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Global warming: Greenpeace morphs into big tobacco

March 26, 2:34 PM · Environmental Policy Examiner · Thomas Fuller



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According to Greenpeace's latest report, "[Dealing in Doubt: The Climate Denial Industry and Climate Science](#)," those opposed to the consensus position on global warming are a well-organized, well-funded group of climate change deniers. It begins with a quote from a document written by a tobacco company in 1969.

As you might guess, I find the report objectionable. It is a twisted mess of half truths and outright lies. It includes a quote from Michael Mann that *"The side that has been issuing these attacks are extremely well-funded, well-organized. They have had an attack infrastructure of this sort for decades, developed it during the tobacco wars, they honed it further... in further efforts to attack science that industry or other sceptical interests find inconvenient. So they have a very well honed, well-funded organised machine that they are bringing to bear in their attack now against climate science."* But they don't even try to back it up. Why would a paleoclimatologist be a reputable source about skeptical lobbying? No answer is given.

Greenpeace is crossing a line. They are adopting the tactics of Big Tobacco in an effort to fight what they want you to think is a Big Tobacco array of interests against them. This serves two purposes. First, it obviously helps their cause to class their opponents alongside Big Tobacco, with all the symbolism that entails. But second, it helps their fundraising as they paint themselves as the small, beleaguered group of environmental good guys fighting against these evil monsters.

But their budget for one year is 10 times greater than all the money they say has been contributed to their opponents over the past 10 years. So is that of the World Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, etc. The report adds up 10 years of contributions to make the totals look bigger--ooh! Exxon gave the Cato Institute \$125,000 over a 12 year period. The Cato Institute writes about every subject under the sun. Giving them \$10,000 a year does not seem like funding a machine to attack climate change. It's the very conservative management of an energy company giving a token donation to a very conservative thinktank. I'm a progressive liberal. I oppose almost everything the Cato Institute has ever written. But come on, people. Get real. Is nobody even going to mention the \$100 million Exxon donated to Stanford so Stephen Schneider can continue his advocacy of Greenpeace and the fight against global warming? Isn't that relevant to this discussion at all? Is nobody even going to mention the institutional donors to Phil Jones' CRU, and all the energy companies among them? How much money do the environmental NGOs receive from big energy companies, and why don't they publish that?

Update: Greenpeace is also trying to characterize this struggle as being led by the thinktanks funded by Exxon, which is not even close to the truth. The lumbering, slow conservative thinktanks do occasionally publish on climate change, but the writers are the same as those eulogizing Ronald Reagan and pushing other conservative memes. They haven't driven the debate--they have followed it, usually following the bloggers that Greenpeace thinks are the product of this process. In fact, they have led it.

The people they tar with the hate word 'denialist' are not--most of the people they libel actually believe

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the people they fear with the hate were denier and not most of the people they most actually believe in climate change due to anthropogenic causes. But Greenpeace equates them with Holocaust Deniers because they don't agree with Greenpeace's policy solutions. Although they didn't name me (I'm not important enough to show up on their radar screens) I would be one of those they call a 'denialist.'

The Greenpeace report replicates a chart found on a site called ExxonSecrets.org. [To give one example](#), they label an astrophysicist, Sallie Baliunas (who has published a variety of skeptical papers) as a denier funded by Exxon Mobil. However, looking in detail at their material about her, it is clear that Exxon never gave her any money. She has worked with conservative thinktanks such as the Heritage Foundation and the Hoover Institute which receive funding from Exxon. This is libel.

The Greenpeace report calls Steve McIntyre a denier, equating him with those who say the Holocaust never occurred. But McIntyre does believe in global warming, does believe humans are contributing to it, and has never received any money from anyone to express his (or their) opinions on the subject. The report adamantly defends Michael Mann's Hockey Stick, without mentioning the Wegman or the NAS report that concluded it used wrong methods of analysis that would have transformed random noise into his famous hockey stick.

At the end, it is a useless diatribe. Those who wish to defend the consensus on climate change will need to look elsewhere for support.

Greenpeace tries to paint a picture of vast sums of money given by Exxon Mobil to fight the good environmentalists. But they don't use real numbers, which allows them to distort what is happening. Most of the organisations Exxon has contributed to are conservative thinktanks that share Exxon's view on a variety of issues, including Alaskan oil, offshore drilling, access to shale natural gas and other topics that potentially affect their bottom line. And yes, these organisations do write about climate change from time to time, and are skeptical. But to say that Exxon has geared up and contributed \$23 million over 10 years time to a couple of dozen organisations to create a machine to fight climate change is a fantasy with just one goal--to increase contributions to Greenpeace.

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kim says:

Yeah, and what they like doing, too. Lately, though they still like doing it, they are not so good at it.

=====

March 29, 11:48 AM

global warming will resume shortly. Around the world ...

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Tony Hansen says:

Kim,
Because people should do what they are good at?

March 27, 9:35 PM

j ferguson says:

Duncan,
I don't doubt that they are unhappy with us, but surely they don't think that this blog circuit is either "well funded" or "orchestrated" assuming they even understand the concept of orchestration.

I've always suspected that the managers of religions never really understood the substance of their heresies - other than that they thought that "faith" was the key to everything and accordingly nothing needed to be accessible to rational consideration.

GreenPeace certainly doesn't seem to understand the substances of the heresies we ponder here.

March 27, 7:58 PM

Duncan says:

jferguson, I've tried to hope that too. Many times.
Turns out, they're really talking about us.

See, one you start demonizing your self-perceived enemies, it becomes difficult to distinguish among them. Or between them and the sane people who just don't share your paranoia.

Greenpeace crossed that line long ago.

March 27, 6:06 PM

catcracking says:

Kim,
"Let's get real, folks. Ask yourself why did they lie."
Good point although they do fools some of the people including some in Congress and the Administration. Maybe not, these folks are not known for their honesty either. Maybe Boxer is not really that stupid.
If they hadn't propagated such exaggerations and lies maybe they could have pulled it off. Some of us smelled a rat and investigated the claims about global warming and ultimately became skeptics in varying degrees based on the facts.

March 27, 1:43 PM

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If they hadn't propagated such exaggerations and lies maybe they could have pulled it off. Some of us smelled a rat and investigated the claims about global warming and ultimately became skeptics in varying degrees based on the facts.

March 27, 12:18 PM

j ferguson says:

Is it possible they aren't talking about "us?" Maybe Fox News and perhaps the Wall Street Journal fall into the deniers' camp as seen by Green Peace - and at least Fox IS well funded.

March 27, 10:50 AM

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kim says:

They lied about the science and they're lying about the politicking. Let's get real, folks. Ask yourself why did they lie.
=====

March 27, 10:34 AM

Mike Ramsey says:

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

March 27, 7:51 AM

ian s says:

Tom...re: greenpeace, don't know whether you read this on Pielke Sr. blog, 13 March:

'The Unholy Alliance between Philips and the Greens – A Guest Weblog by Joost van Kasteren and Henk Tennekes'

cheers, ian

March 27, 12:51 AM

John W says:

If only every debate could be between the intellectually honest, such as yourself. I may disagree with you on AGW, but I admire your integrity.

Have you seen the story going through the media about the island off the coast of India that's disappeared "due to global warming"? Whether you believe in AGW or not, that sort of irresponsible journalism does no one any good in the long run.

March 26, 10:56 PM

Peter Wilson says:

Don't sell yourself short, Tom, the only reason you don't show up on their radar is they have lousy radar.

We keep hearing about the old "Big Tobacco" campaign, but as I recall there was one important factor people forget - no one ever believed the Tobacco companies. For all the money they spent, they convinced almost exactly no one - cigarettes were referred to as "cancer sticks" when I was at school in the early 70's, and I recall nagging my father about his smoking, on health grounds, in the late 60's (little brat I was!).

The lesson from that rather sordid chapter in the history of science is that no amount of money spent peddling snake oil will prevail if your message is nonsense. A lesson which appears to be being played out again, although "Big Green" got further than Big Tobacco ever did before the blogosphere blew their cover.

March 26, 8:04 PM

Eric says:

this is important and unpopular accountability journalism.

PEHarvey - hehe, nice catch. Where did that come from?

March 26, 7:04 PM

hunter says:

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Replay

Well stated. The Orwellian tactics of the AGW community were one of the first tells for me that something on the alarmist side was not right. This effort of Greenpeace to manipulate by way of lies the public square is simply one of the more blatant ones.

March 26, 5:57 PM

PEHarvey says:

Please dissociate from the reference on that strange article on "Directed Energy Weapons" that appears on the same page as your article

March 26, 3:41 PM



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