



## Google funds climate deniers, new report reveals

Vanessa Taylor

October 11, 2019

With the movement around climate change growing, companies have started to take public stances in support. However, what's said in public doesn't always match private actions. Although it has vocally supported climate initiatives, Google funds organizations denying climate change, The Guardian reported. This revelation may bring the company's public stances into question.

In a list of beneficiaries of "substantial contributions", Google lists organizations like Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), right-wing think tank the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, Americans for Tax Reform, and the Cato Institute.

The Guardian's report comes after tech employees protested in support of climate action and Google's CEO Sundar Pichai announced the company's "biggest renewable energy purchase ever".

Google wouldn't let The Guardian know exactly how much money it had donated to climate denying groups. Instead, Google told the outlet, "We're hardly alone among companies that contribute to organizations while strongly disagreeing with them on climate policy."

However, the organizations listed as Google's beneficiaries go beyond simply denying climate change. For example, CEI, which has referred to climate change as "climate delusion", was instrumental in getting the Trump administration to abandon the Paris climate agreement, which was a global deal to fight the climate crisis that included voluntary emissions reductions by participating countries.

Google is correct that it's not alone among companies who contribute to organizations like CEI. Amazon has also done so. But it still opens up valid concerns around the tech giant's commitment to climate action.

"You don't get a pass on it. It ought to be disqualifying to support what is primarily a phoney climate-denying front group. It ought to be unacceptable given how wicked they have been," Democratic Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (R.I.), told The Guardian. "What all of corporate America should be doing is saying if you are a trade organization or lobby group and you are interfering on climate, we are out. Period."

This isn't the first time Google's partnerships have contradicted its public stances. Although Google is often thought of as an LGBTQ friendly company, it came under fire after appointing the Heritage Foundation's president, Kay Cole James, to its AI ethics council earlier this year.

Over 1,200 Googlers — along with academic, civil society, and industry supporters — signed a petition calling for James' removal, citing her transphobia, homophobia, and anti-immigrant positions. The council ended up falling apart after a week.

Tech companies are not coming away from recent protests unchallenged. And with Google's own employees having a history of organizing, it will be interesting to see if there are any internal reactions to the company's donation history.