

August 16, 2010

Is Cato's Pat Michaels Oil Industry Funding a Problem?

Last night, in my Weekend De-Briefing, I [posted](#) that:

Fareed Zakaria's GPS on CNN was full of think tankers. **Patrick J. Michaels, PhD, senior fellow in environmental studies, Cato Institute** took on global warming questions and some tough questions from Zakaria about who's funding his research.

What that meant, specifically, was that after a dodge or two, [Michaels](#) conceded that approximately 40% was coming from the petroleum-based industry.

From the CNN transcript:

ZAKARIA: OK. Then let me ask you what people wonder about, advocates like you. They say --

MICHAELS: I'm advocating for efficiency.

ZAKARIA: Right, but people say that you're advocating also for the current petroleum-based industry to stand pat, to stay as it is, and that a lot of your research is funded by these industries.

MICHAELS: Oh, no, no. First of all, what I'm saying is --

ZAKARIA: Well, is your research funded by these industries?

MICHAELS: Not largely. The fact of the matter is --

ZAKARIA: Well, can I ask you what percentage of your work is funded by the petroleum industry?

MICHAELS: I don't know -- 40 percent. I don't know.

ZAKARIA: OK.

Today, I asked the Cato Institute about the 40% and Zakaria pressing Michaels on the funding. Here's what Vice President for Communication Kristine Brookes had to say:

We are proud to have Pat Michaels and his research associated with the Cato Institute. However, Pat works for Cato on a contract basis, not as a full-time employee. Funding for work that Pat does outside the Cato Institute does not come through the Cato Institute.”

Meanwhile, our annual report has more details about our funding sources institutionally. Note that less than 1 percent of our overall funding is corporate:

http://www.cato.org/about/reports/annual_report_2009.pdf

Curious to know what people think about this. Ok, they don't take the oil industry funding--fine, that's important to note--but they do publish his research findings. Can Cato (or anybody else, for that matter) have it both ways?