



The House Energy and Commerce “Committee from Koch”

The House Energy and Commerce Committee plans to hold a hearing Wednesday to discuss blocking the Environmental Protection Agency’s ability to reduce carbon dioxide pollution. We can expect the same old half-truths, misstatements, and outright lies from the new majority, with an extra dose of special interest pandering.

The reality, however, is that the draft legislation to stop EPA from setting pollution safeguards, proposed by Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI), Subcommittee Chair Ed Whitfield (R-KY), and Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK) is nothing less than an attempt to give big polluters free rein to dirty the air we breathe and the water we drink. This proposed language—which was hatched at a secret meeting between the bill’s sponsors and other energy-related trade lobbyists—would protect corporate polluters and their profits at the expense of public health. But a deeper look into the panel members’ campaign money and political ties reveals that their efforts to shield polluters from regulation should really come as no surprise.

The Koch brothers contributed over a quarter of a million dollars to House Energy and Commerce Committee panel members in 2010

- The Koch brothers and their employees are the biggest oil and gas donors to lawmakers sitting on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. They contributed \$279,500 to 22 of the committee’s 31 Republicans and \$32,000 to five Democrats.
- Nine of the 12 new Republicans on the panel signed the Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity “No Climate Tax” pledge that opposed any government action to reduce carbon dioxide pollution.
- Koch front-group Americans for Prosperity spent over \$200,000 on ads to help key Energy and Commerce Committee members in the 2010 elections. Five of the six GOP freshman lawmakers on the panel benefited from the group’s separate advertising and grassroots activity during the 2010 campaign.
- Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI) received \$20,000 from Koch employees in 2010, making them among his top 10 donors.

- Koch operatives met with Rep. Upton on the first day of the 112th Congress to discuss gutting the Clean Air Act by handcuffing the EPA.
- Koch Industries, the private company of the billionaire Koch brothers, is one of the primary sources of carbon pollution in the United States.
- According to the EPA, Koch Industries is responsible for more than 300 oil spills in the United States and has leaked 3 million gallons of crude oil into fisheries and drinking waters. They were fined a record \$35 million dollars and an additional \$8 million in Minnesota for discharging into streams.

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 The committee is stacking the witness stand with big polluters and their allies

- National Black Chamber of Commerce president **Harry Alford** has received \$425,000 from ExxonMobil since 1998.
- **Margo Thorning** is the vice president and chief economist for the American Council for Capital Formation, or ACCF. ACCF has received \$215,000 from Koch foundations and nearly \$1.7 million from ExxonMobil.
- **Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott's 2010 campaign** was heavily funded by some of Texas's largest industries, with most coming from people connected to oil and gas interest. A vocal climate-denier, Abbott sued the Obama administration to end an offshore oil-drilling moratorium instituted following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and has taken the federal EPA to court three times in the past year.
- **Lonnie Carter** is president of Santee Cooper, the largest single mercury polluter in South Carolina.
- **Steve Cousins** is vice president of Lion Oil, which ranks 27 on the list of top 100 facilities releasing chemicals such as nitrous oxides, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and benzene into the environment.
- **Peter Glaser** of Troutman Sanders LLP works with the Washington Legal Foundation, which has received \$325,000 from ExxonMobil since 1998.
- **Fred Harnack** represents the U.S. Steel Corporation, which ranks 19th on the 2010 Political Economy Research Institute Toxic 100 Air Polluters list.
- **James Pearce** is the environmental general manager for FMC Corp., which had to pay the largest civil penalty ever obtained under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act for repeatedly violating the hazardous waste law at its phosphorus production facility in Pocatello, Idaho.

- **Steve Rowlan** is the environmental general manager at Nucor Corp., which is 24 on the 2010 Political Economy Research Institute Toxic 100 Air Polluters list.
- Self-proclaimed “climate-denier-in-chief” Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK), and one of the draft legislation sponsors, will also testify at the hearing.
- Illinois Farm Bureau president **Phillip Nelson** has a history of attacking air and water safeguards, while supporting big polluting mega-farms.

Americans strongly support protecting our air and holding polluters accountable

- Seventy-seven percent of the public—including 61 percent of Republicans—oppose efforts in Congress to block Clean Air Act updates for carbon dioxide, smog, and other pollutants according to a recent National Resources Defense Council poll.
- Nearly two-thirds of Americans believe the EPA needs to do more to hold polluters accountable and protect our air and water.
- A recent USA Today/Gallup Poll showed that of the eight actions Congress could take this year, Americans most favor an energy bill that provides incentives for using alternative energy (83 percent).
- The vast majority of Republicans—as well as a majority of Americans—oppose the Newt Gingrich plan to dismantle the EPA. More than 75 percent of the respondents oppose congressional efforts to limit the EPA’s authority to enforce the Clean Air Act

Public health professionals and business leaders oppose efforts to handcuff EPA

- Since its founding the EPA’s standard setting and polluter accountability efforts have prevented 205,000 premature deaths, 843,000 asthma attacks, 18 million child respiratory illnesses, and more.
- The economic benefits of the Clean Air Act rules outweighed the costs by more than 20-to-1 in 2010. It will be nearly 30-to-1 by 2020, according to an Environmental Protection Agency analysis.
- Public health professionals from the American Lung Association to the Trust for America’s Health and the American Public Health Association oppose Rep. Upton’s bill.
- More than 60,000 small businesses sent a letter to the White House and Congress urging them to support the EPA’s ability to enforce the Clean Air Act.