



The Green Witch Hunt

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Led by agenda-setting New York State and radical left-winger Al Gore the progressive persecution of climate change skeptics by the states is underway.

Top law enforcement officers in several states are joining with the Chicken Littles of green activism to weaponize the scientifically dubious argument that human activity is not only changing the earth's climate but that unprecedented world catastrophe awaits unless draconian, economy-killing carbon emission controls are imposed more or less immediately.

The litigation offensive has nothing to do with justice. It is aimed at forcing those few remaining holdouts in the business community who stubbornly cling to science to confess their thought crimes and submit to the know-nothing Left's climate superstitions. It is part of modern-day environmentalism's ongoing assault on knowledge, human progress, markets, and the rule of law.

Repent and embrace the true green faith or else you'll be investigated and denounced as a climate criminal, is the message of "Inspector Gotcha," New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman.

"It's too early to say what we're going to find," he said of the five-month-old witch hunt aimed at his current target, the gigantic ExxonMobil, at a press conference this week in Lower Manhattan. "We intend to work as aggressively as possible, but also as carefully as possible."

The *New York Times* previously reported that Schneiderman is looking into "whether the company lied to the public about the risks of climate change or to investors about how such risks might hurt the oil business. ... For several years, advocacy groups with expertise in financial analysis have been warning that fossil fuel companies might be overvalued in the stock market, since the need to limit climate change might require that much of their coal, oil and natural gas be left in the ground."

But "The First Amendment, ladies and gentlemen, does not give you the right to commit fraud," Schneiderman said this week.

Of course that assertion is true on its face but that doesn't necessarily mean whatever he's calling fraud is actually fraud. How can rejecting a theory -- a wild, unproven, apocalyptic theory based on creative computer modeling and little else -- about future climate conditions constitute fraud?

The New York Times now reports that the attorneys general of Massachusetts and the Virgin Islands said this week they would join Schneiderman's politically motivated so-called investigation into whether ExxonMobil lied to investors and the public for years about the alleged threat posed by climate change. California opened its own investigation into the company last year.

The interest in ExxonMobil was sparked last year when "Inside Climate News and The Los Angeles Times published articles from Exxon Mobil archives describing the company's research into the risks of climate change," the Old Gray Lady reports.

"An activist uproar ensued, complete with a popular Twitter hashtag: #ExxonKnew."

ExxonMobil spokeswoman Suzanne McCarron said the claims made about the company "are politically motivated and based on discredited reporting by activist organizations." The allegations rest on the "preposterous" claim that the company "reached definitive conclusions about anthropogenic climate change before the world's experts" and kept those findings secret.

Trying to appease Schneiderman, McCarron said her company "recognizes the risks posed by climate change," adding "the investigations targeting our company threaten to have a chilling effect on private sector research."

At Schneiderman's press conference, former Vice President Gore, whose understanding of science roughly mirrors that of the Unabomber, was in attendance along with the attorneys general of Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Vermont, Virginia, and the Virgin Islands.

Gore implied ExxonMobil was just as bad as the tobacco industry which allegedly denied risks posed by its products for years. State attorneys general were an important part of the effort to nail Big Tobacco, he said.

"I do think the analogy may hold up rather precisely," said Gore whose longtime meal ticket has been global warming. Thought to earn up to \$200,000 per speech, Gore reportedly had a net worth of about \$1.7 million at the turn of the century. But global warming hysteria cultivated by Gore grew over the years and by 2013 his fortune had grown to more than \$200 million.

Schneiderman, a left-wing fanatic, is gearing up for what amounts to political show trials to enforce the Left's party line on anthropogenic global warming. His most recent victim is coal concern Peabody Energy which settled with the Democrat shakedown artist over its public disclosures related to climate change.

This radical inquisitor whom *Politico* reported had “spent his career building an ideological infrastructure for the left,” is building a gallows for those with the temerity to reject the lies of the misanthropic global-warmist agenda.

Schneiderman is a leftist's leftist, a zealous true believer intent on, in his own words, “slow[ing] down the bone-crushing machinery of the contemporary conservative movement.”

In his successful campaign for the attorney general post he worked closely with the ACORN-linked "Working Families Party and financed his run with nearly \$1 million from unions, [establishing he] was a true movement progressive, at home in the sorts of gatherings where 'Joe Hill' might be sung and people know who Emma Goldman was," Walter Olson writes at *City Journal*.

The business community is wary of Schneiderman -- and for good reason.

"Beyond the confines of Washington, D.C.," Olson adds, "the attorney general of the State of New York is, in some ways, the public official most feared by America's business community, and for reasons that go beyond the famous tenure of hyperactive AG Eliot Spitzer."

It needs to be said that Schneiderman's pursuit of ExxonMobil sure smells like political payback.

As Dr. Steven J. Allen, my learned Capital Research Center colleague, has reported ExxonMobil used to be a major contributor to the scandal-plagued Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation, as well as a sponsor of the annual meetings of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI). But as the foundation became inundated by adverse publicity related to the fact that it functions as a clearinghouse for future presidential favors from Hillary Clinton, ExxonMobil reportedly stopped giving it money.

It's no coincidence that Secretary Clinton turned on the company last fall, demanding it be investigated for giving grants to warming-skeptic organizations. “There's a lot of evidence that they misled the public,” she declared.

Allen writes:

"In November, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman—a top supporter of Clinton—launched an investigation into the company that, in the words of the *Wall Street Journal*, 'marks a dangerous new escalation of the Left's attempt to stamp out all disagreement on global-warming science and policy. ... demanding Exxon's documents on climate research from 1977 to 2015.'"

Was Schneiderman's newfound interest in ExxonMobil piqued by green idealism?

The question answers itself.