

# Rep. Waxman Presses for Inquiry on Global Warming Denier Pat Michaels Of dirty Koch money, climate denial and misleading Congress

Blogpost by [Kert Davies](#) - January 25, 2011 at 9:29 [Add comment](#)

Yesterday, [Rep. Henry Waxman](#) sent a letter to [Rep. Fred Upton](#) seeking to pull career global warming denier Pat Michaels in for questioning. [Upton](#) is the ranking Republican leader of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. [Waxman](#) is the Committee's minority leader.

Worth noting here on the subject of Koch money, Rep. Upton recently jumped right in bed with the *Kochtopus*, co-authoring a December 29, 2010 [Wall Street Journal op-ed](#) with Tim Phillips of the Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity. The piece attacked EPA proposed clean air regulations and lo and behold...Upton is expected to introduce legislation later this week to kneecap EPA.

Back to today's Waxman letter, Pat Michaels testified before the Energy and Commerce Committee in February 2009. Waxman's letter says Pat Michaels testified

"that widely accepted scientific data had "overestimated" global warming and that regulation enacted in response to that data could have "a very counterproductive effect." Among the scientists who testified before this Committee on the issue of climate change in the last Congress, Pat Michaels was the only one to dismiss the need to act on climate change."

Here is exactly [what Pat Michaels said before the Committee](#)

"No, the science is not settled. In fact, judging from these results, it's time for climate scientists to get back to work and generate models which will be able to estimate the recent past and present within their normal confidence ranges.

Until that is done, all we know is this: calculations of the costs of inaction, based upon models that are clearly overestimating warming to the point that they can no longer be relied upon, are likely to be similarly overestimated. In that eventuality, the costs of drastic action can easily outweigh the costs of a more measured response, consistent with what is being observed, rather than what is being erroneously modeled."

The Waxman letter concludes:

"Dr. Michaels may have provided misleading information about the sources of his funding and his ties to industries opposed to regulation of emissions responsible for climate change."

We don't know if Pat Michaels misrepresented his funding sources under oath, but misleading Congress is not advisable in general... and misleading Henry Waxman is a really bad plan.

While lining up his testimony in 2009, Pat Michaels submitted an extensive CV (resume) with all of his (climate denying career) accomplishments and sources of funding to the Committee. He listed a small number of corporate grants. These sources of income amounted to a small percentage of his income. Meanwhile, Pat Michaels failed to list multiple large payments to [New Hope Environmental Services](#), Pat Michaels' private climate denial enterprise, which has published the climate denial publication, [World Climate Report](#) dating back to 1995.

New Hope's website says it's...

"an advocacy science consulting firm that produces cutting-edge research and informed commentary on the nature of climate, including patterns of climate change, U.S. and international environmental policy, seasonal and long-range forecasting targeted to user needs, and the relation between the earth's atmosphere and biology. The company also consults on legal matters related to weather and climate."

In 2006, it was [revealed that western coal fired utility interests](#) were rounding up funding for Pat Michaels.

Pat Michaels put his funding sources in the spotlight again in August 2010, by stating on CNN under direct questioning that he gets 40% of his funding from the oil industry.

All of us denier watchers caught the CNN piece and muttered a collected "huh?"... Then [POLITICO](#) called out Michaels double speak a few weeks ago.

Previous to this immense slip (or sudden honesty) by Michaels on CNN, we knew of Pat Michaels funding from the Edison Electric Institute (national electric utility lobbyists), the Western Fuels Association (Wyoming coal front group) German coal industry, US coal addicted electric utilities and other grants.

Greenpeace also unearthed some clues while intervening in a climate lawsuit in Vermont in 2007 where Pat Michaels was an expert witness for auto interests suing the state to stop stricter vehicle greenhouse emissions standards. Greenpeace sought to reveal documents listing Pat Michaels sources of income. The [judge eventually declined our request](#) but in the course of events, Pat Michaels retained counsel and submitted a telling affidavit. He pleads that New Hope Environmental Services is a vital source of income for him and other scientists (presumably [Robert C. Balling, Jr.](#), Contributing Editor to World Climate Report but who else?)

[Pat Michaels' affidavit in the Green Mountain case](#) states:

"Large companies are understandably adverse to negative publicity. Thus, the global warming controversy has created an environment in which companies who wish to support New Hope's research and advocacy about global warming science are increasingly willing to do so only if their support remains confidential. For this reason, some companies that support New Hope financially do so on the understanding that their support will not be made public."

and says that such disclosure of New Hope funding had already cost him income, itemizing several large grants from corporate interests and then pleads poverty:

"Besides modest speaking fees, New Hope is my sole source of income beyond a negotiated retirement package from the University of Virginia. Thus, the Greenpeace motion, if granted, would imperil my livelihood. New Hope also employs the services of other scientists who receive all or a substantial part of their incomes from New Hope. Their livelihoods are also threatened by the Greenpeace motion."

An interesting sidebar here is the lawyer retained by Pat Micheals, [Peter Glaser of Troutman Sanders law firm](#) in DC. Glaser has made a career of keeping coal burning utilities beyond the grasp of EPA enforcement on Clean Air Act violations and representing global warming deniers like Peabody Coal, the Farm Bureau and others. We wonder, were some of Glaser's high rolling carbon club clients *really* interested in keeping Micheals' funding sources under wraps?

[Kate Sheppard of Mother Jones](#) did a nice review of Pat Micheals' credibility and the Green Mountain case in February 2010.

[Pat Michael's is man of many hats](#)...hats of convenience. Over the course of his career depending on the venue and the audience. He has used the titles Virginia State Climatologist (stripped of that title some years ago by the Governor), Senior fellow at the Koch founded and funded Cato Institute, a visiting scientist at the George Marshall Institute, etc. Cato Institute was co-founded by Charles Koch and [David Koch sits on the board](#).

Pat Micheals rarely if ever states any association with New Hope Environmental Services in public, except for publishing World Climate Report. While Michaels "is" a professional scientist and climatologist, he also acts like an economist or free market specialist whenever prompted, opining on the negative economic impacts of climate policies. This prompts us to ask: if you accept economic advice from an expert in weather patterns, would you ask a dentist to set your broken leg?

We look forward to seeing Upton's response to Mr. Waxman.