



Greenpeace Says Climate Denialism a 20-Year Industry

Internet, Monckton-Style Deniers Changing the Game, Report Says

by Stacy Feldman - Mar 24th, 2010



(UPDATE: Adds Comment from American Enterprise Institute)

Current efforts to deny climate science are part of an organized campaign that dates back 20 years, when the fossil fuel industry first formed a lobbying apparatus to stifle action on global warming, the environment group Greenpeace said on Wednesday.

In a [report](http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/dealing-in-doubt) (<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/dealing-in-doubt>) titled "Dealing in Doubt: The Climate Denial Industry and Climate Science," the group accused ExxonMobil of being the ringleader of what it called a "campaign of

denial."

Exxon was a prominent member of the now-defunct [Global Climate Coalition](http://www.exxonsecrets.org/html/orgfactsheet.php?id=38) (<http://www.exxonsecrets.org/html/orgfactsheet.php?id=38>), one of the first industry groups established in 1989 to refute findings of the then-newly formed UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Since Exxon's 1998 merger with Mobil, the oil giant has spent \$23 million on stoking opposition to climate action, Greenpeace said. It continues to fund 28 groups that run denial campaigns, according to the report, though the oil giant is hardly alone in betting against climate change.

The report said that the think tanks at the forefront of challenging the science of warming — such as the Heartland Institute, the Cato Institute and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) — receive a majority of their climate-related funds from a raft of utility, coal, oil and car interests.

Kenneth Green, a resident environmental scholar at AEI, said he has "never worked for an energy company, worked as a lobbyist, worked at a lobbying firm nor been registered as a lobbyist."

Green, in particular, was called out in the report for a "long history of connections with a number of the front groups funded by industry," especially ExxonMobil. "Greenpeace's implication that such donations influence my research or findings is both cynical and illogical," Green told SolveClimate.

"It is not surprising that in their efforts to stem the rapid erosion of credibility in climate science, Greenpeace would double down on the type of attacks it routinely applies to those who differ with their extremist views of climate risk and climate policy," Green added.

No. 1 Target: UN IPCC

The denial industry's main target from the get-go, according to Greenpeace, was the IPCC.

"The aim was to discredit the process by which the IPCC worked," it said.

Key moments, the group said, include:

- In 1990, fossil fuel interests launched a public push to refute the main finding of the first IPCC assessment that greenhouse gas emissions would "certainly" lead to warming.
- In 1995, following the second IPCC assessment, which concluded there is a "discernible human influence on global climate," attacks shifted from the science to the scientists themselves.
- In 1997, Bert Bolin, the chair of both the World Meteorological Organization and the IPCC for nine years, was forced to release a statement denying claims that he had flip-flopped on human-caused climate change.
- In 1998, the American Petroleum Institute, a trade and lobbying group, began a communications campaign to inform the media and citizens about "uncertainties in climate science," with the goal of thwarting Kyoto Protocol-like climate measures.

With the release of the IPCC's third and fourth assessments in 2001 and 2007, climate skeptics ramped up efforts, Greenpeace said.

The report details memos, press junkets, petitions, recent denier conferences led by the Heartland Institute, and a CEI book — all allegedly aimed at questioning the consensus view on climate change.

The report also identified a "central team of spokespeople" that for years has been used to challenge the science. They include: Sallie Baliunas and Willie Soon, both Harvard-Smithsonian Institute astrophysicists; Richard Lindzen, a climatologist at MIT; Patrick Michaels, a climatologist and scholar at the free-market Cato Institute; and Fred Singer, an atmospheric physicist and former professor at the University of Virginia.

Singer was particularly singled out by Greenpeace as a "serial denier."

In an email to SolveClimate, Singer responded to the "serial denier" label by saying: "I don't know what this means — perhaps

" — the controversy over hacked emails from the University of East Anglia's prominent Climatic Research Unit — and the admission by the IPCC of a [mistake \(/blog/20100218/ipcc-errors-fact-and-spin\)](/blog/20100218/ipcc-errors-fact-and-spin) exaggerating Himalayan glacier melt in its 2007 report.

Both incidences sparked outrage among skeptics of climate science, who seized on them — and on an especially snowy winter in Washington, D.C. — to bolster their claims that global warming is not real.

"The world is learning just how shabby and shoddy the work of the United Nations IPCC and associated climate scientists has always been," Green said.

Scientists worldwide have tried to beat back the criticism with press conferences, letters and petitions pointing to overwhelming evidence that a buildup of greenhouse gases is warming the Earth.

Still, independent evaluations of both CRU and the IPCC are underway. Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), Washington's most prominent climate skeptic, has gone farther, suggesting [criminal investigations \(/blog/20100226/opponents-climate-regulations-start-targeting-scientists\)](/blog/20100226/opponents-climate-regulations-start-targeting-scientists) of top climate scientists and lead authors in the IPCC.

The Greenpeace report suggests this could be the tip of the iceberg, due in part to the rise of the Internet.

"In recent years, the corporate PR campaign has gone viral, spawning a denial movement that is distributed, decentralized and largely immune to reasoned response," the group said.

New times have also spawned a new kind of denier, the group said. The main example is business consultant Christopher Monckton, a former adviser to Margaret Thatcher and noted climate skeptic. He is not a scientist but has [testified before Congress \(/blog/20090327/congressional-hearings-amateurs-invited-confuse-climate-science\)](/blog/20090327/congressional-hearings-amateurs-invited-confuse-climate-science) about climate science and become a "darling of the industry-funded, U.S.-based conservative think tanks," Greenpeace said.

Richard Littlemore, a co-author of the new book "Climate Cover-Up: The Crusade to Deny Global Warming" and editor of DeSmog Blog, said Monckton has "a history of advocating completely wacky positions ... and is now saying things that are diametrically opposed to the scientific consensus."

"It's impossible to have a reasoned conversation with someone like Monckton — in part because, like some argumentative old uncle, he's just not interested in reason," Littlemore told SolveClimate. "He just wants to maintain the debate."

"Monckton offers a bunch of examples that are often narrowly true, but calculated to confuse or distract," Littlemore added.

Greenpeace warned:

"There are many more like him who repeat the denier message for no other reason than because they believe it."

See also:

[Opponents of Climate Regulations Start Targeting Scientists \(/blog/20100226/opponents-climate-regulations-start-targeting-scientists\)](/blog/20100226/opponents-climate-regulations-start-targeting-scientists)

[Utah House Passes Resolution Implying Climate Change Conspiracy \(/blog/20100210/utah-house-passes-resolution-implying-climate-change-conspiracy\)](/blog/20100210/utah-house-passes-resolution-implying-climate-change-conspiracy)

[IPCC Errors: Fact and Spin \(/blog/20100218/ipcc-errors-fact-and-spin\)](/blog/20100218/ipcc-errors-fact-and-spin)

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[Wrong way round \(/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6856\)](/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6856)

On March 24th, 2010 Peter Wilson (not verified) said:

This article couldn't be more mistaken. Has anyone noticed the truly trivial amounts of money being bandied about here. \$15 million for goodness sake? WWF has an annual operating budget of \$600million, and Greenpeace only slightly less. If money were the defining factor, the debate really would be over by now.

And haven't you also noticed that all the energy and car companies are on board the AGW bandwagon with both feet, most of them having investments in "clean energy" or carbon trading worth many times the pathetic amounts talked about here. They see that same kind of profit opportunities that Al Gore does, and no reason it should interfere with their other activities.

[\\$15 million is 'trivial'?! \(/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6858\)](/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6858)

On March 24th, 2010 Anonymous (not verified) said:

\$15 million is trivial? Tell that to people scraping to get by, the ones skipping meals so they can pay for the gas in their cars to get to work -- money that goes straight into campaigns like this.

[Yes, \\$15,000,000 is an \(/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6862\)](/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6862)

On March 25th, 2010 Peter Wilson (not verified) said:

Yes, \$15,000,000 is an utterly trivial sum compared to the billions (that's thousands of millions) spent by organizations like WWF, Sierra Club, Oxfam, Greenpeace, not to mention the incredible sums lavished by

["It's impossible to have a \(/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6853\)](#)

On March 24th, 2010 Anonymous (not verified) said:

"It's impossible to have a reasoned conversation with someone like Monckton — in part because, like some argumentative old uncle, he's just not interested in reason,"

Thing is though, you won't debate him will you; because you've no answers and no proof.

Greenpeace are now seriously in danger of losing everything.

Jump ship blokes, discard your resident communists and get back to what you did best...like real and pressing environmental issues.

[ALG Could anyone put it \(/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6852\)](#)

On March 24th, 2010 Anonymous (not verified) said:

ALG

Could anyone put it better. Splendid, thank you.

[Alarmists' Last Gasp \(/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6849\)](#)

On March 24th, 2010 Diane Bast (not verified) said:

This article claims the new Greenpeace report finds The [Heartland Institute](http://www.heartland.org) receives "a majority of [its] climate-related funds from a raft of utility, coal, oil and car interests."

This is a complete and utter misinterpretation of the Greenpeace report, not to mention a flat-out dishonest statement about The Heartland Institute's funding. The Greenpeace report contains NO information on The Heartland Institute's funding beyond an occasional reference to a single company, ExxonMobil.

Heartland Institute has not received funding from ExxonMobil since 2006 (<http://www.exxonsecrets.org/html/orgfactsheet.php?id=41>), two years before the organization's [First International Conference on Climate Change](http://www.heartland.org/events/NewYork08/proceedings.html) (<http://www.heartland.org/events/NewYork08/proceedings.html>). The organization has raised [more than \\$15 million](http://www2.guidestar.org/organizations/36-3309812/heartland-institute.aspx#) (<http://www2.guidestar.org/organizations/36-3309812/heartland-institute.aspx#>) since ExxonMobil last gave it money. The Greenpeace report cites no sources with knowledge of Heartland's funding.

The report is nothing more than the dying gasp of an alarmist group that is watching the [great global warming delusion](http://www.heartland.org/policybot/results/26955/Bast_Unwinding_the_Great_Global_Warming_Delusion.html) (http://www.heartland.org/policybot/results/26955/Bast_Unwinding_the_Great_Global_Warming_Delusion.html) unravel before its very eyes.

[Twisting the Facts Keeps the USA Down \(/blog/20100324/greenpeace-says-climate-denialism-20-year-industry#comment-6854\)](#)

On March 24th, 2010 not Exxon (not verified) said:

Here's the actual quote from the story, as opposed to the way the Ms. Bast attempted to distort it in her comment above (interestingly, she's using the same tactics described in the story, which kind of makes you wonder about some of these people, doesn't it): "The report said that industry front groups and think tanks at the forefront of challenging the science of warming — such as the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Heartland Institute and the Cato Institute — receive a majority of their climate-related funds from a raft of utility, coal, oil and car interests."

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