

April 19, 2010



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Posted: April 19, 2010 02:23 PM

Squadron of Oil Executives on Fraser Institute Board of Directors

Canada's libertarian think-tank, the Fraser Institute, has a knack for providing excellent PR and advocacy services for the oil industry in Canada. That might be because they practically are the oil industry.

Out of 47 directors, 9 can be clearly linked to the oil, gas and coal industries. Since Canadian oil companies extract dirty tar sands, which have a much larger environmental impact and carbon footprint than run-of-the-mill dirty oil, the industry relies on top-notch spin to massage its image in the public eye.

Here are some of the oil celebrities riding Fraser's anti-regulation bandwagon:

William (Bill) Siebens founded Siebens Oil and Gas Ltd in the 1950s and is still at it. His lifetime of extracting fossil fuels earned him a spot in the Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame.

Roger Phillips sits on the board of directors of Imperial Oil, Canada's largest oil company. Imperial is 70% owned by ExxonMobil and has a 25% stake in Syncrude Canada, the largest producer of oil from tar sands.

John Dielwart is the president and CEO of Arc Energy Trusts, one of Canada's largest conventional oil and gas royalty trusts.

Paul Hill is the president and CEO of the Hill Companies. According to his bio, "he is a past director of Canada Trust, North Canadian Oils Ltd., Shopping.com, US Forest Industries, the Canadian Forces Liaison Committee and the Asia Pacific Foundation to name a few. He is a member of the World Presidents and Chief Executives Organizations."

Gwyn Morgan is a current director and former President and CEO of EnCana Corporation, one of North America's largest natural gas producers. Morgan has been described as one of the most powerful men in the oil patch and spent his lifetime building an oil empire in Alberta.

Herbert Pinder, another current director of ARC Resources, also serves as director for “a number of private energy companies,” according to his ARC Energy Trusts bio.

Also on Fraser's board are **Charles Barlow** of gas exploration company Barlow Brothers Ltd; **R. Jack Pirie** who is associated with private oil company Sabre Energy Ltd.; and **John Hagg**, CEO of tar sands extractor Northstar Energy.

With a line-up like this, the lesser known Fraser Institute ranks right up there with the Competitive Enterprise Institute, Cato Institute and other right wing think tanks supported by dirty energy industries to fuel public doubt about climate change. Fraser staffers are adept at cherry picking data to create the appearance of scientific research, and then using their PR resources to influence public opinion.

According to the company's annual report, the Fraser Institute received \$120,000 from ExxonMobil in 2003-'04. Fraser Institute Foundation President Michael Walker said the funding paid for the work of researcher Kenneth Green, who served as chief scientist at Fraser Institute between 2002-2005. Kenneth Green now resides at the American Enterprise Institute as one of its chief climate deniers in residence.

Other Fraser misdeeds include targeting Canadian high school students and teachers with global warming misinformation, as Bill Miller wrote on Desmogblog in March of 2008. Fraser designed a booklet for high schoolers allegedly aimed at “helping them understand the issue and make their own decisions about what actions are needed” on global warming. “The manuscript was compiled by rookie scientists and retirees with strong ties to oil and gas pressure groups,” Miller wrote.

Fraser is also a supporter of Canada's leading climate skeptics. Ross McKittrick is a senior scholar at Fraser, and is well known for his efforts teaming up with mining executive Steve McIntyre to attack climate science. (The minor mistakes pointed out by McIntyre and McKittrick have been acknowledged and corrected by climate scientists, but their PR efforts continue unabated.)

For a full list of the businesspeople represented on the board of the Fraser Institute, as well as some of their operating procedures, check out the excellent research done by Norman Farrell at Northern Insights.

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