, so I just did a quick check on the group's ambassadors with my thinking being surely these few selected to represent the many would offer insight into the group.

Starting at home, the U.S. ambassador is Richard Lindzen, an established MIT professor. It seems legit until you find out he [accepted](#) \$30,000 from Peabody Coal in 2015 and another \$25,000 from the Cato Institute, another think tank founded by Charles Koch whose multi-billion-dollar wealth is heavily invested in oil production.

Canada, our neighbors to the north, have Jeffrey Foss listed as their ambassador. Foss is a regular contributor to the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, which has [received](#) at least some money from The Heartland Institute and a large [portion](#) of their funds come from the Aurea Foundation, founded by Peter Munk.

Munk was the creator of Barrick Gold, the largest gold mining company in the world and another industry that may not enjoy the effects of stricter environmental regulation.

Lastly, the German ambassador, Dr. Fritz Vahrenholt who is literally still the [CEO of RWE Innogy](#), the second-largest energy company in Germany that provides natural gas to more than \$10 million customers.

I guess technically its possible that this network of money and connections to the energy sector could be coincidental and each person on the list honestly believes that 17 of the 18 hottest years on record having occurred since 2000 is equally coincidental.

If you find this possibility plausible though, boy have I got a great deal on a bridge for you.

What this petition is actually indicative of is why there has ever been any "debate" around climate change at; billions of dollars funding a misinformation campaign that allows the main culprits to skate responsibility and continue making money.

This stunt is only the latest in a long line and the reason it hasn't been taken up by the mainstream media is because they rightly saw it was hokum not worth mentioning.