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Global Warming: Who's funding the fight?

April 3, 9:10 PM Environmental Policy Examiner Thomas Fuller



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Over at Mother Jones, Kate Shephard asks--and answers--the question in my headline: "Who's behind a multi-million dollar campaign to seed doubt about climate change? It's not just Exxon and Chevron--it's also Koch Industries, an oil and gas giant that most people have never heard of, according to a new report from Greenpeace. Koch's extensive funding of anti-climate work makes it the "financial kingpin of climate science denial and clean energy opposition," says Greenpeace." The Greenpeace report can be found here.

Financial kingpin of climate science denial? Sounds pretty ominous. And because I want to feel free to defend George Soros and his funding of causes I support now, and I believe that at some point I will have to speak out in defense of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett in the future (some hard choices coming for their foundation), I am going to bend over backwards in defending people and organisations who wish to contribute money to causes they believe in, or believe will benefit them. As long as everyone's open about it, I think it's okay.

Greenpeace says "The Kansas-based company and its affiliates and foundations spent almost \$25 million on "organizations of the 'climate denial machine'" between 2005 and 2008." Okay... but in fact, \$22 million of that money went to conservative thinktanks with little or no connection to climate science. The top recipient, receiving over \$9 million, was the Mercatus Center, which has several research and outreach programs: Capitol Hill Campus, the Government Accountability Project, the Regulatory Studies Program, and the Global Prosperity Initiative. Not much climate denial goin' on here...

Let's look at The Cato Institute, which has received more than \$1 million from Koch over the past three years, and has featured on their website the following reports:

- China Trade and American Jobs, Daniel J. Ikenson in the Wall Street Journal. Escalante Stood and Delivered. It's Our Turn. Andrew J. Coulson on education reform. Demography Determining GOP's Destiny. Gene Healy in the DC Examiner. The Rich Can't Pay for ObamaCare. Alan Reynolds in the Wall Street Journal. Concealed Handguns Won't Make Bars Shooting Galleries. by David Rittgers.

Tell me--do you think Cato is really part of the 'climate denial machine' or a conservative thinktank that occasionally has an article that disagrees with Greenpeace? (Hey Cato--too bad about that healthcare thing. /sarc).

But this is what Greenpeace says about Cato: "The Cato Institute (received over \$1 million in grants from Koch since 2005) is the frontgroup for climate-denier Patrick Michaels14, who has been a vocal spokesperson regarding "ClimateGate". Within two weeks following the email breach at East Anglia University, Patrick Michaels had appeared in over twenty media interviews15 on shows including CNN's Anderson Cooper 360, NBC's Nightly News, FOX's Fox & Friends, C-SPAN's Washington Journal,

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and BBC's Have Your Say. Michaels, taking one line of an illegally-obtained email out of context, has claimed the scientists have committed a "capital crime"¹⁶ and their actions are "akin to filtering what goes in the bible."

But Cato's annual budget is \$24 million--and they get about \$300,000 a year from Koch; they pay scholars to write on a variety of topics, and occasionally one of those writers is the noted skeptical climate scientist Pat Michaels. This is absurd. And Greenpeace takes pretty large liberties in their description of what Michaels wrote. This is Michaels: "...the e-mails show a scientific establishment blinded by its own certainty, one willing to take extraordinary steps to maintain a consensus that suddenly appears shaky at best — and dishonest at worst." And later, on [Cato's website](#) we see Michaels say, "It is too soon to know what the complete fallout from the leak of the CRU e-mails will look like. Michaels is quick to point out that nothing in them speaks to the truth of rising global temperatures or the fact that humans play some role in the earth's warming." Not quite as incendiary as Greenpeace would have you think. Not really much in the way of a 'climate denial machine.'

I hope that makes Greenpeace breathe a little easier. Other recipients of Koch money include the Heritage Foundation, the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies--all conservative thinktanks, all who probably disagree with Greenpeace about the issue of global warming, but none of whom form part of the 'climate denial machine.'

Koch does provide funding for the Institute for Energy Research--to the tune of \$60,000 per year. And also the Property and Environment Research Center--they get \$23,000 per year from Koch.

The Greenpeace story doesn't mention how long Koch (and Exxon, for that matter) have been funding organisations like this. That's because their funding predates any controversy about global warming. That's right, they were giving money to these conservative think tanks back when news stories were worried about global cooling--and even before anyone was worried about the climate at all.

It's another Greenpeace scare story--kind of reminds me about the old joke about Himalayan glaciers...

It's also a bit hypocritical for Greenpeace to focus on energy companies funding some invented 'climate denial machine.' It has never asked Stanford University to return the \$100 million donated by Exxon to its Environmental Studies program, for example. Greenpeace does not accept donations from companies, governments or political parties. But it doesn't criticize the many NGOs that do accept funding.

Readers of our book, [Climategate: The CRUtape Letters](#), may remember a string of emails about CRU team members working the eternal university funding game. The Climate Research Unit (CRU) in the UK was set up in 1971 with funding from Shell and BP as is described in the book: "The history of the University of East Anglia, Norwich; Page 285)" By Michael Sanderson. The CRU was still being funded in 2008 by Shell, BP, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and UK Nirex LTD (the nuclear waste people in the UK).

I've included an email from Climategate at the end of this to remind everyone that both sides have sought and continue to seek money from large energy companies. And large energy companies oblige.

In case nobody has mentioned it yet, there are very many scenarios for the future where big energy companies profit greatly from increased regulation of CO2 emissions. To place them in the camp of some 'climate denial machine' is naive at best, vile at worst, and wrong in any case.

I say let's let people and companies contribute money where they see fit. Let's be open about it and watch how it's being spent. But the next time some Republican attacks George Soros, I want to be able to say with a clean conscience, I defended Koch's philanthropy--and I'm defending Soros, too.

Here are the Climategate emails I mentioned:

- >re: List of Industrial and Commercial Contacts to Elicit Support
- >from for the Tyndall Centre
- >
- >This is the list so far. Our contact person is given in brackets
- >afterwards. There is some discussion on whether we
- >should restrict ourselves to board level contacts - hence Dlugolecki
- >is not board level but highly knowledgeable about climate change.
- >I think people such as that, who are well known for their climate
- >change interests, are worth writing to for support. There may be
- >less value in writing to lesser known personnel at a non-board level.
- >
- >SPRU has offered to elicit support from their energy programme

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>for the need to seek support from their energy programme
 >sponsors which will help beef things up. (Frans: is the Alstom
 >contact the same as Nick Jenkin's below? Also, do you have a BP
 >Amoco contact? The name I've come up with is Paul Rutter, chief
 >engineer, but he is not a personal contact]
 >
 >We could probably do with some more names from the financial sector.
 >Does anyone know any investment bankers?
 >
 >Please send additional names as quickly as possible so we can
 >finalise the list.
 >
 >I am sending a draft of the generic version of the letter eliciting
 >support and the 2 page summary to Mike to look over. Then this can be
 >used as a basis for letter writing by the Tyndall contact (the person
 >in brackets).
 >
 >Mr Alan Wood CEO Siemens plc [Nick Jenkins]
 >Mr Mike Hughes CE Midlands Electricity (Visiting Prof at UMIST) [Nick
 >Jenkins]
 >Mr Keith Taylor, Chairman and CEO of Esso UK (John
 >Shepherd]
 >Mr Brian Duckworth, Managing Director, Severn-Trent Water
 >[Mike Hulme]
 >Dr Jeremy Leggett, Director, Solar Century [Mike Hulme]
 >Mr Brian Ford, Director of Quality, United Utilities plc [Simon
 >Shackley]
 >Dr Andrew Dlugolecki, CGU [Jean Palutikof]
 >Dr Ted Ellis, VP Building Products, Pilkington plc [Simon Shackley]
 >Mr Mervyn Pedalty, CEO, Cooperative Bank plc [Simon Shackley]
 >
 >
 >Possibles:
 >Mr John Loughhead, Technology Director ALSTOM [Nick Jenkins]
 >Mr Edward Hyams, Managing Director Eastern Generation [Nick
 >Jenkins]
 >Dr David Parry, Director Power Technology Centre, Powergen
 >[Nick Jenkins]
 >Mike Townsend, Director, The Woodland Trust [Melvin
 >Cannell]
 >Mr Paul Rutter, BP Amoco [via Terry Lazenby, UMIST]

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Comments

Handymav says:

Put down the pipe, child. History displays cyclical idiots telling us the world is flat and warming--bite it kid.

April 5, 2:53 AM

Dan says:

Tbh, this is just run of the mill fundraising boilerplate. For some reason, left wing orgs love to wax paranoid from time to time with these "web of connections" type reports (you mean right wingers are ORGANIZED?!? The horror!!!1). So they put some poor interns to work digging up donation reports and slap an ominous sounding label on it in the hopes that they can scare some rich left-wing people into giving them more money.

April 5, 1:16 AM

Tom Fuller says:

Peter B--thanks.

April 5, 12:05 AM

Irbinfrisco says:

My impression from your article is that you have probably a prodominate "liberal" political leaning. I would probably disagree with you on many positions. However, your article appears to be exemplary as a communication technique of political opinion. Too bad more don't follow this example. I may not agree with you on the benefits of Obama's healthcare, but I would certainly be more than willing to listen to what you had to say if presented in such a manner that does away with so much of the demonization that is present in polical discourse today.

April 4, 7:18 PM

Peter B says:

Apologies if it's not the best post to which to add this comment. I've finally read Thomas Fuller and Steve Mosher's book, "Climategate: the CRUTape Letters". It's an excellent book and to my surprises it overlaps little with "The Hockey Stick Illusion"; ideally one should read both.

I would like to add that what's depressing - but not really surprising - is the combination of scientific incompetence and utter lack of character that is to be found in all of the Team members - no exception. It is the combination of the two that leads to their lack of openness. Steve McIntyre has plenty of competence and character, which leads to his openness. That should be obvious to anyone following the story and who reads all e-mails. That it's "not" obvious to the broader climate "science" community tells a lot about "their" competence and character.

Your book does touch on that, but not with as much focus as I'd have wished. But that's my own opinion.

April 4, 4:45 PM

hunter says:

Earl_E,
Describe a region 'ravaged by climate'.
And while you are at it, show us the history of the concept of 'ice volume' irt Arctic ice. For extra points. How do you like taxpayer money being spent to pretend a theory is proven, and to suppress problems with the same theory?

April 4, 2:44 PM

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Mike Ramsey says:

The truth has always been the least of Greenpeace's concerns.

"Patrick Moore [a Greenpeace founder]: Going back to the early days in Greenpeace in the 1970s and 1980s, we were totally focused on nuclear war and nuclear testing in the Cold War. We failed to distinguish between the beneficial uses of the technology and the evil uses of the technology."

He fails to mention that that failure to distinguish was intentional and done with malice.

"It became clear to me that there was a logical disconnect. The people who were most concerned about climate change were most opposed to nuclear power. Greenpeace is against fossil fuel, nuclear and hydroelectric power. Those three technologies produce over 99 percent of world energy. What kind of a path to a sustainable future is that?"

Growing up is better late than never.

--Mike Ramsey

April 4, 1:54 PM

Allan says:

I am a first time reader anything of your work. I suspect we would disagree on many things but, am pleased to see you believe that we all have a right to speak and to give our assets as we see fit. For a "liberal" (which I think you probably are) to strip away the hype honestly is refreshing (we conservatives could use some of that too!). I will read your comments in the future knowing that you respect the view of others.

I know Kochl through long association. They are focused on economic theory. They believe fiercely that the free market will bring the greatest good for the greatest number long term. They have all the money they will ever need. Their efforts to influence society is truly not directed to enrich themselves but, in their view, to enrich us all with a better future. [They certainly are in business to make money however.] There is a lot of disagreement on how to get to a better future but we need to be honest in our rhetoric. Thank you for your comments.

April 4, 12:47 PM

Earl_E says:

Just wondering how often multi-national corporations spend millions of dollars to disprove scientific hypothesis? Other than smoking and cancer I can't think of any. Name some please.

Across the web we now hear the March ice extent being promoted as contradictory despite the scientific evidence that ice volume continues to decline. They say to look at ice cover even if it is mostly first year ice. Wouldn't it be nice if volume didn't matter?

Then they ignore the research which shows wind direction has more to do with ice sheets than first thought, and that changes in the wind speed, direction, and moisture content have significant impact on ice formation.

It must be hard for these profit-driven socialists to continue to ignore 95% of the science.

I just wish my tax dollars didn't have to go to regions ravaged by climate or to fund military operations for oil disguised as war.

April 4, 12:40 PM

hunter says:

The AGW nutters are getting a bit twitchy.

April 4, 11:28 AM

Ernie says:

So how much money do Michael Mann et al receive to pursue their ideology??

A bit more, perhaps.

This is a nutty accusation.

Ernie in Utah

April 4, 12:18 AM



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