

Media Matters for America

Who is Steve Milloy?

Milloy Was Hired By American Petroleum Institute To Downplay Global Warming.

In a feature on fellow climate change skeptic [Marc Morano](#), *Esquire* reported that in 1998, "the American Petroleum Institute hired a conservative PR expert named Steve Milloy to develop a 'Global Climate Science Communications Action Plan.' They had to tell a better story and tell it fast. They had to change the narrative. Milloy ran a Web site called Junk Science, joined in time by Climate Audit and Ice Cap and a thousand others, all hammering the same message -- *ignore global warming*." [*Esquire*, [3/30/10](#)]

Milloy's Groups Have Been Funded By ExxonMobil. Chris Mooney reported in a May 2005 *Mother Jones* article:

In its giving report, ExxonMobil says it supports public policy groups that are "dedicated to researching free market solutions to policy problems." What the company doesn't say is that beyond merely challenging the Kyoto Protocol or the McCain-lieberman Climate Stewardship Act on economic grounds, many of these groups explicitly dispute the science of climate change. Generally eschewing peer-reviewed journals, these groups make their challenges in far less stringent arenas, such as the media and public forums.

[...]

Consider attacks by friends of ExxonMobil on the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA). A landmark international study that combined the work of some 300 scientists, the ACIA, released last November, had been four years in the making. Commissioned by the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum that includes the United States, the study warned that the Arctic is warming "at almost twice the rate as that of the rest of the world," and that early impacts of climate change, such as melting sea ice and glaciers, are already apparent and "will drastically shrink marine habitat for polar bears, ice-inhabiting seals, and some seabirds, pushing some species toward extinction." Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) was so troubled by the report that he called for a Senate hearing.

Industry defenders shelled the study, and, with a dearth of science to marshal to their side, used opinion pieces and press releases instead. "Polar Bear Scare on Thin Ice," blared FoxNews.com columnist Steven Milloy, an adjunct scholar at the libertarian Cato Institute (\$75,000 from ExxonMobil) who also publishes the website JunkScience.com. Two days later the conservative Washington Times published the same column. Neither outlet disclosed that Milloy, who debunks global warming concerns regularly, runs two organizations that receive money from ExxonMobil. Between 2000 and 2003, the company gave \$40,000 to the Advancement of Sound Science Center, which is registered to Milloy's home address in Potomac, Maryland, according to IRS documents.

ExxonMobil gave another \$50,000 to the Free Enterprise Action Institute-also registered to Milloy's residence. Under the auspices of the intriguingly like-named Free Enterprise Education Institute, Milloy publishes CSRWatch.com, a site that attacks the corporate social responsibility movement. [*Mother Jones*, May 2005, accessed via Nexis]

Milloy Denied Health Risks Of Secondhand Smoke While Taking Money From Tobacco Industry. From a February 2006 report by Paul Thacker in *The New Republic*:

Milloy has been affiliated with FoxNews.com since July 2000. On March 9, 2001, he wrote a column for the website headlined "secondhand smokescreen." The piece attacked a study by researcher Stephen Hecht, who found that women living with smokers had higher levels of chemicals associated with risk of lung cancer. "If spin were science, Hecht would win a Nobel Prize," Milloy wrote. For good measure, he heaped scorn on a 1993 Environmental Protection Agency report that also linked health risks and secondhand smoke. Later that spring, he authored another smoking-related piece for FoxNews.com. In that one, he cast aside two decades of research on the dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke and concluded, "Secondhand smoke is annoying to many nonsmokers. That is the essence of the controversy and where the debate should lie--the rights of smokers to smoke in public places versus the rights of nonsmokers to be free of tobacco smoke." You might chalk it up to Milloy's contrarian nature. Or to his libertarian tendencies. Except, all the while, he was on the payroll of big tobacco. According to Lisa Gonzalez, manager of external communications for Altria, the parent company of Philip Morris, Milloy was under contract there through the end of last year. "In 2000 and 2001, some of the work he did was to monitor studies, and then we would distribute this information within to our different companies," Gonzalez said. Although she couldn't comment on fees paid to Milloy, a January 2001 Philip Morris budget report lists Milloy as a consultant and shows that he was budgeted for \$92,500 in fees and expenses in both 2000 and 2001. Asked about Milloy's tobacco ties, Paul Schur, director of media relations for Fox News, said, "Fox News is unaware of Milloy's connection with Philip Morris. Any affiliation he had should have been disclosed." Milloy could not be reached for comment.

Yet it's all in the public record. The University of California at San Francisco maintains a database of seven million tobacco industry documents made public as part of the 1998 settlement between tobacco companies and state attorneys general. According to those documents, Milloy's relationship to big tobacco goes back at least to March 1997, when he took over as executive director of The Advancement of Sound Science Coalition (TASSC), a front group established in 1993 by Philip Morris and PR firm APCO Associates "to expand and assist Philip Morris in its efforts with issues in targeted states." (Fumento was on the organization's advisory board.) Under Milloy, TASSC sought to debunk a range of scientific theories that ran counter to the conservative viewpoint, from the dangers of breast implants to the need for stricter clean air standards. Philip Morris remained heavily invested in these efforts. A 1997 Philip Morris budget report includes a line item granting TASSC \$200,000. As executive director, Milloy also reached out to other allies within the industry. For instance, in September 1997, he sent a letter to Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation soliciting \$50,000: "The grant will be used to further

TASSC's efforts to educate the public, media and policymakers on priorities in public health," he wrote.

The Advancement of Sound Science Coalition is now defunct. But one of Milloy's nonprofits has the same acronym and a remarkably similar name: The Advancement of Sound Science Center. His Free Enterprise Action Institute also has tobacco links, with Thomas Borelli--a longtime Philip Morris executive--serving as its secretary. [*The New Republic*, 2/6/06, accessed via Nexis]

Milloy's JunkScience.com Targets CEOs Who Have Pushed For Government Action On Climate Change. Congressional Quarterly reported in October 2009:

During the G-20 summit of major industrialized countries last month in Pittsburgh, JunkScience.com protestors wore sandwich boards featuring a wanted poster of Klaus Kleinfeld, chief executive of aluminum company Alcoa Inc., calling him a "carbon villain" for participating in the U.S. Climate Action Partnership, a lobbying group set up by major companies to push for climate change legislation that would include a cap-and-trade system for reducing carbon emissions. The conservative activists contend that such a system would devastate the economy.

[...]

Junkscience.com has run advertisements on the Drudge Report Web site featuring similar wanted posters of other CEOs, including John Rowe of Exelon and Jim Rogers of Duke Energy Corp., whose companies are in the Climate Action Partnership. [Congressional Quarterly, 10/17/09, accessed via Nexis]

Milloy Founded Mutual Fund That Fought Against Corporate Responsibility Efforts. Daniel Gross reported in 2006 on Milloy's Free Enterprise Action Fund:

Since opening for business in March 2005, the fund has bought very small stakes in nearly 400 different companies and used these tiny holdings to take their fight to the business establishment. The fund has [zinged](#) the [Business Roundtable](#) for insufficient vigilance in "defending capitalism and free enterprise against efforts in Congress to confiscate business earnings and shareholder assets." Last December, it [challenged](#) Microsoft to "reverse its recently announced plan to stop using PVC plastic as a packaging material." (Here's Microsoft's [announcement](#).) In March it [told](#) General Electric that while the fund is all for GE's "[Ecomagination](#)" initiative, the company shouldn't put itself on the record in favor of government regulations of emissions. In March, Milloy, Borelli, and a colleague [made a spectacle](#) at the annual meeting of Goldman Sachs. (They're angered that CEO Henry Paulson is a tree-hugger, and that Goldman [had given land in Chile to a conservancy group](#).)

[...]

The [2005 annual report](#) notes that the fund filed resolutions asking Johnson & Johnson, among others, to report on the impact "of the flat tax as discussed in 'Flat Tax Revolution: Using a Postcard to Abolish the IRS' by Steve Forbes." It also initiated action on "an effort by the *New York Times* to investigate the adoption of children by Supreme Court Justice John Roberts." Huh? Your guess is as good as mine. After agreeing to an interview with me, Milloy didn't return several messages. [Slate, [5/4/06](#)]

— S.T.