



New Report Exposes Climate Change Denial Funding

By Sam Schrader

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The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) recently released a report outlining how many of the nation's top companies are actually remarkably inconsistent or even contradictory when it comes to climate change science.

UCS profiled 28 companies of the S&P 500 that had participated in climate change policy debates over the past few years. While all of them had claimed concern and or committed to reducing emissions either through public statements or press releases, it turns out a lot of that was nothing more than lip service.

Half of the companies misrepresented climate science in public while others spread misinformation regarding climate change through less traditional channels, such as through political contributions, trade group memberships and think tank funding.

"Corporations' increased ability to influence policy should come with an increased responsibility to let the public know how they are doing so...companies may play a role in policy discussions, but right now, it's simply far too easy for them to get away with misrepresenting science to achieve their goals," UCS's Scientific Integrity Program director Francesca Grifo stated.

For all the companies that accept climate change science and have actively changed their habits (NRG Energy, Nike, AES), there are companies that have been working hard to undermine climate policies and misrepresented the science to do so (Peabody Energy Corp, Valero Energy Corp and FMC Corp).

There are also companies who might openly talk about climate change and altering habits, but are still involved with anti-climate change organizations. Caterpillar, for instance, talks a good game, but is still associated with climate change deniers like the US Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, not to mention its association with both the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation, both of which have spent considerable time and money misrepresenting the science.

"The actions of these companies come right from the tobacco industry playbook, where the end goal is delaying sensible regulations that protect our health and safety...companies generally find that complying with new rules is not as burdensome as they first imagined. But that doesn't prevent them from obfuscating the science to create confusion and delay." Grifo said.

UCS is proposing a pretty reasonable and attainable goal: make companies accountable by expanding reporting requirements to the SEC and the passage of the DISCLOSE Act, which would force corporations to share more information about their political spending. Vermont Congressman Chris Van Hollen strongly supports the latter of UCS's proposal, saying, "Voters have a right to know who is bankrolling the campaign ads that are designed to influence their votes...An informed electorate is essential to our democracy."

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Editor's Note: From solar and wind to geothermal and biofuels, *Green Chip* readers want to know which renewable energy resource will take over where fossil fuels leave off. The answer is...[all of the above!](#)

There is no one single solution to today's energy crisis. However, the combination of all viable renewable energy resources, coupled with energy efficiency, conservation and smart grid development will not only lead us to energy independence and a cleaner, more sustainable energy infrastructure — but also to what will soon prove to be the [greatest investment opportunity](#) of the 21st Century.