

Koch and Climate Obstruction

Climate Social Science Network
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Abstract

Scientific analysis of global climate change began in earnest in the late 1960s. This research has been widely circulated throughout the U.S. in scientific and industry circles since then. Despite clear information on the causes and potential damages of climate change, a wide variety of organizations have engaged in a efforts to obstruct meaningful action to address climate change. One key actor in the effort to obstruct climate action is Koch, Inc., along with a fleet of organizations it has developed, controlled and financed. This paper provides an interim report of the results of ongoing historical research into the knowledge of climate change held by Koch executives, and the subsequent actions this company took in spite of this knowledge to obstruct climate mitigation efforts. The results show that Koch and its predecessor organizations received extensive knowledge of the nature and impacts of climate change, and that the organizations directed by Koch worked to obstruct climate action by engaging in: 1) monitoring and contesting climate science, 2) shifting the cultural understanding of climate change through public relations campaigns and 3) conducting aggressive lobbying of political elites. Through these activities, Koch and nonprofit organizations controlled by its executives played an important role in obstructing national and international climate mitigation efforts.

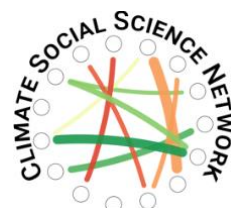


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Introduction

The dramatic testimony of James Hansen and the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 marked the emergence of global warming as a major public issue, and amplified calls for government action to rein in carbon emissions.¹ In response, corporations with strong ties to fossil fuels, acting in coordination with allied trade associations and other organizations, mounted a series of efforts to oppose reductions in carbon emissions. One of the leading companies in these efforts was Koch Inc. and its surrogate organizations.

Koch, Inc. (hereafter, “Koch”) is a privately held global corporation based in Wichita, Kansas. Charles de Ganahl Koch is the longtime chairman and CEO of Koch and a top owner of Koch’s privately-held stock. The multi-industry conglomerate has been renamed twice since Charles Koch inherited Rock Island Oil & Refining Company from his late father, Fred Chase Koch, after the senior Koch died in 1967.² The company went by the name of Koch Industries from 1968 until 2024, when it was changed to Koch, Inc.³ Charles Koch has been the top executive of his family’s company for over 50 years, with the close participation of his late brother, David Hamilton Koch, until the latter died in 2019.⁴ Charles and David Koch wrestled over control of the company with David’s twin, William “Bill” Ingraham Koch, and eventually bought out the private corporate stock held by Bill and their eldest brother, the late Frederick Robinson Koch, prompting decades of estrangement and litigation lasting into the early 2000’s.⁵ Charles Koch’s son, Chase Koch, has served in multiple executive level roles in recent years, after entering the company in lower-level positions two decades ago.⁶ Since March 2023, longtime Koch executive Dave Robertson has been co-CEO alongside Charles Koch.⁷

The Koch company’s historic roots are in oil refining, oil gathering, pipelines and petrochemicals.⁸ For decades, under Charles Koch’s leadership, Koch has grown into a global diversified conglomerate involved in various consumer goods, cattle ranching, fertilizer, pulp, paper and lumber, industrial equipment, software, financial trading, and private equity, among others.⁹

Unlike any other American company, Koch executives control an integrated network of approximately 32 organizations that advance its policy and public relations goals.¹⁰ The structure and evolution of these groups is infamously complex, with numerous limited liability companies, C-corporations, political action committees and family trusts interlaced with the nonprofits.¹¹ In addition to these Koch-controlled organizations, Koch-controlled foundations finance hundreds of other organizations to advance the family’s political and cultural agenda.¹² Universities are deeply interwoven into this network, as Koch’s strategic framework for policy influence relies on universities as a base layer and “talent pipeline.”¹³ Many policy initiatives have been advanced, or targeted, by this network, including decades of resistance to climate change mitigation efforts, as this report examines.

Much scholarly research exists on the actions of Koch and its affiliates against climate and environmental policies and regulations. Since 2013, (co-author) Robert Brulle of Brown University has published multiple peer-reviewed investigations into the top financiers of the “climate change counter movement,” of which foundations affiliated with Charles Koch are continually present.¹⁴ Harvard University researchers Theda Skocpol and Alexander Hertel-Fernandez examined the structure and influence of the Koch political network in a significant study published in 2016.¹⁵ In examining the “Koch network” impact on climate-related policies, Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez looked back into the company’s lobbying efforts against a “BTU tax” in the 1990’s, comparing the effort to the company’s resistance to climate change legislation from 2008-2010. Important scholarly journal articles and commentary related to Koch and climate change include a variety of papers by Oklahoma State University’s Riley E. Dunlap, Michigan State University’s Aaron M. McCright, and the University of Pittsburgh’s Patrick Doreian.¹⁶ However, the specific question of Koch executives’ understanding of climate science over time is not well explored in the peer-reviewed literature.

Far more research on Koch and climate change has been conducted outside of the academic realm. Several foundational media reports examined the significance of Koch and its affiliates, without detailing the company’s early efforts to slow progress on climate change mitigation, specifically.¹⁷ Early reporting on Koch’s efforts against climate and clean energy policies was led by *ThinkProgress*, *DeSmog*, the Center for Media and Democracy, and Greenpeace in 2009 and 2010.¹⁸ Following these exposés, aggressive anti-science statements and references were published by the company.¹⁹ Of the numerous books that have examined the history of the Koch family and their company, two in particular delved into Koch’s opposition to climate change science: Christopher Leonard’s

Kochland, and Jane Mayer's *Dark Money*.²⁰ There are perennial books about opposition to climate change mitigation that did not draw direct links to Koch, but touch upon many of the climate change denial groups supported by Koch family foundations, such as *Merchants of Doubt* by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, and *Boiling Point* and *The Heat is On* by the late journalist Ross Gelbspan.²¹

This report provides a timeline of what climate-related information was available to the top personnel at Koch, and its most closely affiliated nonprofit organizations. Our timeline includes as many direct quotes from Koch personnel and publications as we were able to identify, to the extent that they are direct commentary on climate change science. We are not attempting a comprehensive examination of all Koch-funded organizations that have promoted climate misinformation, or obstruction of climate mitigation policies, but we will summarize some of the most explicit examples where we feel that Koch spending was unequivocally linked to climate obstructionism.

Our findings indicate that the most recent statements made by Koch executives, as well as officers at nonprofits they control, contradict some of their previous positions. Statements made by Charles Koch and his affiliates in recent years indicate a gradual shift away from some of the company's most discredited statements on climate change.²² Relatively recent interviews with Charles Koch have resulted in him expressing a general acceptance of the scientific basis for his industry's role in warming the planet.²³ Some of these statements are hesitant to affirm that fossil fuel's contributions have pushed climate change beyond naturally-occurring variability,²⁴ but they are a far cry from heavily discredited statements previously made by Koch executives,²⁵ as well as statements made by officials at Koch-funded organizations.²⁶ Sometimes these statements contradicted each other, including positions espoused by Charles Koch in a series of interviews in 2016.

The inconsistencies are further illustrated by historic documents indicating that Koch and its top personnel had access to high-quality scientific summaries of climate change science from the early 1970's through the 1990's and beyond. Reports published by the company in the 2000's indicate that it was making business decisions based upon the understanding that there was some merit in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Some of these documents do not appear to have been previously reported upon, while others that have been scrutinized previously did not focus on Koch. These early warnings contrast deeply with the discredited statements made by Koch executives in the decades that followed, and with the Koch-funded research that appears to have been an attempt to keep discredited scientific "skepticism" on life support.

Navigating this Report

This report exceeds 50,000 words and contains hundreds of distinct references. Some of the examples in our timeline are documents that have not been reported before. Many of the records featured below are already a matter of public record but have taken on a new significance when synthesized with other information.

The Top Findings section, below, includes a bulleted list of previously unreported information and revelations that we believe are most significant.

In the Timeline section of the report, we use a labeling system to help readers focus on broader categories of material that might be most relevant for their use. The four labels are:

<p style="text-align: center;">[KOCH INFORMED]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Examples of Koch or its executives receiving scientific reports or communications that included relatively accurate information about climate change.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">[KOCH STATEMENT]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Examples of published statements made by Koch, its executives, or nonprofits under their control, that directly address or dismiss climate change science.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">[KOCH ACTION]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Examples of Koch, or its affiliated foundations and nonprofits, financing or participating in activities that served to undermine public trust in climate change science, or opposition to related policy or regulatory efforts.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">[KOCH MITIGATION]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Examples of Koch and its subsidiaries participating in programs designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or touching achievements in emission reductions.</p>

Glossary of Terms:

While we generally strive to use specific language to describe people and entities in this report, there are a few phrases and shorthand that we repeat for the sake of brevity:

“Koch” – the company Koch, Inc., formerly known as Koch Industries. To avoid confusion when referring to members of the Koch family, we chose to spell out their names in full.

“Koch foundations” – the Koch family’s private philanthropic foundations: the Charles Koch Foundation, the Charles Koch Charitable Fund, the Chase Koch Foundation, the Koch Family Foundation, the David H. Koch Foundation, the (defunct) Claude R. Lambe Foundation, and the Knowledge & Progress Fund.

The only potentially ambiguous organization in this regard is the group formerly known as Zero Zero One, Inc, which was repurposed in 2022 and transferred to Charles Koch’s daughter, Elizabeth Koch, who renamed it Unlikely Giving.²⁷ This report does not focus on the philanthropic activity of Elizabeth Koch, but we do touch upon the activities conducted by Zero Zero One before it was in her control. Zero Zero One was directed by Tobias Teal, an executive at the Koch family’s wealth management company, 1888 Management LLC.²⁸ Its primary activities involved exchanging tens of millions of dollars with other Koch-controlled organizations, and granting money to the independent donor advised fund known as the National Philanthropic Trust.²⁹

“Koch-controlled organizations” – referring to organizations that are ultimately operated and governed by executives at Koch (the company), or operated and governed by the top executives at nonprofit organizations founded by Koch executives.

These are generally groups registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service that have been in the control of Koch executives since their founding, such as Stand Together Chamber of Commerce, Stand Together Fellowships, Stand Together Trust, Believe in People, and Americans for Prosperity, among many others.³⁰ This phrase includes all of the “Koch foundations,” as defined above.

This term also includes the political action committee affiliated with Koch Industries—Koch PAC—as well as the super PAC affiliated with Americans for Prosperity—Americans for Prosperity Action—which are registered with the U.S. Federal Election Commission.

There is inherent subjectivity with this term. We have attempted to be strict with the definition to avoid exaggeration. We do not include the following organizations, which arguably meet the same criteria as those above:

The Cato Institute was founded and remains heavily financed by Koch foundations.³¹ We do not include it as “Koch-controlled” due to the dissolution of a shareholder arrangement in 2012 resulting from a legal settlement, at which point Charles and David Koch conceded formal legal control of Cato.³²

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has for decades counted upon Koch executives as part of its governing leadership, and ALEC has received financial support, conference sponsorships and in-person participation from executives at Koch, Koch foundations, and Koch-controlled organizations.³³ While there is probably no other company that holds the same kind of internal influence at ALEC, Koch is one among many companies that pay to participate in ALEC’s functions, and ALEC has many other significant foundation donors in addition to Koch foundations.

The Institute for Energy Research (IER) is the successor organization to a defunct group known as the Institute for Humane Studies of Texas, which was co-founded by Charles Koch in 1984.³⁴ The longtime president of both IER and its affiliate group, the American Energy Alliance, is Tom Pyle. Pyle was a Koch lobbyist from 2001 - 2007, first as a direct employee of the company, then as an executive at the Rhoads Group, and finally as the president of his own firm, Pyle Consulting.³⁵

We include both of the organizations that Koch brought to the campus of George Mason University (GMU), due to each group’s particularly close historic and ongoing relationship with Koch:

The Mercatus Center was founded by Koch executives Richard Fink and Charles Koch.³⁶ Fink and Charles Koch both remain affiliated with Mercatus, along with other top officials at Koch-controlled organizations, such as Stand Together Chamber of Commerce CEO Brian Hooks.³⁷

The Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) was led for decades by Charles Koch, who became the organization’s president in 1973 and remained its chairman until late 2019.³⁸ The IHS was moved to GMU’s campus in 1985, and it remains governed by longtime executives at Koch and Koch-controlled organizations, such as Charles Koch, Brian Hooks, and Ryan Stowers, among others.³⁹

Charles Koch is now the chairman emeritus of the IHS and director emeritus of the Mercatus Center, reflecting a transition of power to his closest nonprofit executives as he enters his elder years.⁴⁰ GMU, IHS and Mercatus Center have received over a quarter billion dollars from Koch foundations since the 1980’s.⁴¹

“Koch surrogates” – organizations or their respective employees that are financed by Koch—or the foundations and nonprofits it controls—which advocate for policies or causes that are aligned with the financial interests of Koch. This descriptor does not necessarily imply direct evidence that Koch instructed these surrogates to behave in a specific way.

Top Findings

This report includes several documents that have not been reported previously:

1. A National Petroleum Council (NPC) report from 1981 included detailed assessments of the potential consequences of industrial greenhouse gas emissions on the planet's climate. The report listed Charles Koch as a member of the NPC. More NPC reports from 1985, 1991 and 1995, all of which listed Charles Koch as a member, noted increased public concern over climate change due to the maturing science. Some of these reports were written to advocate for increased petroleum gas extraction, under the assumption that greenhouse gas emissions from gas extraction and production would be lower than that of oil.
2. Internal board meeting minutes from the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) in 1997 confirm that "Amoco, Exxon and Koch are giving CEI new money just for the global warming project." This level of involvement was not previously confirmed. Other CEI documents from 1997 list exact outputs for the "global warming project" that year, including a conference featuring a core group of climate science deniers, a book summarizing presentations from the conference, and CEI's participation in the launch of the Cooler Heads Coalition. These exclusive documents were obtained by the Corporate Genome Project.
3. Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE), an organization created and financed by Koch executives, called global warming "junk science" in a 1997 press release that is preserved on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine. CSE is the predecessor to Americans for Prosperity, which has continued to fight against public trust in climate science and policies designed to mitigate climate change.
4. Another historic document obtained by the Corporate Genome Project lists the corporate sponsors of various climate contrarians that attended the 1998 United Nations COP4 climate conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. "Koch" is listed at the sponsor for one attendee, in a document created by the Atlas Economic Research Foundation (now known as the Atlas Network).
5. Documents obtained by the Center for Climate Integrity, sourced from the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, detail a meeting that several prominent climate science deniers had with White House staff on June 5, 1991. The guests of this meeting were all participants at an event held by the Koch-founded Cato Institute on June 3, 1991, which at least one member of the Bush administration attended. The Bush administration staff indicated their understanding that scientists attending the Cato event were marginalized in the scientific community for maintaining discredited positions on climate change.
6. Koch's lobbying subsidiary, Koch Companies Public Sector (KCPS), was a secret sponsor of the CEI's annual fundraising dinner in 2019, omitted from the event's printed program. This discovery builds upon findings that KCPS supported CEI's dinner in 2013, and that David Koch made a secretive \$100,000 direct payment to CEI in 2009.
7. Koch's "Environment, Health and Safety" company reports from 2001 and 2007 both referenced efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, indicating that the company was at least aware of a public relations boost that could be gained by doing so. The 2001 report referenced an obscure award from the Canadian government that, upon further examination, was entirely related to greenhouse gas emission cuts. The 2007 report stated that Koch's efforts in energy efficiency and technology development "will result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions." *In-text reference return: Page 6*

Based on previously reported documents, this report also draws new conclusions about Charles Koch, his company and affiliated nonprofits, and organizations receiving his financial support:

1. The Koch-controlled Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE) was a key opponent of national and international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. CSE coordinated millions of dollars in spending with the American Petroleum Institute against President Bill Clinton's proposed "BTU tax" in 1993. CSE ran TV commercials in 1998 coaching voters to oppose international climate negotiations. CSE also participated in the formation of the Cooler Heads Coalition—a particularly significant fact in light of the

discovery that CEI's "global warming project" was financed by Koch in 1997, a project that included the launch of the Cooler Heads Coalition.

2. In 2006, a memo circulated by the Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA) noted that Koch Industries was working with other fossil fuel companies to finance climate misinformation efforts. The document included a crucial comment: "Koch, CEI, and [the Cato Institute's Patrick] Michaels meet periodically to discuss activities [related to climate change]." This revelation takes on new significance in light of the confirmation that Koch supported the CEI's "global warming project" in 1997, and the discovery of many hidden payments from Koch Industries and David Koch to CEI from 2009 – 2019.
3. An obscure address in a Charles Koch Foundation tax filing from 2007 appears to indicate that Koch indirectly funded the Science and Public Policy Institute (SPPI) through another climate science denial group, the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change. This was the same year that SPPI produced a climate denial documentary called *Apocalypse? No!*, which fits the description of a project Koch was allegedly considering supporting, as detailed in the 2006 IREA memo.
4. In 2011 and 2012, Charles and David Koch supported Richard Muller's Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature project (BEST). They discontinued their support after Muller famously 'converted' and accepted the role of fossil fuels in forcing unnaturally fast global warming. Muller spoke directly with the Koch brothers and Charles Koch Foundation staff before and after his initial findings were reported. After receiving these updates, Koch continued to publish misinformation related to climate science in its company newsletter, which is distributed to thousands of Koch company employees. Koch executives misrepresented climate science well after Muller's report-back to Charles Koch and the Charles Koch Foundation.
5. While the top leadership at the Koch-controlled organization Americans for Prosperity (AFP) has generally been very cautious to avoid outright denial of climate change, some of AFP's state directors and event participants made more belligerent statements. At an AFP rally in Oregon in November, 2009, which was attended by AFP's national president, a retired meteorologist posing as a climate expert told an audience, "It's about hoodwinking you into believing that there's a crisis to solve that doesn't exist . . . The climate stuff is just a big fraud, in my opinion..." AFP New Jersey state director Steve Lonegan called climate change "the biggest hoax the world has ever seen" during a webcast event in December, 2009.
6. AFP has protested a multistate cap-and-trade program, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), since 2009. AFP protested outside of at least one RGGI auction while a Koch subsidiary was inside making bids. We found that Koch Supply & Trading has participated in 72% of the RGGI auctions—at least one every year from 2009-2023—as AFP has continued attempts to push state governments out of RGGI.
7. Charles Koch appeared to contradict his own position on climate change between interviews in 2016. *ABC News* reporter Jonathan Karl interviewed Charles Koch at his headquarters in Wichita, Kansas, in which Karl photographed a pile of books in Charles Koch's office bathroom that included James Inhofe's *The Greatest Hoax*. When Karl asked Charles Koch if he believed that human activity was responsible for global warming, Koch stated, "Well, I'm not arguing, those are what the measurements show."

Less than three months later, at a panel event hosted by *Fortune*, Koch stated "Yeah I believe it's been warming and I believe that the evidence is there are such a thing as greenhouse gases, and they're contributing to that. But I don't think anybody knows how much. I don't think science is settled."

8. Donald Trump's first term in the White House brought major anti-climate policy victories to Charles Koch and his network of political donors. These victories continue to be delivered by the Supreme Court's conservative majority, including three justices appointed by Trump whom Koch's AFP spent millions of dollars to support. A litany of Trump's advisors and cabinet staff were Koch affiliates, including William Happer of the CO2 Coalition, a Koch-funded organization solely focused on disputing climate change science.

Timeline of Key Events

1970's and 1980's: Early Warnings of Warming

1972: Koch Receives American Petroleum Institute Study on Greenhouse Gases and Global Warming

[KOCH INFORMED]

In January 1972, Koch's predecessor company, Rock Island Oil & Refining Company, was listed in an American Petroleum Institute (API) document as a participant in the API's Committee for Air and Water Conservation.⁴² The document, titled "Environmental Research: A Status Report," summarized numerous "environmental research projects sponsored by the API," including research on carbon dioxide emissions and its potential impacts on the global atmosphere.⁴³ As summarized in court records related to litigation initiated in 2018 by the state of Rhode Island against several major oil companies:⁴⁴

In 1972, API members, including Defendants, received a status report on all environmental research projects funded by API. The report summarized the 1968 [Stanford Research Institute] report describing the impact of fossil fuel products, including Defendants', on the environment, including global warming and attendant consequences. Defendants and/or their predecessors in interest that received this report include, but were not limited to: [...] Rock Island (Koch Industries)...

The API's 1972 "status report" summarized two studies specifically related to the oil industry and greenhouse gas emissions, each of which were commissioned by the API Committee for Air and Water Conservation. A detailed analysis of these API-commissioned studies was published by the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) in 2019:⁴⁵

In 1968, a report from the Stanford Research Institute called Sources, Abundance, and Fate of Gaseous Atmospheric Pollutants was delivered to W.A. Burhouse, Assistant Director of API's Committee for Air and Water Conservation [...] Authored by SRI scientists Elmer Robinson and R.C. Robbins, the report addressed six pollutants, including carbon dioxide. It cautioned that rising levels of CO2 would likely result in rising global temperatures and that, if temperatures increased significantly, the result could be melting ice caps, rising sea levels, warming oceans, and serious environmental damage on a global scale. The scientists acknowledged that burning fossil fuels provided the best explanation for rising CO2. They further recognized that existing science was "detailed" and seemed "to explain adequately the present state of CO2 in the atmosphere."

The 1968 report from SRI did not state definitively that there was a scientific consensus on questions of climate, but concluded "[s]ignificant temperature changes are almost certain to occur by the year 2000 and these could bring about climatic changes." Robinson and Robbins cautioned that these increased temperatures could result in melting ice caps, rising sea levels, warming oceans, and environmental damage on a global scale.

[...]

Although API quickly embraced other aspects of the Robinson and Robbins report, API asked SRI to review their findings on CO2 more extensively in a Supplemental Report submitted in 1969.

[...]

Unlike the original paper, the majority of SRI's 1969 supplemental report focused on only two pollutants, one of which was atmospheric carbon dioxide. This supplement repeated and further substantiated most of the core conclusions of the prior report, including its recognition that: atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide were steadily increasing; 90% of this increase could be attributed to fossil fuel combustion; and continued use of fossil fuels would inevitably and inexorably result in greater CO2 levels in the atmosphere. They reviewed the role of plant growth and of oceans both as sources of and as natural sinks for carbon dioxide. They found it unlikely that either changes in marine biomass or other natural changes in the biosphere could be responsible for rising CO2 levels, and further concluded that neither of these natural sinks could keep pace with the excess emissions created by burning fossil fuels. As a result, Robinson and Robbins estimated that the projected growth in fossil fuel use would push atmospheric CO2 to 370 ppm by the year 2000. This estimate proved remarkably accurate.

CIEL found that the second report that Robinson and Robbins wrote for API seemed to soften some of its language in terms of “predicting future effects of CO2.”⁴⁶

Robinson and Robbins acknowledged the widespread inference in the available science that “a given increase in atmospheric temperature could cause a gradual melting of the polar ice caps” and that this melting, if it occurred, “would obviously result in inundation of coastal areas.” They also acknowledged a long-term, detailed study that had indeed found apparent relationships between Antarctic ice caps and the global climate. Remarkably however, and in stark contrast to their treatment of other issues and the warnings of their earlier report, Robinson and Robbins summarily disregarded these findings and their implications, on the grounds that they were “based on what has occurred in the past, and with our present knowledge we are not justified in predicting future effects of CO2 based on these correlations.” The Supplement omits several paragraphs from the earlier report summarizing the potential environmental and human impacts of climate change.

Still, the authors concluded that “significant temperature changes could be expected to occur by the year 2000 as a result of increased CO2 in the atmosphere. These could bring about long term climatic changes.”

These studies, and the participation of Rock Island Oil & Refining Company, in the API committee that commissioned, reviewed and circulated them, appear to represent the first known document in which Charles Koch's company, and perhaps Charles Koch himself, had access to scientific research approximating the rate and impact of climate change, research predictions that have turned out to be accurate in hindsight.

Charles Koch was named president of Rock Island Oil & Refining Company in 1966, a job given to him by his father. The company was renamed Koch Industries in 1968, in the wake of Fred Koch's death in November 1967.⁴⁷ It's unclear why the 1972 API report continues to refer to the company as “Rock Island,” but Charles Koch was in control of the company at that point in time.

1981: The National Petroleum Council's “Environmental Conservation” Report

[KOCH INFORMED]

Between 1981 and 1995, Charles Koch appears to have received at least four major reports by the National Petroleum Council (NPC) on the topic of climate change—all of them in his capacity as a member of the NPC.

The first of these reports is particularly significant. A 1981 NPC report titled “Environmental Conservation: The Oil and Gas Industries” summarized scientific research linking fossil fuel to increased atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, with the potential to cause “catastrophic climate changes” requiring “joint action by major powers” around the world.⁴⁸ Charles Koch is listed among NPC's members in the report appendix.⁴⁹

The NPC report's section on climate change begins by citing a 1958 study published by Guy Stewart Callendar, an engineer who became an early pioneer of climate science.⁵⁰

Callendar conjectured that the rapid increase in the burning of fossil fuels which has occurred since the start of the Industrial Revolution will result in an increase in the CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere. C.D. Keeling, at Mauna Loa Observatory, Hawaii, initiated in 1958 a program of CO₂ concentration measurement in the atmosphere, which has been essentially continuous ever since. ... Seasonal variations, such as rates of photosynthesis and seasonal ocean temperature changes, are apparent and of interest. The relatively close agreement in absolute quantities and the similarity of the trends at each of the sample locations have established a global increase in atmospheric CO₂ as a credible phenomenon.

The coincidence of this increase with the increase in combustion of fossil fuels since about 1860 has led to a widely accepted conclusion that the burning of fossil fuels is a significant, if not the major, contributor to a real increase in atmospheric CO₂.

[...]

The question as to whether there will be a CO₂ problem has generated considerable debate. The one fact that scientists in this field seem agreed upon is that there has been an increase in global atmospheric CO₂ content from about 315 parts per million volume (ppmv) in 1958 to about 335 ppmv or slightly more today. The cause of this increase is generally attributed to the large quantities of fossil fuel being burned.

While the report did not contain the sense of urgency that would emerge from the scientific community later in the 1980's and especially by the late 1990's, it explicitly noted the potential for more serious problems related to global warming [emphasis added]:⁵¹

*The reason that the subject continues to cause debate and to stimulate research is that it is so very closely tied to the world energy problem. If fossil fuel combustion is the major cause of increasing atmospheric CO₂, if the increasing CO₂ content will result in large or possibly catastrophic climate changes, **and if natural constraints are either inadequate or too slow to keep the situation stable, then action must be initiated fairly soon to reduce the discharge of CO₂ into the atmosphere.***

This action could take the form of restrictions on the use of fossil fuels. The burning of all of the "recoverable resources" of oil (2 trillion barrels) and of gas (9,000 trillion cubic feet) only (not coal) could not raise the global CO₂ level (assuming an airborne fraction of 0.53) to 500 ppmv, which is considered acceptable. The fossil fuels having much greater abundance, particularly coal, are present in sufficient quantity to cause unacceptable CO₂ (and temperature) levels.

Thus the CO₂ "greenhouse" effect may or may not be a serious problem in the future. If it will be a serious problem, plans and implementation strategies should be developed in the near future.

The National Petroleum Council (NPC) was founded by President Harry Truman's administration to provide expertise to the federal government. It is "federally chartered and privately funded," and generally conducts studies upon request of the U.S. Secretary of Energy.⁵² The Energy Secretary also appoints NPC members, which is directed by dozens of executives from the country's large and mid-sized oil & gas companies, as well as a wide variety of industrial companies and consulting firms that are adjacent to the oil & gas industry.⁵³

Charles Koch's name appears in NPC reports as early as December 1979, and as late as August 1995, according to a list of reports archived on the U.S. Department of Energy website.⁵⁴

1985: National Petroleum Council "Natural Gas Transportation" Report

[KOCH INFORMED]

A report published by the NPC in 1985 notes that "growing concern over the greenhouse effect may promote gas as a fuel of choice over other fossil fuels."⁵⁵ Charles Koch is named in the report appendix as an NPC member.⁵⁶

The 1990's: From the Rio Earth Summit to the Kyoto Protocol

1992 was the beginning of a new era of recognition of the seriousness of global climate change. The Rio Earth Summit was initiated four years after Dr. James Hansen's Congressional testimony in 1988. Among the summit's outcomes was the establishment of the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), setting decades of climate negotiations into motion.⁵⁷ The UNFCCC's annual "conference of parties" (COP) climate summits began in 1995, which brought government leaders from around the world into collaboration. The actions of COP participants were generally meant to follow the recommendations of thousands of collaborating scientists producing reports for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which was established by the UN in 1988.⁵⁸ The UN's annual climate negotiation conferences became increasingly serious following the publication of the IPCC's Second Assessment report in 1995, seen by many as a key turning point after which only an increasingly isolated minority of credentialed climate scientists doubted that human industrial activity was warming the Earth.⁵⁹ The 1995 IPCC report created an increased sense of urgency for a binding international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which came to a head at the 1997 UN COP3 conference in Kyoto, Japan, where the "Kyoto Protocol" was first established.⁶⁰

Koch surrogates fought against progress at these negotiations as they proceeded. This report's first confirmed example of such activity is a 1991 conference held by the Cato Institute to dispute climate change science in the lead up to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. There were complementary efforts by the Koch-controlled organization Citizens for a Sound Economy, and a Koch-funded campaign run by the Competitive Enterprise Institute in 1997.

Throughout the 1990's, Charles Koch continued to be named as a National Petroleum Council member in reports containing relatively credible assessments of climate science, in his capacity as the Chairman and CEO of Koch Industries.

June 1991: Cato Institute Climate Conference

[KOCH ACTION]

On June 5-6, 1991, the Cato Institute held a conference titled "Global Environmental Crises: Science or Politics?"⁶¹ Some of the most aggressive historic climate science contrarians were set to attend, including Richard Lindzen, Patrick Michaels, Fred Smith, S. Fred Singer, and Richard Stroup. A description of the conference indicated what was likely the overall goal for Cato, in line with its business-friendly, anti-regulatory policy agenda: "Instead of accepting more regulation and possibly jeopardizing our common future, Cato is bringing together those scientists and policy analysts who offer alternative perspectives on environmental crises in the interests of rational and humane decisionmaking."⁶²

The validity of climate science was a target of the conference attendees. The first panel event of the day was titled, "Global Warming: Catastrophic? Manageable Change? Beneficial?" The front of the conference brochure featured a quote from Richard Lindzen:⁶³

"The notion that global warming is a fact and will be catastrophic is drilled into people to the point where it seems surprising that anyone would question it, and yet, underlying it is very little evidence at all. Nonetheless, there are statements made of such overt unrealism that I feel embarrassed. I feel it discredits science. ..."

The Cato conference was explicitly scheduled to send a message to the White House well before the commencement of the United Nations' Rio Earth Summit, scheduled for the following year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. With the possibility that President Bush might attend the Rio Earth Summit the following year, the participants of the Cato event in Washington, DC succeeded in meeting with White House staff. As Christopher Leonard detailed in his book, *Kochland*:⁶⁴

The seminar was not a fringe event. Lindzen and other speakers at the conference were invited to join White House staffers in the Roosevelt Room while they were in town for the conference, according to an internal White House memo from Nancy G. Maynard, who worked for the president's Office of Science and Technology Policy. Maynard's boss forwarded the invitation to Bush's chief of staff, John H. Sununu, under the subject line "Alternative Perspectives on Global Warming."

Maynard was tasked by Sununu with attending the Cato event in person, according to a memo written on June 3, 1993.⁶⁵ The memo also contained a list of questions Sununu planned on asking a handful of the Cato conference speakers, indicating that the Bush administration understood that the positions espoused by people like Richard Lindzen, Patrick Michaels and Robert Balling were already marginalized within the broader scientific community. Sununu's staff already had a few ideas for ways to help, including a "sympathetic hearing on the Hill" and going "to the coal states for support."

1. Questions asked by Governor Sununu:

As we discussed, your meeting on June 5 with the scientists from the CATO Institute Conference on Global Warming has been arranged for 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room.

In order to spark a lively debate and encourage a good exchange of ideas among the participants, we might allow each of the scientists an opportunity to present a few thoughts on his favorite global change topic. This could be followed by some time for questions and discussion. If you would like each of the participants to address a specific aspect of the global warming issue, we could use an agenda such as the following:

Proposed Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introduction - Governor Sununu
- II. Issues in Global Warming: Science and Politics
 - . Critical Issues in Climate Forecasting - Richard Lindzen
 - . The Detection of Greenhouse Warming - Andrew Solow
 - . Interpreting the Global Temperature Effect - Robert Balling
 - . Atmospheric Science and Global Warming - Hugh Ellsaesser
 - . The Political Science of Global Warming - Patrick Michaels
- III. General Discussion

As you know, I will not be in town on June 5 but Dr. Nancy Maynard (x6202) of my staff, who will be attending the CATO Conference, will take care of the arrangements for the participants and provide support for the meeting. She will continue to stay in touch with your staff to finalize details of the meeting.

- a. What is happening technologically in this science area which addresses a more conservative approach to global warming?
- b. What science has emerged which validate this more conservative approach?
- c. What are the politics of the issue in the academic community?
- d. How can we make a more aggressive hard sell toward this more conservative view of the global warming issue?
- f. What impact have the dollars spent in global change had and what have these dollars given us?
- g. What can we do to help these people (this community with the alternate approach to global warming) relative to discrimination against them?
- h. How does industry relate to this issue and the scientific funding?
- i. What new science is happening in the field - last 6 months especially?
- j. How do we best deal with the international community and its approach to the US on this issue?
- k. It may be good to put together and distribute a volume which addresses the NAS "Policy Implications" document by describing the actions being taken by the Administration. (Maybe we should do a press release) We should do it before UNCED.

Screenshot of June 3, 1991 memo from D. Allan Bromley to Governor John H Sununu.

A year after the Cato event, U.S. President George H.W. Bush attended the Rio Earth Summit. The tone of Bush's speech was distinct from the statements made by his staff in the private meeting with the Cato conference speakers the previous summer. In his speech on June 13, 1992, the day before the Rio Earth Summit concluded, Bush announced his intentions for the U.S. to collaborate with other countries around climate change:⁶⁶

We come to Rio with an action plan on climate change. It stresses energy efficiency, cleaner air, reforestation, new technology. I am happy to report that I have just signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Today, I invite my colleagues from the industrialized world to join in a prompt start on the convention's implementation.

Charles Koch and the History of the Cato Institute:

Cato was founded by Charles Koch and Ed Crane in 1977, and heavily financed by foundations controlled by Charles and David Koch over the decades.⁶⁷ Charles Koch's relationship with Crane soured over the years, and he reportedly became less involved, but David Koch took his brother's position on the Cato board of directors.⁶⁸ For most of its history, the Cato Institute was a central player and coordinator in efforts to dispute climate change science and resist related policy efforts. This work largely revolved around Patrick Michaels, dating back to at least the late 1980's, until Michaels left Cato in 2019 and his department was closed.⁶⁹

Koch foundations have given millions of dollars in grants to Cato. In 1991, the year of the global warming conference, Koch foundation grants to Cato totaled \$800,000.⁷⁰ Archives of historic Koch foundation tax filing data indicate that Cato received a combined \$5,785,740 from the Koch-controlled Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundation (which has since shuttered) and the David H. Koch Charitable Foundation from 1986-1991.⁷¹ Cato continues to receive millions of dollars in annual grants from Koch foundations, despite a widely publicized litigation between the Koch brothers and Cato in 2012, which was settled in a matter of months.⁷² Stand Together Trust, Stand Together Fellowships and the Charles Koch Foundation have given millions of dollars in recent years, ranging between \$1.9 million to \$4.3 million annually for the last five years of available records.⁷³

1992: National Petroleum Council Gas Report

[KOCH INFORMED]

A 1992 report published by the National Petroleum Council (NPC) titled “The Potential of Natural Gas in the United States” delved into “Emerging Environmental Issues.” The report was written to promote expansion of the petroleum gas industry, and the section on “Global Climate Change” reflects that goal:⁷⁴

Global climate change caused by the gradual buildup of carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases is an issue of growing public policy and scientific debate. As the debate continues, it may serve as a driving force for legislation and regulation to minimize the consumption of fossil fuels with preference given to those fossil fuels that minimize the emission of these gases.

Natural gas is the lowest emitter of combustion carbon dioxide, but it is itself a greenhouse gas which may draw attention to minimizing emissions from production transportation and storage. There are few reliable, objective data on the question of methane emissions. The Gas Research Institute has initiated an aggressive program with the Environmental Protection Agency to develop reasonable estimates of the leakage of methane during the production and transportation of natural gas.

The report appendix lists Charles Koch as a member of the Council.⁷⁵

1993: Koch Opposition to BTU Tax

[KOCH ACTION]

In 1993, as part of their first budget proposal, President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore proposed an energy tax that was intended to raise revenue to offset some of the social costs of pollution from industrial sources.⁷⁶ Climate change mitigation and greenhouse gas emissions reductions were not the explicit goals of the policy, which was directed more broadly at various air pollutants. Nonetheless, such a policy would have become a significant de facto climate mitigation effort.⁷⁷

An organization founded by the Koch brothers and Koch Industries’ top political strategist, Richard Fink, became a key player in orchestrating public opposition to the BTU tax.⁷⁸ Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE) was founded by Fink and David Koch in 1984, and CSE’s operations were closely controlled and financed by Koch executives, as the *New Yorker* summarized in 2010 [emphasis in original]:⁷⁹

The Koch brothers, after helping to create Cato and Mercatus, concluded that think tanks alone were not enough to effect change. They needed a mechanism to deliver those ideas to the street, and to attract the public’s support. In 1984, David Koch and Richard Fink created yet another organization, and [Matt] Kibbe joined them. The group, Citizens for a Sound Economy, seemed like a grassroots movement, but according to the Center for Public Integrity it was sponsored principally by the Kochs, who provided \$7.9 million between 1986 and 1993.

[...]

Within a few years, the group had mobilized fifty paid field workers, in twenty-six states, to rally voters behind the Kochs' agenda. David and Charles, according to one participant, were "very controlling, very top down. You can't build an organization with them. They run it."

Jeff Nesbit, who worked as a consultant for Citizens for a Sound Economy in 1993, detailed Fink's orchestration of CSE's campaign against the Clinton administration's proposed BTU tax. As described in Nesbit's book, *Poison Tea*:⁸⁰

What didn't become public until nearly twenty years later was that these themes of a Tea Party antitax, antiregulation, and antigovernment revolt were then developed almost simultaneously by two of the largest tobacco companies—Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds—under the guise of political and business coalitions to fight excise taxes of all sorts, including cigarette taxes. In successive phases in the 1990s, with the Kochs' CSE as its core mobilization network partner, Philip Morris and RJR helped create state-based antitax and antiregulation propaganda campaigns such as Get Government Off Our Back, Enough is Enough, and the Coalition Against Regressive Taxation.

Before that first deal in early 1993 was wrapped up, however, more senior Philip Morris officials joined the meeting. One of them knew me and my efforts to convince the FDA to regulate the tobacco industry. He stopped the meeting and ushered us out of the room. I was never invited back into these discussions, and I knew it was only a matter of time before my consulting contract with CSE would end.

But I still had time to watch one more episode in the beginning of the transformation of CSE from an unknown hybrid advocacy think tank carrying out Charles Koch's wishes in Washington to, years later, the much more well-known Americans for Prosperity.

When President Clinton's first budget was submitted to Congress, it contained a novel idea to tax carbon emissions—a BTU tax that Vice President Al Gore and others had been proposing as a method to start combatting global climate change.

When Clinton's budget arrived in Congress, Rich Fink walked into the American Petroleum Institute with a check in hand for several million dollars. That funding, he told API's leadership, was available if they'd match it and allow CSE to take on just the BTU issue in Clinton's budget. API said yes, and the single-minded campaign to target the BTU tax began in earnest.

CSE created the content of the relentless attack ads in media in key states, all with an eye toward demonizing the BTU tax. In the end, they only had to flip a single senator—Democratic moderate David Boren, who represented the swing vote on the Senate Finance Committee. CSE took out one full-page ad after another in Oklahoma's daily newspapers to hang the BTU tax around Boren's neck. It worked. Boren capitulated quickly, the BTU tax was pulled from Clinton's first budget, and CSE and the Kochs had their first significant victory on the new political playing field they had created for themselves with help and guidance from Philip Morris and the American Petroleum Institute.

In a report on the demise of the BTU tax, the *Washington Post* reported that the American Petroleum Institute worked in concert with the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and "farming interests" to spend "more than \$2 million on television and newspaper ads and other efforts to mobilize public opposition to the tax and make key lawmakers feel the heat."⁸¹ API was prepared to spend even more—perhaps in part due to the commitment of Koch's Richard Fink. As Dawn Erlandson summarized in a 1994 article published in the *Pace Environmental Law Review*:⁸²

... Citizens for a Sound Economy, with its 250,000 members, staged protest rallies in North Dakota, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Montana, attacking the tax as the worst possible tax we could use to reduce the budget deficit. Further opposition arose from the Affordable Energy Alliance and the American Petroleum Institute (API). In fact, API pledged to spend nearly five million dollars to defeat the Btu tax.

CSE and its affiliated CSE Foundation operated for 20 years before an internal feud led to a split in which CSE became FreedomWorks, and the CSE Foundation became Americans for Prosperity (AFP).⁸³ AFP remains Koch's

current flagship political organization. CSE participated in other anti-environmental policy initiatives, such as opposition to the Kyoto Protocol climate agreement of 1997, as detailed below.

1995: National Petroleum Council “Future Issues” Report

[KOCH INFORMED]

A National Petroleum Council (NPC) report from 1995 titled “Future Issues: A View of U.S. Oil & Natural Gas to 2020” mentions climate change as an ongoing issue for the industry. This appears to be the last NPC report that lists Charles Koch as a member in the appendix.⁸⁴ Coincidentally, the study was produced with the help of Arthur D. Little, Inc, where Charles Koch was employed before he joined his father’s company.⁸⁵ A description of the study’s methods notes that Arthur D. Little, Inc “conducted a series of 45 interviews and three facilitated workshops involving thought leaders” that are summarized in the report.⁸⁶ These interviews are where the quotes on climate change come from in the following passage:⁸⁷

Concern over global climate change relates to the possibility that emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases will result in alterations in climate patterns. Global climate change is one of the most uncertain of the issues that the oil and gas industry and society generally, will face over the next 25 years, and the potential impact could be great. Some people believe that the danger posed is serious enough to require immediate drastic action, and many think that response to global climate concerns may be a dominant theme for the oil and gas industry over the next 25 years.

There is general agreement that, if fossil fuel consumption is in fact causing significant long-term detrimental climate changes, the oil and gas industry will be significantly impacted. One interviewee, for example, said, "Global warming is a key uncertainty. If calamities can be directly attributed to it, the whole future of the energy industry could be changed." The differences in views of this issue arise from polar opinions of the likelihood that fossil fuel consumption is having a significant effect on the climate system. One comment was, "The fears about global warming are likely to be greatly exaggerated. You get amazing results from a small input of fact." In contrast, another response was, "Most of our international neighbors believe that global warming is real and that concrete steps should be taken soon." And at the other end, a third comment was, "Global warming will not occur. The current computer models are weak. Inaccuracies in their basic assumptions indicate that warming conclusions are inappropriate." It should be noted that respondents differentiated the effects of global climate change on the oil and gas segments of the industry: "Natural gas will increasingly become the favored transitional fuel toward a fully renewable sustainable economy."

It is unclear if Charles Koch or any of his company’s staff participated in the interviews that were quoted in this report. The most aggressive statements denying global warming in the NPC report were completely inconsistent with the IPCC’s “Climate Change 1995” report, which was released several months prior.⁸⁸

1997: Koch Funding to CEI’s “Global Warming Project”

[KOCH ACTION]

In 1997, Koch was among the sponsors of the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s “global warming project.” Koch’s support was earmarked specifically for this project, rather than CEI’s general budget, according to minutes from the March 31, 1997 CEI board of directors meeting, which were obtained by the Corporate Genome Project and shared with the authors. As the meeting notes summarized, “Amoco, Exxon and Koch are giving CEI new money just for the global warming project,” a project CEI hoped to raise \$500,000 that year.⁸⁹

DEVELOPMENT

Jason Taylor explained why CEI is confident of raising \$3.2 million. His new assistant, Megan McLaughlin, will keep Fred and Jason on track and the new database will automate the system. Every \$5,000 and up donor on CEI's list has been carefully vetted. Fred Smith believes CEI can raise at least \$71,000 for the insurance program. STAR gave CEI \$75,000 last year. Funding for the program could reach \$200,000. Jason expects \$25,000 in new individuals, and \$225,000 in new foundations. Amoco, Exxon and Koch are giving CEI new money just for the global warming project. The potential is there to raise \$500,000 for the project. Existing donor companies are beginning to refer CEI to other companies. Jason said that he has started working on the Brookes dinner in a timely manner. He said that Steve Forbes has agreed to be speaker, and that the date and hotel have already been selected. He also said that shortly they will send out "save the date" pre-invitation cards.

The same CEI board meeting minutes from March 1997 summarize some of CEI's related programs that year, including a "global warming" conference:⁹⁰

Global Warming Conference: Jonathan Adler said that CEI has obtained the money for it, although not for the project as a whole. He explained that CEI wants edited proceedings, video highlights, and audio tapes. This conference will be held between the June and July Bonn meetings, and prior to the Kyoto Conference. This event will emphasize the policy side rather than the science - what global warming policy will mean for people. United Mine Workers are adamantly opposed, as are some in AFL-CIO. AFL-CIO's line is curbing energy use is all right as long as it hurts everyone equally. Al Gore has tried hard to woo labor and has failed. With full funding, CEI will run public service ads, probably with the theme of "Energy: It moves the world."

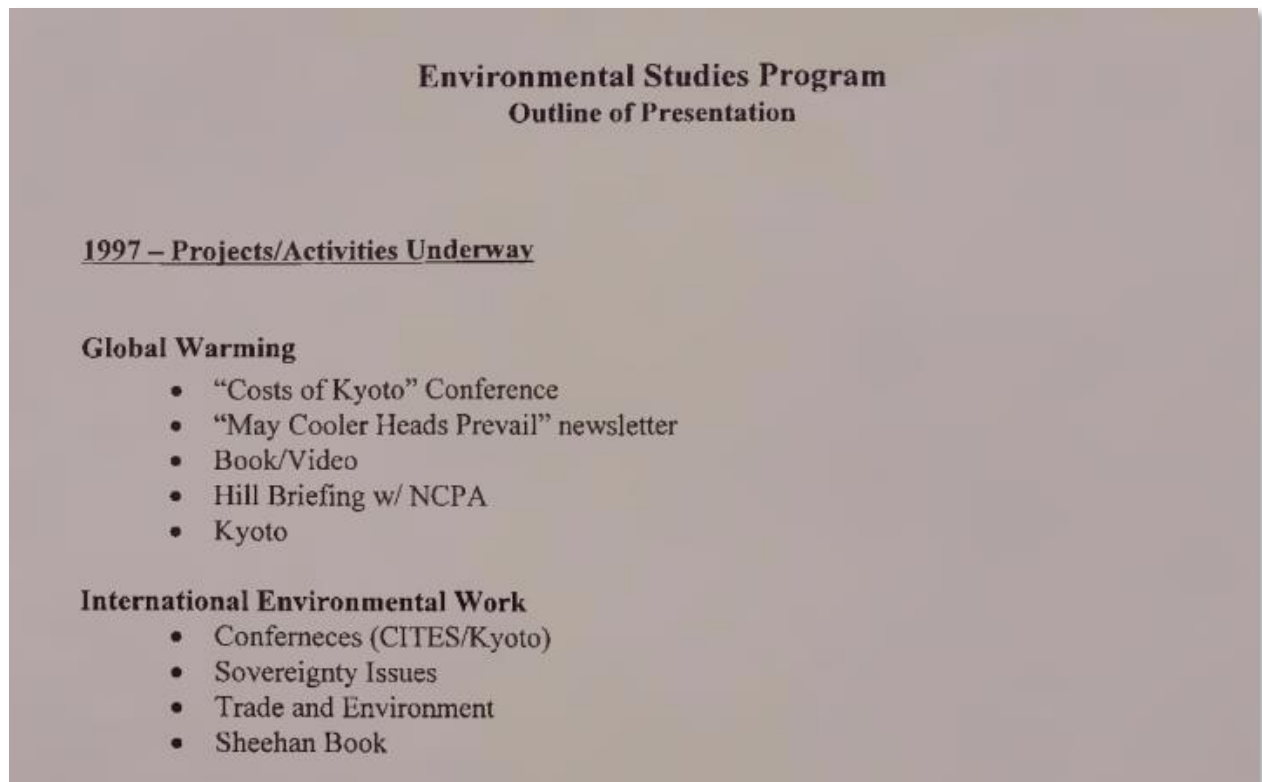
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IRS 990 tax filing data compiled by Greenpeace shows that CEI received a combined sum of \$305,000 from Koch Foundations from 1996-1999, specifically from the Koch-controlled Claude R. Lambe Foundation and the David

H. Koch Foundation.⁹¹ Combined, these two foundations provided CEI with \$70,000 in 1996, \$90,000 in 1997, and \$145,000 in 1998. CEI received Koch grants before and after this time frame as well.

Minutes from another CEI board of directors meeting that took place in September 1997 reveal more details CEI's "global warming project" activity in 1997. Notes from an outline of a presentation summarizing CEI's active "Global Warming" related projects included this bulleted list:⁹²

- *"Costs of Kyoto" Conference*
- *"May Cooler Heads Prevail" newsletter*
- *Book/Video*
- *Hill Briefing w/ NCPA [National Center for Policy Analysis]*
- *Kyoto*



Some of these project descriptions are vague, and impossible to attribute to specific activities conducted by CEI in 1997. At least two examples are easier to confirm, as detailed in the next two events on the timeline of this report.

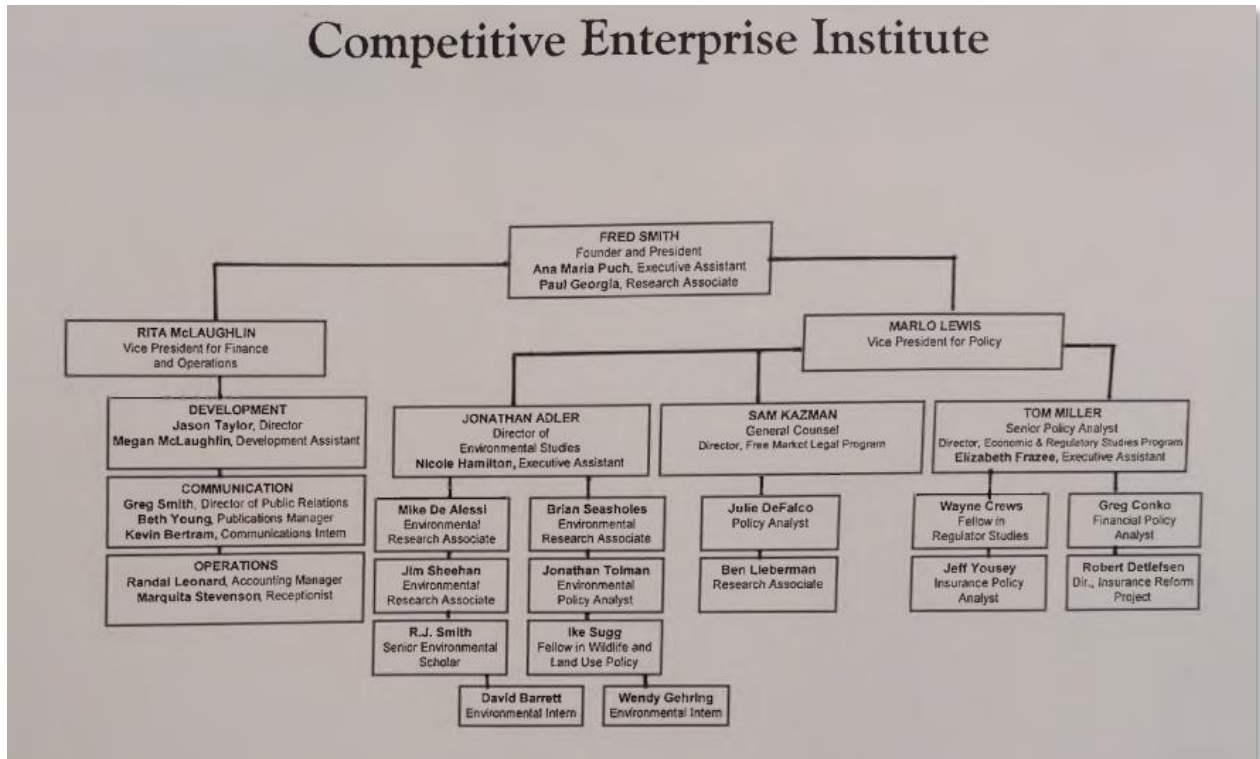
May 1997: Launch of the Cooler Heads Coalition

[KOCH ACTION]

The Cooler Heads Coalition (CHC) was formed on May 6, 1997 by 24 organizations—including the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) and the Koch-controlled Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE)—many of which composed the core of modern history's climate change science opposition movement.⁹³

The CHC ran the website GlobalWarming.org, which was operated as a clearinghouse of misinformation about climate change science and opposition to related policies and regulations.⁹⁴ CEI's Marlo Lewis was listed as the "group leader" of the Coalition on the earliest archives of its website, in January 1998, a role he served until mid

2004.⁹⁵ At the time, Lewis was supervising Jonathan Adler, who ran CEI's "Environmental Studies" programming, which included CEI's Koch-funded "global warming project".⁹⁶



According to the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, the CHC website appears to have launched on July 8, 1997.⁹⁷ It was initially operated by the organization Consumer Alert, and its affiliated National Consumer Coalition, of which both CEI and Koch's Citizens for a Sound Economy were members.⁹⁸ Consumer Alert's Fran Smith, who was married to CEI's Fred Smith, was credited as the coordinator of the National Consumer Coalition.⁹⁹ Both the National Consumer Coalition and Consumer Alert are now defunct, but the CHC continued operating into 2024.

For its entire existence, the CHC website's stated mission was "focused on dispelling the myths of global warming by exposing flawed economic, scientific, and risk analysis."¹⁰⁰ At the time, the CHC website contained a variety of discredited or decontextualized statements about the basic facts of climate change science, such as the following bulleted statements:¹⁰¹

- *Satellite data indicate a slight cooling in the earth's climate in the last 18 years. These satellites use advanced technology and are not subject to the "heat island" effect around major cities that alter ground based thermometers. [...]*
- *By most accounts, man-made emissions have had no more than a minuscule impact on the climate. [...]*
- *Ninety-Eight percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions are natural (mostly water vapor); only two percent are from man-made sources. [...]*
- *The idea that global warming would melt the ice caps and flood costal [sic] cities seems to be mere science fiction. Scientists have found that due to likely increased precipitation, more snow will accumulate at the poles, thus adding to the ice caps and off-setting any small amount of melting that may occur due to global warming.*

Several members of the CHC attended a key meeting at the American Petroleum Institute (API) in 1998, in which they forged an “action plan” for “Global Climate Science Communications” alongside lobbyists from API, Exxon, Chevron, and Southern Company.¹⁰² The explicit goal of this plan was clearly printed at the top of the document’s project goals:

Victory Will Be Achieved When

- **Average citizens “understand” (recognize) uncertainties in climate science; recognition of uncertainties becomes part of the “conventional wisdom”**
- **Media “understands” (recognizes) uncertainties in climate science.**
- **Media coverage reflects balance on climate science and recognition of the validity of viewpoints that challenge the current “conventional wisdom”**
- **Industry senior leadership understands uncertainties in climate science, making them stronger ambassadors to those who shape climate policy**
- **Those promoting the Kyoto treaty on the basis of extant science appear to be out of touch with reality.**

One of the longtime CHC members in attendance was Myron Ebell of the Frontiers for Freedom. Ebell soon became a CEI employee, in 1999, where he continued to work against climate and clean energy policies for almost 25 more years.¹⁰³ While at CEI, Ebell replaced Marlo Lewis as the “group leader” of the CHC in 2004.¹⁰⁴ The globalwarming.org website was later “paid for and maintained by the Competitive Enterprise Institute,” from at least 2007 to September 2024.¹⁰⁵ Ebell remained the CHC’s chairman for most of its existence, until his retirement in 2024. It is unclear if the CHC is continuing to operate after Ebell’s retirement. The GlobalWarming.org web domain now redirects to the CEI website, as of October 2024.¹⁰⁶

July – October 1997: “The Costs of Kyoto” - CEI Conference and Book

[KOCH ACTION]

As part of the Koch-funded “global warming project,” CEI published a book titled, *The Costs of Kyoto* on October 10, 1997.¹⁰⁷ It was edited by Jonathan Adler, the CEI employee in charge of the organization’s “environmental studies” program, who was supervised by Marlo Lewis, who in turn reported directly to CEI’s president, Fred Smith.¹⁰⁸ The book was published after CEI hosted the “global warming conference” that was listed in CEI’s internal board meeting minutes as part of the Koch-funded “global warming project.” The resulting content of that conference was the basis for the book, which is noted in Adler’s introduction:¹⁰⁹

The Costs of Kyoto

To clarify these concerns, the Competitive Enterprise Institute hosted “The Costs of Kyoto,” a conference on global climate change policy and its implications on July 15, 1997. The conference examined the economic and social implications of climate change policies, and reviewed how such policies are developed. A premium was placed on the real world impacts of climate change policy, both in the United States and abroad, and on the trade-offs inherent in environmental policy. The papers in this book are based upon presentations from the conference.

In-text reference
return: Page 6

In Adler’s introduction, climate science is described in ways that undermine the severity of the problem, using arguments that prevail today. The first three paragraphs avoid outright denial of the phenomenon, while conveying to readers that global warming was, in fact, not a problem:¹¹⁰

The primary basis for global warming forecasts is found in the global circulation models, highly complex computer programs that seek to simulate atmospheric changes. As these models have become more accurate at estimating present temperatures, they have also forecast less extreme temperature rises due to the accumulation of greenhouse gases [sic]. Based upon the models’ findings, the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts a warming of 0.8 to 3.5 degrees C by the year 2100. This is significantly less warming than predicted in the apocalyptic scenarios with which we are all too familiar. Indeed, the IPCC’s lower-bound warming estimate is just over half that predicted just a few years ago.

As the models improve they predict less warming and new uncertainties are revealed. In May, Science, America’s most prestigious scientific journal, published a news story, “Greenhouse Forecast Still Cloudy,” highlighting the raft of uncertainties that remain in predictions of global warming. The article concluded that “most [computer] modelers now agree that the climate models will not be able to link greenhouse warming unambiguously to human actions for a decade or more.” One month later, the Bulletin of the American Meteorological [sic] Society published a paper suggesting that computer models may be misrepresenting the effect of water vapor feedbacks within the climate system. Then, Nature made headlines by publishing a study suggesting that global warming poses little threat to polar ice caps. Indeed the report suggested that some ice shelves should expand, not melt, if the earth warms.

The more that is known, the less it seems that humans have to fear from global warming. The indications are that a warmer world would be far more benign than previously imagined. Scorching summers, produced by an increase in daytime highs, would have far different effects on human and other life than a wintertime warming that occurs mostly at night. Yet a recent study found no indication that global warming would produce killer heatwaves in urban areas, environmentalist claims notwithstanding. Nighttime warming should lengthen growing seasons, at the same time that increased levels of CO2 accentuate the growth of plants. A rise in soil moisture levels is more likely to occur than a rise in severe droughts.

Adler’s introduction discourages outright denial of climate change:¹¹¹

The real question facing the world’s people is not “is warming real?” but “what, if anything, should be done about it?”

Pursuing the Safest Course

The real question facing the world's people is not "is warming real?" but "what, if anything, should be done about it?" Future events will always be indeterminate, and given the magnitude of human activity, this means there will be uncertainty about the impacts of civilization. Natural disasters will strike randomly whether modern industrial society contributes to climatic changes or not. Even the most sophisticated computers will be unable to forecast future events with anything approaching certainty. What then is the proper policy response to *uncertainty*?

As with many conferences and publications produced by CEI and its peer organizations, this position is directly contradicted by other authors in Adler's book. The most obvious contradiction is in the opening paragraphs of a chapter written by Frances B. Smith (wife of CEI's founder and then-president, Fred Smith):¹¹²

Public debates on global warming policy often focus on the science of climate change. Yet whether warming is occurring is still in question; and, if global warming is occurring, the extent of mankind's influence has not yet been clearly established. [...]

A chapter written by David Murray, focused on alleged media bias, included a subtle note undermining Adler's opening assertion that, at the very least, global warming is "real."¹¹³

Second, if there has been warming, there is the question of anthropogenicity — are man-made greenhouse gases implicated in a causal role, or is that "signal" against the background of natural variation still ambiguous?

Other prescriptions of doubt in *The Costs of Kyoto* were more nuanced, avoiding outright denial of global warming. Dr. Roy Spencer, whose position on the issue have evolved very little since 1997, included another inaccurate statement in a chapter later in the book:¹¹⁴

Within the science of global warming it is often difficult to separate what the data show from what the scientists want the data to show. [...] The theory of global warming will probably never be validated or falsified since we can not put the Earth in a laboratory and run experiments on it. About all we can hope for is that sufficient measurements can be accumulated in support and in opposition to the theory to eventually make some generalized statements reflecting our uncertainty of the existence and magnitude of global warming.

Similarly, without resorting to outright denial, Roger Bate used more calculated language in his chapter of the book, using statements that undervalued the basic conclusions that a vast majority of climate scientists had accepted by 1997:¹¹⁵

The general public seems to believe that the climate is changing due to human activities. They hear from environmental groups and the media that those changes will be harmful and that we should be doing something about it. However, within the scientific community, things are not so clear cut.

Bate was affiliated with the UK-based Institute for Economic Affairs.¹¹⁶ He got his start at the IEA as a "Koch fellow" in 1992, and then a "Lambe fellow" at Koch's Institute for Humane Studies. These credentials were mentioned in a letter written to Charles Koch by IEA's John Blundell two weeks before the *The Costs of Kyoto* book was published, in which Blundell referred Mr. Koch to Bate's work on "global warming."¹¹⁷ Bate previously did secretive work on behalf of the tobacco industry, and later became an adjunct fellow with CEI.¹¹⁸

June 1997: Citizens for a Sound Economy Calls Global Warming “Junk Science”

[KOCH ACTION]

In a press release published on June 26, 1997, the Koch-controlled Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE) referred to the “so-called global warming theory” as “junk science,” in comments released as part of an event featuring an industry-funded scientist who became well known for his contrarian climate position:¹¹⁹

Commenting on President Clinton's remarks concerning global warming at the United Nations today, Paul Beckner, president of Citizens for a Sound Economy said, "Before the world stage, President Clinton announced his intentions to spend billions of Americans' dollars on unproven environmental policies." Beckner characterized the so-called global warming theory as "junk science."

The president's speech in New York follows his decision on Wednesday to implement the Environmental Protection Agency's controversial new clean air standards.

[...]

At [a] Citizens for a Sound Economy Foundation luncheon today in Boston, a climatology expert challenged many popularly-held perceptions surrounding global warming. Dr. Robert C. Balling, director of the Arizona State University office of climatology said that records from satellites and airborne balloons actually indicate that global temperatures have cooled during the past two decades, despite the increase in greenhouse gases.

It is unclear if CSE, or Koch, financed any of Balling’s controversial work. Balling’s ties to ExxonMobil and other fossil fuel companies were revealed decades ago, as summarized by *DeSmog*, and he was the co-author of a book published by the Koch-funded Cato Institute in 2000.¹²⁰ In-text reference return: Page 79

1998: Citizens for a Sound Economy TV Commercial

[KOCH ACTION]

In 1998, in anticipation of the fourth United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Citizens for a Sound Economy worked with several industry trade associations to pay for a commercial advocating against support for participation in the “UN climate agreement.” The commercial’s narrator warned:¹²¹

It will put America on a strict energy diet that will raise the price of just about everything you buy. Gas prices will go up by fifty cents a gallon. The cost of heating and electricity will increase. And higher transportation costs will send food prices soaring. In-text reference return: Page 17

November 1998: Koch Pays for Don Ritter to Attend COP-4

[KOCH ACTION]

An undated document produced by the Atlas Economic Research Foundation, and obtained by the Corporate Genome Project, shows that “Koch Industries” gave a donation of \$3,500 for Don Ritter of the National Environmental Policy Institute (NEPI) to attend the United Nations’ “COP-4” climate summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina in November 1998.¹²² Another \$2,693 in expenses was also attributed to Ritter, which appears to have been contributed by Atlas itself. The same document attributes other specific sponsors to more attendees, including ExxonMobil, the American Petroleum Institute, and the Western Fuels Association, apparently organized or brokered by Atlas. These attendees included some of key figures in the anti-climate public relations movement, like Fred Singer, Patrick Michaels, and Robert Bradley.

In 1998, the Koch-controlled Claude R. Lambe Foundation gave \$3,500 to the Atlas Economic Research Foundation, matching the grant amount in the 1998 “Global Warming Events in Argentina” document.¹²³ Records of tax filings for Koch foundations prior to 2000 indicate that 1998 was the only year that Koch foundations gave Atlas grants in the time frame from 1993 – 2000.¹²⁴

GLOBAL WARMING EVENTS IN ARGENTINA
 Donations and Expenses for Seminars and COP-4 Summit in Buenos Aires

EN BUENOS AIRES, 8 DE OCTUBRE DE 1998

DONATIONS		EXPENSES					RECONCILE
DONOR	AMOUNT	RECIPIENT	HONORARIA	AIR TRAVEL	MISCEL	TOTAL	
Exxon Corp (genl grant)	8,750	Fundación Republica	0	0	11,250	11,250	
Exxon Corp (special grant)	15,000	Fundación Libertad	0	0	10,000	10,000	
American Petroleum Insti	5,000	Fundación MEL	0	0	1,500	1,500*	
Robert Bradley (from stocks)	5,250	Pat Michaels (New Hope)	1,500	4,517	155	6,172*	
Koch Industries	3,500	Don Ritter (NEPI)	1,500	1,068	125	2,693*	
Western Fuels Association	5,000	Jim Sheehan (CEI)	0	750	0	750*	
Independent Petrol Assn	1,000	Roberto Fendt (IL-RJ)	0	250	0	250*	
Ford Motor Company	0	Ana Luisa Covarrubias (LyD)	0	350	0	350*	
Gordon Cain	0	Deroy Murdock	0	0	0	0	
American Airlines	2 tickets	Fr Micael Beers	0	950	100	1,050*	
<i>Monsanto</i>	<i>2000?</i>	Rafacl Palacio	0	700	300	1,000	
<i>FEE/L Sol Petroleo</i>	<i>2000?</i>	Fred Singer (SEPP)	0	0	5,000	5,000	
<i>Petroken?</i>	<i>1000?</i>	Atlas Fdn (org-mgt fee)	0	0	3,500	3,500	
RECEIVED	40,000						40,000
(SPENT)						(43,515)	43,515
BALANCE							(3,515)

* Still to be paid, in whole or part

Eight months after COP-4 took place, NEPI published a report on “Global Environmental Change” summarizing a discussion event that took place at Georgetown University on March 31, 1999.¹²⁵ Attendees included Ritter, representatives from ExxonMobil, the American Petroleum Institute, Kenneth Green on behalf of the Reason Public Policy Institute, and CEI’s Marlo Lewis, along with many other scientists, professors, and professionals. Ritter authored the “chairman’s letter” at the beginning of the report.

Chairman's Letter

July 28, 1999

Policymakers face a diverse and complex set of issues related to climate change. Though policymakers are no strangers to dealing with such complexity and high-risk policy, climate change poses unique challenges:

- Climate science is evolving, and core elements of present understanding of climate change are continually being refined;
- The potential risks of climate change are poorly understood, and estimates are heavily dependent upon assumptions that face many challenges;
- Climate change policy has economic ramifications significant enough to threaten the national economy;
- Climate change policy has ramifications that transcend national boundaries, raising questions of global competitiveness and cooperation;
- The climate change policy process has become heavily politicized, creating a framework that makes exploration of policy options more difficult.

There is no evidence indicating that Koch financed or influenced this report, but the tone of Ritter's introduction and other sections of the report reflects a rhetorical shift by Koch-controlled organizations, like Citizens for a Sound Economy, and Koch-funded organizations like CEI, which involved focusing more on undermining climate policies than challenging the scientific consensus.¹²⁶

As of December 2023, Ritter continues to promote the use of fossil fuels, as an affiliate of the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow, which was a member of the Cooler Heads Coalition (see 1997 CEI Global Warming Project section, above).¹²⁷

The 2000s: Kyoto to Copenhagen and the Defeat of U.S. Climate Legislation

The first decade of the 2000's contained numerous significant milestones and setbacks for national and international climate mitigation efforts, as well as opposing efforts. Coming out of the Kyoto era, aggressive climate change denial was still relatively common in the early 2000's.¹²⁸ Groups financed by Koch foundations, ExxonMobil and the American Petroleum Institute, as well as coal mining and utility companies, saw their preferences reflected in the priorities of the George W. Bush administration, including the aggressive behind-the-scenes work of vice president Dick Cheney, a former Halliburton executive.¹²⁹ In the public discourse, mainstream media outlets gradually came to understand that "global warming" is a symptom of "climate change," rather than a synonym.¹³⁰ While it was a more broadly applicable phrase, "climate change" was also used to weaken the public's sense of severity because it sounded "less frightening," as the conservative pollster Frank Luntz wrote in a memo he created for the George W. Bush administration.¹³¹

The IPCC's Third Assessment report was published in 2001, which began to use more urgent language about the need to engage in climate mitigation efforts to avoid increasing costs and impacts. Despite the Bush administration's regressive statements and positions, many Republicans in Congress were willing to take some basic steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and several bipartisan climate bills began gaining popularity.¹³² The 2008 election was a face off between Senators Barack Obama (D-IL) and John McCain (R-AZ), the latter of whom was the co-sponsor of such legislation. 2009 was an explosive year for climate change mitigation, coming out of the landslide presidential election of Obama and heading toward a major UN climate summit in Copenhagen, Denmark. A Democratic majority in both chambers of Congress resulted in one climate change bill, the American Clean Energy

and Security Act, nicknamed the “Waxman-Markey bill” after its co-sponsors, U.S. Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Ed Markey (D-MA).¹³³

This was the last decade in which Charles and David Koch enjoyed relative public obscurity. They had made news in the previous decade over contentious litigation with their brother, Bill Koch.¹³⁴ Koch Industries was still in the thick of a series of several major scandals coming out of the 1990’s, from a deadly pipeline explosion to oil spills to theft of oil from the native Osage tribe.¹³⁵ Despite this torrent of bad press, the company was not yet recognized as a fixture of American politics, as it would come to be known in the next decade. Charles Koch began convening other wealthy political donors in 2003, though virtually no details of these efforts existed in the public record until 2010.¹³⁶

Koch surrogate organizations aggressively continued a public relations war against climate science, and related policy and regulations, during this era. Ironically, some of the Koch company’s publications touted achievements in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

January 2001: Mercatus Center Opposes EPA Effort to Reduce Carbon Emissions from Vehicles

[KOCH ACTION]

The Mercatus Center is an anti-regulatory policy organization hosted on the Arlington, Virginia campus of George Mason University (GMU). It was founded by Charles Koch and Richard Fink.¹³⁷

The group was initially known as the Center for the Study of Market Processes (CSMP), established briefly at Rutgers University. Led by Fink, the new CSMP was resisted by Rutgers’ economics faculty for its focus on marginalized Austrian economics, and “flak from the administration” because Fink did not yet have his Ph.D.¹³⁸ Rather than risking termination and further controversy, Fink decided to leave Rutgers and take the operation to George Mason University (GMU). The CSMP became part of GMU in 1980, changing its name to the Mercatus Center 19 years later, in 1999.¹³⁹ As with Rutgers, the Mercatus Center was also resisted by the faculty of GMU’s economics department, with one longtime economics professor calling Fink a “third rate hack” and “a man who is very appropriately named.”¹⁴⁰

Efforts to resist the ideological work of Mercatus at GMU did not ultimately succeed. GMU ultimately allowed Mercatus to continue operating on campus as a privately-controlled operation at a publicly-funded state university since it was established.¹⁴¹ As accused by estranged brother Bill Koch during the Koch brothers’ years of interfamily litigation, the Mercatus Center was a way for Charles Koch “to have a tax deduction for financing a group, which for all practical purposes is a lobbying group for his corporate interest.”¹⁴² George Mason University and the two Koch-controlled organizations it hosts—the Mercatus Center and the Institute for Humane Studies—have together received hundreds of millions of dollars from Koch foundations since the 1980’s—well over a quarter billion dollars total, as of 2022.¹⁴³

In January 2001, the US EPA published a call for comment in the Federal Register regarding a proposed rule to regulate emissions of key greenhouse gasses for new motor vehicles under the Clean Air Act. In a public comment submitted to the US EPA opposing the proposed rule, the Mercatus Center made repeated assertions that were reflective of discredited positions on climate change science at that point in time. From the Mercatus Center’s bulleted summary of its comment:¹⁴⁴

- *The evidence regarding global warming and human contribution to it is mixed, and as forecasts of anthropogenic warming get more refined, they predict less extreme warming.*
- *... There is little, if any, scientific support for dire predictions that warming temperatures will result in rampant tropical diseases etc. On the contrary, if a slight warming does occur, historical evidence suggests it is likely to be beneficial, occurring at night, in the winter, and at the poles. Taking "precautionary action" to protect human health based on a series of tenuous linkages would likely create a new set of risks.*

The full public comment—written by the Mercatus Center’s Kameran L. Bailey—promoted a number of discredited positions, cited contrarian information published by fossil fuel lobbying groups and consultants, fringe scientific groups and materials that attempted to feign scientific legitimacy.¹⁴⁵ In a section refuting that human greenhouse gas emissions are linked to global warming, Bailey wrote:¹⁴⁶

Greenhouse gas emissions are directly linked to the hotly debated issue of global warming. A premise behind the petition is the notion that increasing levels of these gases in the atmosphere warm the earth by making the atmosphere less transparent to outgoing (infrared) radiation while remaining fully transparent to incoming (visible) solar radiation. Controversy surrounds the science of global warming, however, resulting in differing opinions on almost every facet of the issue. Questions still left unanswered include the role of water vapor in the earth’s temperature, the reliability of temperature data and climate modeling, and the potential impacts, positive or negative, of a modest warming should this occur.

But by far the most contentious issue centers around the human release of greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on the earth’s atmosphere. The CTA petition requesting rulemaking regarding greenhouse gas emission from new motor vehicles implies a sense of certainty linking the human release of greenhouse gases to global warming. Many scientists have challenged this assertion.

The Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine issued a statement signed by 17,000 scientists saying in part, "there is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane, or other greenhouse gases is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate."

This section cites the “Oregon Petition,” a deceptive document that was meant to appear like a prestigious scientific study backed by thousands of scientists. After fake signatures were discovered in the petition, including members of the pop music group, the Spice Girls, and fictional characters from TV shows, the petition’s creators admitted they had no vetting process for signatories.¹⁴⁷ But more problematic was how the petition was designed to trick actual scientists into signing it. As summarized by *DeSmog*:¹⁴⁸

The included research paper was also made to mimic the style of the National Academy [of Sciences]’ prestigious Proceedings of the National Academy journal. With the signature of a former NAS president, and a research paper that appeared to be published in one of the most prestigious science journals in the world, many scientists were duped into signing a petition based on a false impression. In fact, the documents had been authored by Art Robinson, Sallie Baliunas, Willie Soon (both who receive funding from the oil industry) and Robinson’s son Zachary.

As a result, the actual National Academy of Sciences released a statement in 1998, noting, “this petition has nothing to do with the National Academy of Sciences and that the manuscript was not published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* or in any other peer-reviewed journal. The petition does not reflect the conclusions of expert reports of the Academy.”¹⁴⁹

The Mercatus Center’s comment made reference to the work of other notable climate change “skeptics” with no scientific credentials, such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s Chris Horner, as the source for this claim:¹⁵⁰

[...] in a sworn affidavit submitted in federal litigation a senior EPA official acknowledged that global warming is a theory, rather than fact and EPA has yet to make a formal determination on CO2 based global warming.

Multiple sections of the report cite a book by ex-Enron executive Robert L. Bradley. At the time, Bradley worked for the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), after previously co-founding a group with Charles Koch that eventually became the Institute for Energy Research.¹⁵¹ As the Mercatus Center comment stated:¹⁵²

Researchers and modelers continue to investigate this theory and its implications. However, they have not yet reached consensus on (1) the link between anthropogenic emissions and global temperatures, (2) the degree of warming that can be expected in future years, or (3) the impact of warming on public health and welfare.

[...]

A new book from the American Legislative Exchange Council provides a comprehensive examination of the evidence regarding global warming, and offers several interesting observations. First, it notes that the evidence regarding global warming is mixed, and that, as forecasts of anthropogenic warming get more refined, they predict less extreme warming. The empirical evidence reviewed in this book also offers no scientific basis for dire predictions of rampant tropical diseases etc. On the contrary, data suggest that any warming that does occur will likely be at night, in the winter and near the poles. If a slight warming does occur, historical evidence suggests it is likely to be beneficial, stimulating plant growth and making humans better off.

In 2001, the Mercatus Center's board of directors still included its co-founders, Charles Koch and Richard Fink.¹⁵³ At the time, Fink was a top officer of at least four Koch foundations: as president the Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundation, president of the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, director of Knowledge & Progress Fund and director of the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation, as well as boards of Charles Koch's Institute for Humane Studies and the GMU Center for the Study of Public Choice.¹⁵⁴ Fink was also on the GMU board of visitors, along with top officials at other Koch-funded organizations, like James C. Miller III of Citizens for a Sound Economy, Ed Meese III and Ed Fuelner, Jr of the Heritage Foundation, and Manuel Johnson.¹⁵⁵

2001 Mercatus Center staff at the time included two up and coming officers who later took significant jobs working closely with Charles Koch: Kevin Gentry, who later joined Koch Industries, and Brian Hooks, who now oversees the entire Stand Together network.¹⁵⁶

Charles Koch and Richard Fink remain affiliated with the Mercatus Center's board of directors, along with other top Koch personnel, including Brian Hooks.¹⁵⁷

BOARD OF VISITORS

George Mason University



Richard Fink

Richard Fink of Centreville is executive vice president and a member of the board of directors of Koch Industries, Inc., in Washington, D.C. A member of George Mason's economics faculty from 1980 to 1986, he was founder and director of the Center for Market Processes (now part of the Mercatus Center). He also served as executive vice president for advancement and planning at George Mason in 1989-90.

2001: Koch Industries EH&S Report

[KOCH MITIGATION]

A series of Koch company reports published between 2000 and 2010 included at least two references indicating that the company was aware of the benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, specifically. The topic of climate change was never mentioned in these reports, perhaps even avoided, with a much more explicit focus on "criteria" air pollutants like sulfur, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxides.

Without mentioning greenhouse gas emissions or climate change, Koch Industries noted an award it received in Canada for reducing its carbon emissions in its 2001 Environmental, Health and Safety (EH&S) Progress Report. In a list of awards that Koch subsidiaries received in 1999 and 2000, Koch Petroleum Canada Ltd is credited for receiving the "Silver Award and Honorable Mention, Emission Reduction Leadership" as part of "Canada's Voluntary Challenge and Registry Gas Processors Association."¹⁵⁸

This challenge was an official program of the Canadian government, initiated in 1994.¹⁵⁹ A description on the Government of Canada website states:¹⁶⁰

The Climate Change Voluntary Challenge and Registry Program is a national initiative that calls on Canadian organizations to voluntarily take actions to limit or reduce net greenhouse gas emissions. The Voluntary Challenge is a joint initiative of federal, provincial and territorial governments and is recommended and supported by Canadian business. It is a core element of Canada's National Action Program on Climate Change and is designed to coordinate with other existing government programs. The

Challenge is to limit or reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Canada on a voluntary basis. The Registry component provides a public record [of] organizations' commitments, action plans, progress and results.

Executives serving on Koch's "EH&S Leadership Council" at the time included Richard Fink and James Mahoney, according to the 2001 Koch EH&S report.¹⁶¹ As detailed below in this report, Fink and Mahoney made statements inconsistent with basic climate science over a decade later in at Koch-funded events and in Koch-funded publications.

2005 – 2007: Charles Koch Foundation Funds Willie Soon Research

[KOCH ACTION]

From 2005 to 2007, aerospace engineer Willie Soon received payments from the Charles Koch Foundation for controversial research dismissing the role of climate change's adverse impacts on polar bears. As summarized by Greenpeace in a 2015 report:¹⁶²

In March 2007, Willie Soon co-authored a 'viewpoint', published in the journal Ecological Complexity...that announced that polar bears were not under threat from global warming and that Arctic sea ice decline was less severe than stated in recent peer-reviewed literature. Ecological Complexity publishes peer-reviewed research, but "Viewpoints" aren't subject to such scholarly review. Dr. Soon was one of the authors of the 'viewpoint', joined by well-known [climate change] deniers Sallie Baliunas, David Legates and Tim Ball.

The paper was rejected some four years earlier by a peer-reviewed journal. But because the peer-reviewed and non peer-reviewed reports look almost identical, it would be almost impossible for a casual reader to tell the difference. Also contained in Willie Soon's Harvard files online was a rejection letter from the Editor of "Ecography" magazine, Linus Svensson, dated June 5, 2003, containing peer review comments supporting the magazine's rejection of the submission.

[...]

Willie Soon acknowledges that the article was partly sponsored "(for Willie Soon's work) by ExxonMobil, the American Petroleum Institute (API) and the Charles G Koch Charitable Foundation."

A total of \$110,000 in grants from the "Koch / Mobile Foundation" [sic] was disclosed in Smithsonian Institution documents obtained by Greenpeace using public records requests, verified by grants disclosed by the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, in the amounts of \$55,000 in 2005 and \$55,000 in 2007.¹⁶³ In-text reference return: Page 43

Soon received more funding from the Charles Koch Foundation from 2010-2012 (detailed below).

July 2006: Intermountain Rural Electric Association Memo

[KOCH ACTION]

In 2006, a regional electric distribution cooperative called the Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA) circulated a memo detailing its support for the Cato Institute's Patrick Michaels.¹⁶⁴ IREA noted that it provided \$100,000 to Michaels' group, New Hope Environmental Services, in order to combat a narrative established by climate "alarmists." IREA noted other fossil fuel companies and trade associations that were involved in complementary efforts.¹⁶⁵ Return to page 40

Koch Industries is working with other large corporations, including AEP and the Southern Company, on possibly financing a film that would counteract An Inconvenient Truth. Koch has also decided to finance a coalition that very likely will be administered through the National Association of Manufacturers. Koch, CEI, and Michaels meet periodically to discuss activities.

2007: Apparent Koch Grant to Science & Public Policy Institute

[KOCH ACTION]

In 2007, the Koch-controlled Claude R. Lambe Foundation gave \$25,000 to the Idso family's Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change (CSCDGC).¹⁶⁶ CSCDGC was operated by Craig Idso, his brother Keith Idso and father Sherwood Idso (since deceased). The organization is strictly focused on climate change, steadily publishing misinformation on the subject.¹⁶⁷ CSCDGC previously received \$25,000 from the Lambe Foundation in 2004, and another \$35,000 in 2005.

However, the 2007 grant from the Lambe Foundation was unique due to the recipient being listed at an address in Haymarket, VA, rather than in Tempe, AZ, where the Idso family's CSCDGC was based at the time.¹⁶⁸ The address receiving the Koch grant appears to match that of the Science and Public Policy Institute (SPPI), according to the relatively obscure town and state listed on a 2007 archive of the SPPI website.¹⁶⁹ (In a similar but more explicit disclosure, the IRS form 990 filed by the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation in 2014 included a grant to the Idso's CSCDGC that was earmarked for SPPI, confirming that the CSCDGC acts as a pass-through grantor for SPPI.)¹⁷⁰

The SPPI is a name-on-paper organization that is not formally incorporated. It is run by Robert Ferguson, who is not a scientist, though its affiliates include some of the most active career climate contrarian scientists, including Bob Carter, Joe D'Aleo, Craig Idso, David Legates, S. Fred Singer, and Willie Soon.¹⁷¹ The CSCDGC 2007 and 2008 990 filings do not include Robert Ferguson as an employee.¹⁷²

It seems that SPPI became active in 2007, the year of the Koch grant to the Idso family's CSCDGC. The earliest archives of the website are from 2007.¹⁷³ *DeSmog's* profile of SPPI includes the following activities in 2007, including its first known press release:¹⁷⁴

July 2007

DeSmog reports how Lord Christopher Monckton, Robert Ferguson and Klaus-Martin Schulte ran a well-coordinated PR campaign to harass Naomi Oreskes using plagiarized papers originally published by Schulte at SPPI.

June 2007

The first-known SPPI press release was issued, supporting the statements made by the then NASA Administrator Michael Griffin questioning global warming. The Heartland Institute's Harriette Johnson was listed as media contact.

The article cites a number of prominent climate change skeptics including Tim Ball, Robert Carter, Ross McKittrick, and Patrick Michaels.

October 2007

The Science and Public Policy Institute funded a film "Apocalypse? No!" intended to show errors in the Al Gore documentary, An Inconvenient Truth. It shows Monckton giving a presentation to the Cambridge University Union.

According to The Sunday Times, "[Christopher] Monckton has obtained funding from a right-wing Washington think tank, the Science and Public Policy Institute (SPPI), to create a second film [following The Great Global Warming Swindle] that will also be sent to schools. Entitled Apocalypse No, it parodies Gore, showing Monckton presenting a slide show in a vitriolic attack on climate change science."

As detailed above, a memo written in July 2006 by an executive at the Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA) mentioned that "Koch Industries is working with other large corporations, including AEP and the Southern Company, on possibly financing a film that would counteract An Inconvenient Truth." We have not confirmed if the SPPI film was the result of the funding stream mentioned in the IREA memo, but the SPPI film's content and

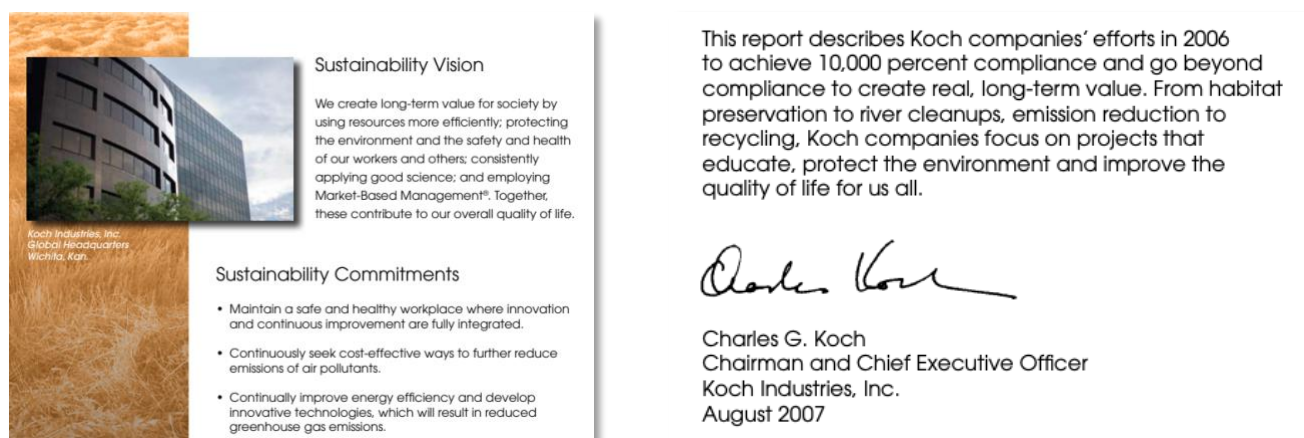
timeline is a compelling fit. “Apocalypse? No!” was released in late 2007.¹⁷⁵ The film was of a speech delivered by Christopher Monckton, a former adviser to UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and a mainstay of the climate denial movement.¹⁷⁶ SPPI’s Robert Ferguson was credited as its executive producer, and the SPPI logo is shown at the end of the film along with the release year, 2007.¹⁷⁷

Years later, Koch Industries linked to the SPPI’s website, in the May 2013 edition of the company’s *Discovery* newsletter (detailed below).

2007: Koch Industries EH&S Report

[KOCH MITIGATION]

The 2007 Koch company “Environmental, Health and Safety and Community Stewardship Report” (EH&S) mentioned efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In a bulleted section under the heading “Sustainability Commitments,” Koch pledged to “Continually improve energy efficiency and develop innovative technologies, which will result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions.”¹⁷⁸



Sustainability Vision

We create long-term value for society by using resources more efficiently; protecting the environment and the safety and health of our workers and others; consistently applying good science; and employing Market-Based Management®. Together, these contribute to our overall quality of life.

Sustainability Commitments

- Maintain a safe and healthy workplace where innovation and continuous improvement are fully integrated.
- Continuously seek cost-effective ways to further reduce emissions of air pollutants.
- Continually improve energy efficiency and develop innovative technologies, which will result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

This report describes Koch companies’ efforts in 2006 to achieve 10,000 percent compliance and go beyond compliance to create real, long-term value. From habitat preservation to river cleanups, emission reduction to recycling, Koch companies focus on projects that educate, protect the environment and improve the quality of life for us all.

Charles Koch

Charles G. Koch
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Koch Industries, Inc.
August 2007

Other sections of the report mention reducing “emissions,” without specifying which kind of emissions are being reduced. This includes a letter from Charles Koch at the beginning of the report, which states:

From habitat preservation to river cleanups, emission reduction to recycling, Koch companies focus on projects that educate, protect the environment and improve the quality of life for us all.

July 2008: Launch of AFP “No Climate Tax” Pledge

[KOCH ACTION]

The Americans for Prosperity (AFP) “No Climate Tax Pledge” was launched in 2008. AFP’s pledge was designed to rally politicians and the local, state and national levels against climate policies if they resulted in “a net increase in...government revenue.”¹⁷⁹

The pledge’s list of signatories grew and shrank over time, from approximately 100 signatures in late 2008, up to over 600 in mid-2012, and down to about 400 in mid-2014.¹⁸⁰ Kansas Republican Senator Pat Roberts was the first member of Congress to sign, in July 2008, according to a 2013 report by American University’s Investigative Reporting Workshop.¹⁸¹ An interview with AFP’s James Valvo, conducted for the Investigative Reporting Workshop’s report, revealed that the science of climate change was avoided in the pledge language for strategic reasons.¹⁸²

James Valvo helped recruit the first federal politicians to sign the pledge. He said AFP was concerned about the intrusion of government into the private market.

“We really wanted to participate in that debate and discussion about what was going to happen with cap-and-trade, which we saw as a very big threat to domestic economic freedom, and we designed the pledge in a way that didn’t have climate change (science) at the center of it,” Valvo said.

As of August 2024, Valvo is still an attorney with two Koch-controlled organizations: the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, and the Cause of Action Institute.¹⁸³ The AFP Foundation is the 501(c)3 “charity” affiliate of AFP, which is a 501(c)4 “social welfare” nonprofit.

The AFP pledge was one of several outputs the organization produced as a tactic to oppose national climate legislation, and similar policies in the states. A federal climate bill was a clear inevitability following the landslide election of President Barack Obama and the Democrats’ control of the U.S. House and Senate in the 2008 elections, after years of previous bipartisan attempts at crafting various federal climate policies.¹⁸⁴ As summarized by the *New Yorker* in a June 30, 2013 article:¹⁸⁵

Starting in 2008, a year after the Supreme Court ruled that the Environmental Protection Agency could regulate greenhouse gasses as a form of pollution, accelerating possible Congressional action on climate change, the Koch-funded nonprofit group, Americans for Prosperity, devised the “No Climate Tax” pledge. It has been, according to the study, a component of a remarkably successful campaign to prevent lawmakers from addressing climate change. Two successive efforts to control greenhouse-gas emissions by implementing cap-and-trade energy bills died in the Senate, the latter of which was specifically targeted by A.F.P.’s pledge. By now, four hundred and eleven current office holders nationwide have signed the pledge. Signatories include the entire Republican leadership in the House of Representatives, a third of the members of the House of Representatives as a whole, and a quarter of U.S. senators.

The 2010 mid-term elections were a high watermark for the pledge. The Kochs, like many other conservative benefactors, gave generously to efforts to help shift the majority in the House of Representatives from Democratic to Republican. Koch Industries’s political action committee spent \$1.3 million on congressional campaigns that year. When Republicans did take control of the House, a huge block of climate-change opponents was empowered. Fully one hundred and fifty-six members of the House of Representatives that year had signed the “No Climate Tax Pledge.” Of the eighty-five freshmen Republican congressmen elected to the House of Representatives in 2010, seventy-six had signed the No Climate Tax pledge. Fifty-seven of those received campaign contributions from Koch Industries’s political action committee. The study notes that more than half of the House members who signed the pledge in the 112th Congress made statements doubting climate-change science, despite the fact that there is overwhelming scientific consensus on the subject.

Koch and AFP’s multifaceted lobbying campaign against U.S. climate legislation is detailed in the section below.

April 2009 Cato Institute Newspaper Advertisement

[KOCH ACTION]

In April 2009, the Cato Institute placed expensive advertisements in the nation’s largest newspapers, refuting President Barack Obama’s claim that climate change was urgent and that the “science is beyond dispute.”¹⁸⁶ “With all due respect, Mr. President, that is not true,” the ad displayed in large bold text, underneath a quote attributed to Obama promising progress on climate change mitigation.¹⁸⁷ The ad then claims:¹⁸⁸

“We, the undersigned scientists, maintain that the case for alarm regarding climate change is grossly overstated. Surface temperature changes over the past century have been episodic and modest and there has been no net global warming for over a decade now. After controlling for population growth and property values, there has been no increase in damages from severe weather-related events. The computer models forecasting rapid temperature change abjectly fail to explain recent climate behavior. Mr.

July 2009: AFP Protests Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, as Koch Participates

[KOCH ACTION]

[KOCH MITIGATION]

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a multi-state cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. State governors first initiated RGGI in 2003, and the program officially began in 2009.¹⁹⁷ As of 2024, eleven states are participating in RGGI.¹⁹⁸

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) campaigned vigorously against RGGI beginning in 2010, a campaign that continues to this day.¹⁹⁹ AFP's advocacy effort involved supporting state legislation for state legislators to use to introduce bills to withdraw their state from RGGI. This model bill was developed by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).²⁰⁰ In addition to RGGI, state legislation reflecting the ALEC model was introduced in a number of western states, to pressure them to leave the Western Climate Initiative, another regional cap-and-trade program comparable to RGGI.²⁰¹

Koch has a particularly influential relationship within ALEC, due to the many roles that Koch executives and affiliated nonprofits have within ALEC. Koch lobbyist Mike Morgan has been a longtime member of ALEC's "Private Sector Board," as it was known at the time when the RGGI model bill was adopted.²⁰² Morgan has also been a longtime participant in ALEC's "Energy, Environment and Agriculture" task force, which developed the model bill.²⁰³ Both Morgan and AFP's Alan Cobb were listed as members in a task force roster dated March 31, 2011, though it is unclear if either of them participated in the previous year's task force meeting, in which ALEC's task force approved the model bill for state withdrawal from RGGI.²⁰⁴

AFP's anti-RGGI legislative strategy was reinforced on other fronts, including executive action and litigation. In New Jersey, where AFP's state chapter was particularly active in the fight, Governor Chris Christie unlawfully attempted to end New Jersey's participation in RGGI.²⁰⁵ It was later revealed that Christie had met privately with David Koch, chairman of the AFP's affiliated Americans for Prosperity Foundation, although both denied that RGGI was discussed.²⁰⁶ (New Jersey has since rejoined RGGI). In late June of 2011, Americans for Prosperity sued the state of New York in an attempt to force the state to discontinue its participation in RGGI.²⁰⁷ The lawsuit was dismissed by the state's supreme court in June 2012.²⁰⁸

Ironically, while AFP's lawsuit and related protests were playing out in New York, a Koch subsidiary was directly participating in the RGGI program at auctions in New York City. On at least one occasion, local reporters confirmed that Koch Supply & Trading was inside the Manhattan building of a RGGI auction event while Americans for Prosperity was outside protesting.²⁰⁹ Videos of this protest have since been taken offline.²¹⁰ As Brian Nearing reported for the Albany Times-Union on September 11, 2010:²¹¹

Americans for Prosperity, a conservative political action group supported by oilmen David and Charles Koch, gathered angry protesters Wednesday in Manhattan to demand New York and New Jersey leave the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a 10-state program in the Northeast to cut emissions from power plants.

At the rally outside RGGI's offices, AFP New Jersey State Director Steve Lonegan blasted the two-year-old program as "sketchy, shadowy, clandestine and top-secret" to a booing crowd of AFP supporters, some waving the yellow Gadsden flag ("Don't tread on me") popular with the Tea Party movement.

Lonegan said RGGI, a cap-and-trade auction system for credits needed by power plants to cover emissions of carbon dioxide, kills jobs and makes electrical rates skyrocket.

RGGI records show another Koch affiliate has taken part in at least three of the nine credit auctions -- including the Wednesday auction that AFP protested as secretive.

Records show Koch Supply and Trading of Wichita, Okla. [sic], also was registered for RGGI auctions in December 2009 and March 2010.

"Koch has participated in the RGGI market since its inception," said spokeswoman Katie Stavinoha on Friday. "We will not turn our backs on incentives available to our competitors."

The trading company is a wholly-owned affiliate of petrochemical giant Koch Industries, which is owned by the two brothers. David Koch is chairman of the Americans for Prosperity Foundation and founded Americans for Prosperity with his brother.

[The article contains an error: Koch is based in Wichita, Kansas, not Oklahoma.]

Auction records on the RGGI website confirm that Koch Supply & Trading has participated in RGGI auctions every year from 2009 through 2023.²¹² The same records show that Koch has participated in 47 of the 65 RGGI auctions—72 percent—since they began in October 2008, until most recent, in September 2024.

AFP has continued to pressure states to withdraw from RGGI through at least late 2023.²¹³

2009-2010: Koch Lobbying Against Climate Legislation

2009: Koch Industries Establishes an Anti-Climate Lobbying Strategy:

[KOCH ACTION]

Christopher Leonard's *Kochland* revealed important details about the internal culture at Koch as the company geared up to fight off climate change legislation in the wake of the 2008 elections, in which Republicans lost control of the White House and Democrats held control of both chambers of Congress. After the election, Leonard detailed a speech made in 2009 by Charles Koch at his annual party for Koch's political action committee, or Koch PAC. Hosted at "the wooded compound of Charles Koch's childhood home," the event was attended by about two hundred people who made up an "elite group of Koch Industries employees who donated the maximum legal amount of money to Koch Industries' political action committee." As Leonard wrote:²¹⁴

Every year, Charles Koch made a short speech at the party. Sometimes he was joined by Richard Fink, the top executive over Koch's political operations. Charles Koch's speeches tended to be anodyne and courteous...In 2009, however, Charles Koch's speech was urgent. He felt that the future of America was imperiled. He thanked his guests for their contributions, but the guests understood that the political fight was just beginning.

One threat from the Obama administration seemed more dangerous than the rest. It was the threat of a massive new regulatory regime to limit greenhouse gas emissions that trapped heat in the Earth's atmosphere. The threat of such had been slowly building for decades, under both Republicans and Democratic administrations. Charles Koch fought against it the entire time. Now the threat appeared to be imminent.

[...]

There was a belief, within Koch Industries, that the carbon-control regime could put the company out of business. It was impossible to overstate the stakes of the coming fight. The bill in Congress sought to wholly reorganize America's energy system. If this happened, there was reason to believe that the world would follow America's lead. There were already two global treaties seeking to impose carbon limits worldwide—one signed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the other in Kyoto in 1997—and the American regulatory regime could be quickly incorporated into this global framework.

A carbon-control regime would expose Koch to a brand-new regulatory structure, but it could also choke off decades of future profits as the world shifted away from burning fossil fuels. Koch's sunk investment in

the fossil fuel business was measured in billions of dollars, reflected in the value of its two oil refineries, pipelines, and other assets. The future revenue to be derived from these assets arguably numbered in the trillions of dollars in future decades.

Koch's lobbying expenditures ballooned massively from the late 1990's to the beginning of President Obama's first term. Koch spent \$200,000 on lobbying in 1998, up to \$20 million in 2008.²¹⁵ The lobbying expenditure spike in 2008 was particularly dramatic, jumping from \$4-5 million per year in 2006 and 2007. Complementary spending by Koch PAC steadily rose from \$807,000 in 1998 up to \$2.6 million in 2008.

Kochland gave an inside account of a lobbying strategy meeting with Richard Fink (Charles Koch's top advisor), and lobbyists Philip Ellender, Laurie Sahatjian, and Don Clay, who previously worked at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The meeting was also attended by David Hoffmann, an executive at Koch's Invista subsidiary who normally did not participate in lobbying meetings. *Kochland* detailed what Hoffmann learned in this particular meeting, as Koch's top lobbyists plotted to defeat a national cap-and-trade climate bill:²¹⁶

[Invista Senior compliance attorney] David Hoffmann worked for months on his study that explored how Koch Industries might adapt its business to a cap-and-trade bill. He was excited by his findings. Hoffmann's committee discovered opportunities for Koch to make money in a market for carbon emissions. Invista released huge amounts of nitrous oxide into the air, a chemical that trapped heat at a magnitude of 290 times greater than carbon dioxide. If Invista cut its nitrous oxide emissions, it could reap extremely valuable carbon emission credits. The future under cap-and-trade might not be entirely bleak.

In spite of these findings, Hoffmann wasn't sure that anyone at Koch was interested in his committee's work. It seemed like his reports and updates were being ignored. Hoffmann realized why after he was invited to attend a senior-level meeting of Koch's lobbying operation. The topics of the meeting were EPA enforcement of the Clean Air Act and the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill.

[...]

Hoffmann believed that Koch's approach to the Waxman-Markey bill might be to mitigate its effects on the company, as he was trying to do. As the discussion got under way, he realized his opinion was in the minority.

[...]

David Hoffmann heard the strategy laid out during the meeting of Koch lobbyists. Koch decided to target moderate Republican politicians who might be tempted to support the measure. There were not enough Republican votes in Congress to kill the bill, but Republican resistance could help slow its passage and make conservative Democrats think twice about supporting it. In-text reference return: Page 33 Page 47

2009: Koch's Internal Culture of Climate Change Denial

[KOCH STATEMENT]

Some of the most significant details to emerge in Christopher Leonard's *Kochland* were of the extreme opinions espoused privately by Koch executives regarding climate change science. Invista executive David Hoffmann came to realize that the executives in Koch's lobbying division were averse to acknowledging the basics of climate change science. From the same lobbying meeting he attended with Fink, Ellender, Sahatjian and Clay, *Kochland* detailed what Hoffmann overheard from his peers at Koch:

When the meeting turned to the cap-and-trade bill, the discussion began with some banter and small talk. Most of the attendees let it be known that they thought climate change was 'a hoax,' Hoffmann recalled. This was difficult for him to absorb. The people in the room were very intelligent. Many of them had an almost encyclopedic knowledge of the emissions released from Koch's factories and refineries and how those emissions interacted with the Earth's atmosphere. The science of global warming was not

fundamentally complex: carbon trapped heat in the atmosphere, more carbon trapped more heat, and humans were releasing unprecedented amounts of carbon into the sky.

But Hoffmann realized that most of the people in the meeting doubted the underlying problem that Waxman-Markey sought to address. If global warming wasn't real, then there was no justification for the law to exist. The feeling in the room was that the Waxman-Markey bill posed an existential threat to Koch Industries. Koch's lobbying team was particularly aggrieved by the bill because it seemed as if the law was specifically targeting oil refineries in an effort to replace them with wind farms and solar panels.

More of this attitude was revealed to *Kochland* author Christopher Leonard in interviews he conducted with Koch executives who asked to remain anonymous:²¹⁷

In private, Koch Industries officials were even more dismissive of the science around climate change. One former senior Koch Industries executive, a trained scientist who only made business decisions after first analyzing reams of data, explained that he believed global warming was a hoax invented by liberal politicians who sought to use the fiction as a way to unite the populace against an invented enemy. After the fall of the Soviet Empire in 1991, this executive explained, American elites needed a new, all-encompassing enemy with which to frighten the masses, and so they invented one with global warming. All the data on atmospheric carbon levels and rising temperatures were part of this conspiracy, the executive said.

A similar reluctance was indicated in less conspiratorial comments made in interviews with Chris Leonard years after the cap-and-trade bill was defeated, such as the 2014 quote from Koch lobbyist Philip Ellender (detailed below) and interviews given by Charles Koch from 2015-2016 (also detailed below).

August 2009: Koch Commissioned American Council for Capital Formation Study

[KOCH ACTION]

As revealed in Christopher Leonard's *Kochland*, Koch "took pains to hide" its role in commissioning a report published by the American Council for Capital Formation (ACCF) in August 2009.²¹⁸ The ACCF report was publicly attributed to the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), projecting massive costs to the Waxman-Markey climate legislation using questionable methodology.²¹⁹

Koch enticed another lobbying group, called the National Association of Manufacturers, to "sponsor" the report, with the understanding that Koch Industries would pay for it.

[...]

The study was announced with a press release from the National Association of Manufacturers. The announcement made no mention of Koch Industries' involvement. Instead, the study appeared to have the backing of a trade group with the interests of a wide range of manufacturing companies at heart.

The study was brutal in its assessment of Waxman-Markey. "Unfortunately, this study confirms that the Waxman-Markey bill is an 'anti-jobs, anti-growth' piece of legislation," NAM's executive vice president, Jay Timmons, said in the press release.

The study's predictions were dire, in part because the ACCF used a set of economic assumptions underlying its analysis that most other studies did not use. The group, for example, predicted that renewable sources of energy would be slower to come online than many analysts predicted, which would leave the United States in an energy crunch. The ACCF estimated that the Waxman-Markey bill would destroy 2.4 million jobs between 2012 and 2030 if it was passed. It estimated that electricity prices would jump 50 percent by 2030, while \$3.1 trillion in economic activity would be lost.

[...]

Inside Koch Industries, the ACCF report was seen as a tremendous victory. Koch's point of view had been carried out into the world in real force—in press releases, Senate testimony, think tank discussions, and political attack ads. And Koch's name wasn't anywhere to be seen.

Grist reported on August 5, 2009 that the Koch-funded ACCF/NAM report targeting the Waxman-Markey bill leveraged the prestige of the Science Applications International Corp, without the SAIC's actual endorsement:²²⁰

On closer examination, footnote No. 5 of the study says that SAIC does not endorse a word of the document. According to the footnote, the study's inputs came from the groups that paid for the report — the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the American Council for Capital Formation (ACCF), which have an interest in the results coming out [the way they did].

SAIC used its computer model on the data, but that was the extent of its involvement. "SAIC is a policy-neutral, non-advocacy organization," the footnote states. "Analysis provided in this report is based on the output from the ... model as a result of the ACCF/NAM input assumptions. The input assumptions, opinions and recommendations in this report are those of ACCF and NAM, and do not necessarily represent the views of SAIC."

After the ACCF/NAM report was released, it was quickly amplified by other groups with close ties to Koch. One of these groups was the Institute for Energy Research, which is a group that Charles Koch helped establish and was operated by close allies and alumni of Koch Industries.²²¹ As *Kochland* documented:²²²

Once the ACCF's study was published, Koch Industries carried out the next phase of its echo chamber system. The study was quickly promoted by a think tank called the Institute for Energy Research, which sent out a press release on August 13 that highlighted the study's findings. ...

After the study was promoted by the IER, it was then recycled by another Koch Industries-affiliated think tank, the American Energy Alliance, and it was essentially the political action arm of the IER. ... The AEA was headed by a former Koch Industries lobbyist named Thomas Pyle, who remained in close contact with his former colleagues at Koch's lobbying shop.

The AEA produced a series of political radio advertisements that were based on the new ACCF findings, along with other statistics that highlighted the potential economic threat of a cap-and-trade bill. ... Senator Lindsay Graham of South Carolina was a particular target.

The echo chamber promoting the ACCF/NAM study that was critical of the Waxman-Markey bill was strikingly similar to previous efforts made by the same organizations. Grist reported that ACCF had already collaborated with NAM to target a national climate bill sponsored by Senators Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and John Warner (R-VA).²²³ As Greenpeace's 2010 report on Koch noted, "Every step of the way, Koch-funded anti-clean energy groups played a key role in moving the NAM/ACCF study in the media and at the grassroots level," including the Heritage Foundation and Frontiers of Freedom.²²⁴ ACCF received \$50,000 from the Koch-controlled Claude R. Lambe Foundation in 2007, \$100,000 in 2008, \$100,000 in 2009, and \$50,000 in 2010.²²⁵

Eventually, in January 2010, Koch Industries itself was promoting the 2009 ACCF/NAM report, as a means to justify its own criticism of the Waxman-Markey climate bill, without taking credit for commissioning it (as detailed above).

November 2009: Koch Involvement in Publicly Mischaracterizing Hacked Emails as "Climategate"

[KOCH ACTION]

In November 2009, a large volume of emails from scientists and faculty at the University of East Anglia's Climate Research Unit were hacked and released to the public. The emails were first publicized by longtime climate change

denial websites, taking quotes out of context in order to accuse numerous climate scientists of engaging in conspiracy and fraud.²²⁶ The confusion over these accusations took weeks to sort out, and while numerous independent investigations exonerated the scientists involved, it had a major impact on public perception.²²⁷ The leak was timed less than a month before the 15th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting was scheduled to begin in Copenhagen, Denmark.²²⁸

Greenpeace found that at least 20 Koch-funded organizations contributed to the hype around the controversy.²²⁹ Koch's Americans for Prosperity (AFP) incorporated the hacked emails into its communications efforts at events it held in Copenhagen, as part of AFP's "Hot Air Tour."²³⁰ While AFP's top staff were generally very cautious to avoid language explicitly denying the science of climate change, the organization veered off script in the fervor over the hacked emails from East Anglia University. The UK's Independent newspaper quoted AFP's state director from New Jersey, Steve Lonegan in a video that is no longer online:²³¹

Americans for Prosperity, a group established by David Koch, did much to foment public outrage over the "climategate" emails stolen from the computers of the University of East Anglia (UEA) in 2009. The organisation claimed the emails proved that global warming was the "biggest hoax the world has ever seen".

Other central participants in manufacturing the Climategate controversy were staff at the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), and the Cato Institute's Patrick Michaels.²³² Both CEI and Cato were heavily financed by Koch that year, receiving \$250,000 and \$34,000 from Koch foundations, respectively.²³³ It was later revealed that CEI also received a direct payment of \$100,000 from David Koch in 2009, a payment that was not administered through his private foundation and thus not disclosed to the public until it was unintentionally leaked.²³⁴ Michaels is the "Cato scholar" referenced by Jane Mayer in her seminal 2010 *New Yorker* article (further detailed in sections below):²³⁵

Cato scholars have been particularly energetic in promoting the Climategate scandal. Last year, private e-mails of climate scientists at the University of East Anglia, in England, were mysteriously leaked, and their exchanges appeared to suggest a willingness to falsify data in order to buttress the idea that global warming is real. In the two weeks after the e-mails went public, one Cato scholar gave more than twenty media interviews trumpeting the alleged scandal. But five independent inquiries have since exonerated the researchers, and nothing was found in their e-mails or data to discredit the scientific consensus on global warming.

Nevertheless, the controversy succeeded in spreading skepticism about climate change. Even though the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recently issued a report concluding that the evidence for global warming is unequivocal, more Americans are convinced than at any time since 1997 that scientists have exaggerated the seriousness of global warming. The Kochs promote this statistic on their company's Web site but do not mention the role that their funding has played in fostering such doubt.

In addition to the millions of dollars Cato had received from Koch Foundations over the years, and David Koch's presence on Cato's board of directors, Michaels himself allegedly had direct meetings with unnamed officials at Koch Industries and the Competitive Enterprise Institute (see 2006 Intermountain Rural Electric Association memo, above).²³⁶

Koch Industries promoted the scandal on its website as part of its company newsletter in January 2010, as detailed below.

2009-2010: AFP Hosted 80 Events Opposing Climate Legislation

[KOCH ACTION]

Americans for Prosperity and its affiliated Foundation were central to the Koch brothers' efforts to fend off national climate legislation, as well as numerous environmental regulations at the executive level. David Koch was still the chairman of the Americans for Prosperity Foundation during the Obama years. At its founding, a rare list of the AFP Foundation's donors revealed that David provided \$850,000 in seed funding to help establish the organization, after

the collapse of AFP's predecessor groups, Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE) and the CSE Foundation.²³⁷ During the George W. Bush presidency, the Koch-controlled Claude R. Lambe Foundation provided annual grants of a million dollars or more to the AFP Foundation, totaling \$4,176,500 from 2005-2008, along with an additional million dollars from the David H. Koch Foundation, for a four-year total exceeding \$5.1 million.²³⁸

With a steady foundation of funding from Charles and David Koch, AFP's budget swelled in the lead up to fights against the Obama administration's climate change efforts, as well as healthcare expansion, as the Daily Beast reported:²³⁹

Americans for Prosperity's budget tripled in response to proposed restrictions on carbon emissions: \$5.7 million in 2007, \$10.4 million in 2009, \$17.5 million in 2010. AFP has worked hard to disseminate preposterous claims that the scientific community is conspiring in order to empower the state.

Jane Mayer's high-profile *New Yorker* article in August 2010 (detailed below) summarized some AFP's activity to oppose the Waxman-Markey bill.²⁴⁰

Americans for Prosperity has held at least eighty events targeting cap-and-trade legislation, which is aimed at making industries pay for the air pollution that they create. Speakers for the group claimed, with exaggeration, that even back-yard barbecues and kitchen stoves would be taxed. The group was also involved in the attacks on Obama's "green jobs" czar, Van Jones, and waged a crusade against international climate talks. Casting his group as a champion of ordinary workers who would be hurt by environmentalists, Phillips went to Copenhagen last year and staged a protest outside the United Nations conference on climate change, declaring, "We're a grassroots organization. . . . I think it's unfortunate when wealthy children of wealthy families . . . want to send unemployment rates in the United States up to twenty per cent."

Much of AFP's effort was dedicated to forcing Republican politicians to "toe the line" and remain opposed to climate mitigation efforts, as described by former U.S. Representative Bob Inglis (R-SC).²⁴¹ Inglis was convinced by his son to take climate science more seriously.²⁴² As a consequence he lost his support from Koch PAC, and became a target of AFP, which enlisted local tea party activists to create a negative din at Inglis' public speaking events.²⁴³ Inglis was resoundingly defeated in the next election.²⁴⁴

Numerous other politicians were targeted in similar ways by AFP, including the eight Republicans who supported the 2009 Waxman-Markey climate bill, as well as conservative Democrats in fossil fuel producing states.²⁴⁵ AFP's president at the time, Tim Phillips, later summarized this strategy in an interview with the Atlantic in 2011:²⁴⁶

Tim Phillips, president of Americans for Prosperity, says there's no question that the influence of his group and others like it has been instrumental in the rise of Republican candidates who question or deny climate science. "If you look at where the situation was three years ago and where it is today, there's been a dramatic turnaround. Most of these candidates have figured out that the science has become political," he said. "We've made great headway. What it means for candidates on the Republican side is, if you ... buy into green energy or you play footsie on this issue, you do so at your political peril. The vast majority of people who are involved in the [Republican] nominating process—the conventions and the primaries—are suspect of the science. And that's our influence. Groups like Americans for Prosperity have done it."

AFP engaged in a number of flashy campaigns that sought to catalyze public pressure against climate legislation, as well as state and federal regulations. Many of these were a continuation of AFP's "Hot Air Tour," which the organization had initiated to draw negative public attention to state and national climate initiatives, and international climate negotiations.²⁴⁷ The tour's website warned, "Climate alarmists have bombarded citizens with apocalyptic scenarios and pressured them into environmental political correctness. It's time to tell the other side of the story."²⁴⁸

The Hot Air Tour was a humble but indicative beginning of these kinds of efforts. The tour launched with an event in Washington, DC featuring prop hot air balloons proclaiming "Global Warming Alarmism: Lost Jobs – Higher Taxes – Less Freedom." The hot air balloons (eventually full-sized) were brought to cities around the country as a way to rally public attention against national climate legislation, events that generally had low attendance.²⁴⁹ AFP's events seemed to increase in popularity after it began riding the wave of the "Tea Party" movement, where videos

emerged of audience members cheering as AFP state directors and rally speakers challenged the scientific foundation of climate change. In one such video, filmed in November 2009 at an AFP rally in Portland, Oregon, a retired TV meteorologist named Chuck Wiese (who has no Ph.D in atmospheric science) told an audience:²⁵⁰

I did my work, my undergraduate work, in atmospheric science at Oregon State University back in the 70's. And we studied all this back then. The founding work never had any contention [sic] at all that CO2 can cause climate change in the Earth's atmospheric system.

[...]

Well here's the embarrassing facts that Mr. [Al] Gore doesn't want to talk about. The climate models always predicted that CO2 and temperature would track. ... What we found was, about five, six years ago, the temperature stopped doing that. That's when global warming became "climate change," cause they couldn't explain how the temperature started tracking away from CO2.

[...]

This is no longer, in my mind, an argument about science. It's about hoodwinking you into believing that there's a crisis to solve that doesn't exist, and they want to take money from you. ... The climate stuff is just a big fraud, in my opinion, to get money from people that they're not entitled to have. If there was evidence that it was there, I'd be the first to jump along on the bandwagon and support it, but there has never been.

Koch executives involved in AFP's founding and governance, including Richard Fink and David Koch, made multiple statements attempting to distance AFP from the Tea Party.²⁵¹ David Koch later contradicted these previous assertions, and it was obvious that AFP played a key role in nurturing the Tea Party movement.²⁵² (AFP's predecessor, CSE, had also previously attempted to incubate various "tea party" uprisings).²⁵³

At times, AFP staff made wildly inconsistent statements about climate science, as footage from the 2010 documentary *(Astro) Turf Wars* by Taki Oldham illustrated. In Oldham's footage, AFP's state director in New Jersey, Steve Lonegan, directly contradicted himself within a single interview:²⁵⁴

"We're not arguing the science of climate change. What we're saying is the price tag put on it is so destructive as to be reckless and irresponsible."

[...]

The science is not finished, the debate is not over, as the left who support this legislation would tell you. It is quite far from over. There is some very doubtful science into whether or not manmade global warming is causing significant climate change, or whether that climate change is bad or not.

Similar statements denying the science of climate change were made by other AFP executives as part of efforts to fend off climate initiatives proposed by the Obama administration's executive agencies. As the late Rick Piltz documented in a guest post for *ThinkProgress*, AFP Texas state director Peggy Venable made the following statement in an opinion editorial for *The Lone Star Report* on January 29, 2009:²⁵⁵

The scientific establishment has dropped the ball. Carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. On the contrary it makes crops and forests grow faster. We exhale carbon dioxide.

AFP's campaigning against the Obama administration's executive-level initiatives to mitigate climate change led to the formation of another national tour, dubbed the "Regulation Reality Tour." As Piltz and *DeSmog* documented, the tour involved actors dressed up as "carbon cops" who drove subcompact Smart Cars and handed out citations to attendees "for mowing their lawns or filling gas tanks, falsely alleging that the EPA would regulate individual consumers."²⁵⁶

The Regulation Reality tour emerged in 2010, which was the year that Koch went from being an obscure political player to a nationally-recognized political juggernaut, with connections to the Tea Party movement.

2009-2010: Charles Koch Foundation Provides More Funding to Willie Soon

[KOCH ACTION]

The contrarian aerospace engineer Willie Soon received additional payments from the Charles Koch Foundation in 2009 and 2010. Koch grants supported Soon's controversial research attributing increases in global atmospheric temperatures to solar variability—a theory that had been studied and debunked repeatedly at this point in time.²⁵⁷ Soon received \$120,000 in grants from the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, including a \$65,000 payment in 2009 described as “Understanding solar variability and climate change,” and a \$55,000 payment in 2010 described as “Understanding solar radiation and climate change.”²⁵⁸ Soon's presentations at the Heartland Institute's climate change denial conferences, as well as media appearances, focused heavily on the sun from 2009-2014 (and beyond), as videos and quotes compiled by *DeSmog* show.²⁵⁹

Willie Soon previously disclosed \$110,000 in payments from the Charles Koch Foundation from 2005-2007 for research dismissing concerns about climate change's impact on polar bear habitat (as detailed above). *In-text reference*

return: Page 30

2010-2011: Koch's Permanent Entry into the Political Conversation

In 2010, Koch went from being an obscure company, relative to its size and influence, to being a household name among the politically-engaged public. The catalyst for this boost in recognition was a widely-publicized *New Yorker* article written by Jane Mayer, which connected Charles and David Koch's political activities to the U.S. “Tea Party” movement, and examined the Koch brothers' significant spending to oppose President Barack Obama's initiatives related to healthcare reform and environmental regulations.²⁶⁰ Mayer's report was released five months after a Greenpeace report detailed Koch's involvement in a number of discreet public relations efforts to obfuscate the science of climate change, along with lobbying efforts to obstruct national and international policy solutions.²⁶¹

As a result of this sudden public recognition, Koch Industries began publishing dozens of reactionary statements on its web platforms, and a microsite called “Koch Facts.” These platforms were used to dispute the claims made by Greenpeace, Mayer, and other critics, while featuring contrary positions and defenses from pundits friendly to the company. Several months before Koch began responding to virtually any publication the company perceived as criticism, Koch began publishing questionable statements about climate change.

These publications are examined in detail, immediately below.

January 2010: Koch Industries Position Statements on Climate Change

[KOCH STATEMENT]

A Koch webpage titled “Climate Controversies and Energy Needs” appears to have launched in January 2010.²⁶² The page made clear the company's rejection of basic aspects of climate change science, featuring discredited talking points that had been repeatedly debunked by scientists in years prior (such as ‘the climate has always changed’ and ‘we're entering a cooling period’).²⁶³ The page posed hypothetical questions to imply uncertainty around some of the most fundamental facts about anthropogenic climate change:

CLIMATE CONTROVERSIES AND ENERGY NEEDS

No matter where you live or what your job may be, climate change legislation has the power to affect you in profound ways.

Is the Climate Changing?

In recent years, various theories on climate change have emerged. Some believe our planet is in peril because of man-made greenhouse gases and that we must do everything possible to keep the earth from overheating. Others agree that warming is occurring but they question whether it is anthropogenic – that is, caused by human activity – or whether it is simply part of the earth’s natural cycle. Still others point to the past 10 years or so of data that indicate we have emerged from a warming cycle and are now entering a cooling cycle.

There are many ways to measure the earth’s temperature but what we do know is that climate change is nothing new. During the so-called Medieval Warm Period, it was warm enough in England that wine grapes were grown. In the Little Ice Age that followed, average temperatures headed the other direction.

Neither of these global changes in climate – both of which lasted for decades – spelled the end of the earth. And, since there were no coal-fired power plants or internal combustion engines back then, can we deduce that fossil fuels did not prompt those changes, and that climate change was part of a naturally occurring cycle?

While many questions remain about the theory of climate change, perhaps the more pertinent questions to ask are these:

- *To what extent is human activity responsible for climate change?*
- *Will proposed initiative to reduce greenhouse gases be effective?*
- *Will changes enacted by the U.S. measurably reduce global emissions if growing nations like China and India do not agree to limits?*
- *Can proposed policy solutions such as cap and trade be enacted at an acceptable cost or will the resulting regulatory burden cause economic peril?*

Koch companies believe in the efficient use of all resources and are absolutely committed to maintaining a clean and healthy environment. But we also believe there should be open and honest debate about climate change and the likely effects of proposed climate policies on the energy that drives the productivity of our society.

The Koch web page contained links to a number of people and organizations that were well known for refusing to accept aspects of climate science, many of whom promoted opinions contradicting each other. These links directed readers to statements made by Bjorn Lomborg, a video featuring John Christy, a book called *Red Hot Lies* by Christopher Horner, and websites run by Marc Morano, Roy Spencer, Anthony Watts, and Robert Ferguson, among others.²⁶⁴ The few Ph.D.-credentialed scientists featured on this web page—Christy, Spencer, and eventually additional references to Richard Lindzen—were among a small pool of credentialed climate researchers who continued to advocate for discredited positions in 2010.²⁶⁵

The text of this web page changed over time. In mid-2011, comments made by Richard Lindzen and Roger Pielke, Jr. were added to the page, along with a reference to the “climategate” scandal, which was still being amplified by Koch-funded organizations (as detailed above).²⁶⁶

Even if the planet is getting warmer, many wonder if carbon dioxide (CO2) is really to blame. In testimony before Congress, MIT Professor Richard S. Lindzen told lawmakers, “The evidence is that the increase in CO2 will lead to very little warming, and that the connection of this minimal warming (or even significant warming) to the purported catastrophes is also minimal.”

He also points out that some of his colleagues seem to be stretching their data until it matches their preferred conclusions. “Inevitably in climate science, when data conflicts with models, a small coterie of scientists can be counted upon to modify the data,” Lindzen wrote on Jan. 15, 2011. “That the data should

always need correcting to agree with models is totally implausible and indicative of a certain corruption within the climate science community.”

Meanwhile, there's no longer a source of raw data to study. In 2009 scientists at the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit admitted they'd thrown out some 150 years worth of temperature readings. "The data were gathered from weather stations around the world and then adjusted to take account of variables in the way they were collected," wrote Jonathan Leake in London's Sunday Times. "The revised figures were kept, but the originals -- stored on paper and magnetic tape -- were dumped to save space when the CRU moved to a new building.”

“The CRU is basically saying, ‘Trust us.’ So much for settling questions and resolving debates with science,” Roger Pielke, professor of environmental studies at Colorado University, told the Times.

[...]

Lindzen also encourages Americans to take a different path. He writes that it doesn't make sense to blame global warming for hurricanes, droughts, snowstorms and other examples of extreme weather. “This is not to say that disasters will not occur; they always have occurred and this will not change in the future. Fighting global warming with symbolic gestures will certainly not change this. However, history tells us that greater wealth and development can profoundly increase our resilience.”

In addition to recommending Bjorn Lomborg's book, *Cool It!* (which Charles Koch possessed a copy of as of April 2016, as detailed below), the webpage included references to Lomborg's "Copenhagen Consensus" project, which *DeSmog* has done multiple exposés of:²⁶⁷

While Lomborg believes global warming is occurring, his Copenhagen Consensus Expert Panel of five world-class economists, including Nobel Laureate Vernon L. Smith, has created a prioritized list of what they think are the most, and the least, effective responses to global warming. According to a news release from the Center, “The Expert Panel found that high carbon taxes would be an expensive, ineffective way to reduce the suffering from global warming.” Here is the list of the Expert Panel's promising responses to global warming and a link to the Copenhagen Consensus site. In-text reference return: Page 66

Vernon Smith has known Charles Koch since the 1970's.²⁶⁸ Smith worked in the Koch-funded economics department at George Mason University for seven years, and has been affiliated with the Mercatus Center since 2001—an organization founded by Charles Koch and Richard Fink (as detailed above).²⁶⁹ Smith, Koch, and Fink all remain affiliated with Mercatus' board of directors.²⁷⁰ (Smith now works at Chapman University, where he helped negotiate a \$5 million grant from Koch that was announced in 2015. Koch later committed another \$15.18 million grant to Chapman to establish an institute in Smith's name.)²⁷¹

Almost every other person referenced on the Koch "Climate Controversies and Energy Needs" web page had no scientific credentials, with the exception of Richard North, whose Ph.D. appears to be related to food poisoning.²⁷² Several of the people were affiliated with organizations funded by Koch foundations, such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI). Another organization, the Cascade Policy Institute (CPI), produced a 2009 video called "Climate Chains" that was featured on the Koch web page.²⁷³ CPI recruited interns as part of the Charles G. Koch Summer Fellow Program, as of at least April 2011, the earliest version of the webpage archived by the Wayback Machine, a time frame that overlapped with Koch's promotion of CPI on its climate web page.²⁷⁴ The CPI internship program was administered through the Institute for Humane Studies, of which Charles Koch had controlled since 1973 and remained chairman of at the time, while granting tens of millions of dollars to the group.²⁷⁵

Links that remained on the web page for the duration of its existence directed users to a studies and organizations that appear to have been secretly financed by Koch.²⁷⁶ One was a report published by the American Council on Capital Formation, which publicly credited the National Association of Manufacturers as its sponsor, but in fact was financed by Koch.²⁷⁷ This wasn't revealed until nine years later in Christopher Leonard's 2019 book, *Kochland* (as detailed above). Another link directed users to the Science and Public Policy Institute (SPPI), which a Koch foundation appears to have indirectly financed via at least one grant in 2007 (as detailed above).

Notably, the web page contained no links to major scientific institutions or climate research bodies, like NASA, NOAA, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the National Academy of Sciences, or any of the world's preeminent climate science researchers. The only apparent counterweight to the torrent of fringe opinions featured on this webpage was a link to the climate program at the Brookings Institution. Brookings had previously been scrutinized for an Exxon-funded partnership with the American Enterprise Institute.²⁷⁸

The Koch Industries climate statement web page was taken offline in December 2011.²⁷⁹

January 2010: Koch Industries Newsletter Article Disputes Climate Science & Policy

[KOCH STATEMENT] [KOCH MITIGATION]

The Koch company *Discovery* newsletter published in January 2010 contained an article titled “Blowing Smoke.” The article opined aggressively against basic aspects of climate science. Selections of the text are quoted here:²⁸⁰

We are often told our planet will be devastated unless we immediately make drastic reductions in man-made greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The list of possible climate catastrophes caused by GHGs seems endless.

The BBC warns there may be no more fish in the sea in 50 years. Greenpeace frets that summer ice in the arctic could disappear completely by 2030.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations Organization, asserted that Himalayan glaciers may be gone by 2035.

Meanwhile, professors from Penn State University say polar bears are becoming extinct as we swelter through the hottest decade in history.

Interestingly enough, all of these claims have been disproven or grudgingly retracted.

Feeble foundation

Climate misinformation has gotten so out of hand that a high court in London has ruled the film “An Inconvenient Truth” amounts to promoting “partisan political views” and cannot be shown to schoolchildren unless its many factual errors are addressed.

So why are such unproven or false claims promoted?

[...]

Advocates of GHG proposals want us to believe they have a monopoly of scientific thought on their side. But what the recent “Climategate” scandal at the University of East Anglia may have illustrated is just how suspect many of those scientific assumptions may be.

[...]

In the United States, the most-discussed proposal for addressing climate change is a cap-and-trade scheme that involves charging companies for permits to emit greenhouse gases.

Cap-and-trade advocates claim this will gradually diminish GHG emissions and generate large revenues without damaging the economy.

[...]

Cap-and-trade is essentially a stealth tax on energy. As such, it inevitably leads to higher energy costs and job losses.

[...]

Policymakers have a history of using new revenue streams to promote pet projects and punish what they consider to be “bad” industries.

If, for example, the U.S. Congress wants to reduce all CO2 emissions, why would proposed regulations penalize refining emissions at six times the rate of emissions from utilities?

Despite the article’s plainly stated opposition to cap-and-trade—further demonstrated by opposition led by Koch’s organization Americans for Prosperity and other groups receiving Koch funds, as detailed above—Koch’s January 2010 newsletter also notes its efforts to position itself in carbon emission trading markets:

Mark Dobbins, executive vice president for Koch Supply & Trading in Houston, is helping develop corporate strategies for emissions trading.

“It’s clear from the data that the science on greenhouse gases is not really settled,” said Dobbins. “But, at the same time, emissions trading has already been launched in the U.K. and E.U., and on a regional basis here in the U.S.”

The final section of the newsletter cites Kenneth P. Green, who at the time was with the Koch-funded American Enterprise Institute.²⁸¹ Green previously worked for other Koch-funded organizations that were prominent participants in the effort to downplay climate change and advocate against policy solutions, including the now-defunct Environmental Literacy Council, the Reason Foundation, and the Fraser Institute, which he remains affiliated with.²⁸²

Last November, Kenneth Green, an environmental scientist, testified before the Senate Committee on Finance about global warming. His conclusions are worth repeating:

“The earth’s climate is prone to sharp changes over fairly short periods of time. Plans that focus simply on stopping climate change are unlikely to succeed; fluctuations in the earth’s climate predate humanity.

“Rather than trying to make the climate static, policymakers should focus on implementing resilience strategies to enable adaptation to a dynamic, changing climate.”

In other words, since we can’t control Mother Nature, let’s figure out how to get along with her changes.

In the same January 2010 *Discovery* newsletter, physicist Richard Muller is specifically cited as an example of a scientist who doubted the fundamentals of anthropogenic climate change:

Richard Muller, a physics professor at the University of California, Berkeley, has raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of proposed climate change policies in North America and Europe.

Regardless of what developed nations do about climate policy, he says, emerging nations are the real issue.

Even under a “best case scenario,” with the U.S. reducing carbon emissions by 80 percent and other developed nations by 60 percent, Muller believes global carbon emissions will quadruple.

That’s because emerging countries, such as India and China (which already emits 30 percent more carbon than the U.S.), will inevitably increase their emissions as their economies grow.

The newsletter's citation of Richard Muller is particularly significant, as detailed below in the sections on Koch's support for Muller's Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature study.

The January 2010 *Discovery* newsletter was still posted on the Koch, Inc website as of October, 2024.²⁸³

In-text reference return: Page 40 Page 52 Page 55 Page 60

March 2010: Koch Response to Greenpeace Report

[KOCH STATEMENT]

Greenpeace released a detailed report on Koch Industries' climate policy obstruction efforts on March 30, 2010.²⁸⁴

Koch representatives apparently learned of the report when they were contacted by reporters at Agence France-Presse:²⁸⁵

Representatives of Koch, meanwhile, were audibly surprised to learn about the report and its allegations from [Agence France-Presse], and a spokeswoman for the company defended Koch's track record on environmental issues.

"Koch companies have consistently found innovative and cost-effective ways to ensure sound environmental stewardship and further reduce waste and emissions of greenhouse gases associated with their operations and products," a statement sent to [Agence France-Presse] by Melissa Cohlma, director of communication, said.

"Based on this experience, we support open, science-based dialogue about climate change and the likely effects of proposed energy policies on the global economy," said the statement, which was sent to [Agence France-Presse] before Koch Industries had seen the report.

Koch Industries, the family and foundations bearing the name "support economic freedom and market-based policy solutions," the statement added.

"These efforts are all about creating more opportunity and prosperity for all, as it's a historical fact that economic freedom best fosters innovation, environmental protection and improved quality of life in a society."

Later that day, on March 30, Koch sent an "official response" to the *New York Times*:²⁸⁶

In a consistent, principled effort for more than 50 years – long before climate change was a key policy issue – Koch companies and Koch foundations have worked to advance economic freedom and market-based policy solutions to challenges faced by society. These efforts are about creating more opportunity and prosperity for all, as it's a historical fact that economic freedom best fosters innovation, environmental protection and improved quality of life in a society.

The Greenpeace report mischaracterizes these efforts and distorts the environmental record of our companies. Koch companies have long supported science-based inquiry and dialogue about climate change and proposed responses to it. Koch companies have put tremendous energy into achieving sound environmental stewardship and consistently implemented innovative and cost-effective ways to reduce waste and emissions, including greenhouse gases, associated with our manufacturing and products.

We believe the political response to climate issues should be based on sound science. Both a free society and the scientific method require an open and honest airing of all sides, not demonizing and silencing those with whom you disagree. We've strived to encourage an intellectually honest debate on the scientific basis for claims of harm from greenhouse gases. We have tried to help bring out the facts of the potential effectiveness and costs of policies proposed to deal with climate, as it's crucial to understand whether proposed initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases will achieve desired environmental goals and what effects they would likely have on the global economy.

Koch's formal response was also posted on the company website on a page that was subsequently updated multiple times to include links to articles defending the company.²⁸⁷ These articles included one by Ronald Bailey in *Reason*, published by the Koch-funded Reason Foundation, and several Washington Examiner columns written by Thomas Fuller.²⁸⁸ It is unclear if Fuller has a connection with Koch (the company) or its affiliated nonprofits. The Examiner was owned at the time by Phil Anschutz, a close collaborator with Charles Koch who was revealed to have attended one of Charles Koch's political donor summits later that year, in October 2010.²⁸⁹

On April 6, 2010, Greenpeace responded in turn, with a letter to Charles and David Koch asking a number of specific questions about their efforts to fund climate change deniers.²⁹⁰ A hard copy of this letter was delivered to Koch's office in New York City, in person.²⁹¹ Koch did not respond to the letter.²⁹²

April 2010: Koch Industries Newsletter Includes Patrick Moore

[KOCH STATEMENT]

The Koch Industries *Discovery* newsletter published in April 2010 included a letter from Patrick Moore, an early member of Greenpeace who has since spent most of his career consulting for polluting industries:²⁹³

I am ashamed that my former organization [Greenpeace, which released a report criticizing KII on March 30] is harassing you in such an abusive manner.

I long ago left Greenpeace when I realized I could no longer influence their science policy even though I was the only International Director with any formal science education.

My small firm, Greenspirit Strategies, is dedicated to developing an alternative environmental policy platform based on science and logic.

We do not believe there is any cause for alarmism about the earth's climate and we are skeptical about the assertion that global warming is caused by human activity.

We work with a wide range of companies and industry associations in energy, agriculture, forestry, mining, fisheries and chemicals.

Even though one of our aims is to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, we are well aware of the important role they play, and will continue to play, in supporting our civilization.

*Patrick Moore, Ph.D.
Chairman and chief scientist
Greenspirit Strategies Ltd.
Vancouver, British Columbia*

Moore's sympathetic letter to Koch contradicted statements he made in previous years, in which he did not appear as "skeptical" about the threat of climate change.²⁹⁴ In 2007, Moore told a newspaper in New Zealand that "Nuclear energy may just be the energy source that can save our planet from another possible disaster: catastrophic climate change."²⁹⁵ Years after the 2010 Koch newsletter was published, Moore was again on the record contradicting himself: in 2012, Moore again promoted nuclear energy as a means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in multiple newspapers, which he reproduced on his own website.²⁹⁶

It is unknown if Moore was contracted or compensated in any way for the letter that appeared in the Koch Industries newsletter.

The Koch *Discovery* newsletter from April 2010 remains published on the company's website as of October, 2024.²⁹⁷

April 2010: Koch’s Georgia-Pacific Claims Effort to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

[KOCH MITIGATION]

A webpage titled “Koch and the Environment” was published in April 2010, which included a vague assertion about cutting emissions, without specifying which kinds:²⁹⁸

Koch companies have a global presence and operate plants responsibly; implement technologies to cut emissions and conserve energy, water and other resources; and manufacture customer-preferred products. They also are active participants in their communities, contributing time and talent to diverse organizations.

One of the fact sheets linked from the “Koch and the Environment” page, dated “April 2010,” included a number of alleged pollution reduction achievements from the company’s top subsidiaries, most of which pertained to air and water pollution (the EPA’s six “criteria air pollutants,” which companies can be sued and fined for failing to control, as Koch itself repeatedly had been by this time).²⁹⁹ However, one of these accomplishments was related to Georgia-Pacific reducing greenhouse gas emissions:³⁰⁰

More than half of GP’s energy is self-generated. By making heat and power more efficiently, GP buys less electricity externally, thus saving money and reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions.

July 2010: David Koch Interview in New York Magazine

[KOCH STATEMENT]

David Koch made particularly discredited statements about climate change in an interview with New York Magazine published in July 2010.³⁰¹ The interview showed that he was personally aware of the Greenpeace campaigns to hold Koch accountable for climate change misinformation:

David Koch is deeply antagonistic to the Obama administration. He fought the health-care bill, and the financial-regulation measure that was passed last week (“Everyone I know in the financial world is terrified by the powers it gives the federal government”). He also opposes the president’s climate-change proposals. In his office, Koch showed me a photocopied flyer Greenpeace had produced with sketches of him and Charles below the words wanted for climate crimes and shook it in the air. Koch Industries’ emissions, Koch told me, are far less than legally required. “And yet they’re attacking us as environmental criminals,” he said. “Wanting to put me and Charles in jail.” Koch says he’s not sure if global warming is caused by human activities, and at any rate, he sees the heating up of the planet as good news. Lengthened growing seasons in the northern hemisphere, he says, will make up for any trauma caused by the slow migration of people away from disappearing coastlines. “The Earth will be able to support enormously more people because a far greater land area will be available to produce food,” he says.

August 2010: New Yorker Investigation into the Koch Brothers

[KOCH STATEMENT]

In August 2010, the first deep investigative reporting on the Koch brothers was published by the *New Yorker*.³⁰² Jane Mayer received widespread acclaim—and backlash—for this reporting, which propelled Koch into the media cycle for the next decade.³⁰³

Mayer’s article summarized Koch’s aggressive attempts to influence the public’s understanding of climate change, and the surrounding policy debate:

The Kochs are longtime libertarians who believe in drastically lower personal and corporate taxes, minimal social services for the needy, and much less oversight of industry—especially environmental

regulation. These views dovetail with the brothers' corporate interests. In a study released this spring, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's Political Economy Research Institute named Koch Industries one of the top ten air polluters in the United States. And Greenpeace issued a report identifying the company as a "kingpin of climate science denial." The report showed that, from 2005 to 2008, the Kochs vastly outdid ExxonMobil in giving money to organizations fighting legislation related to climate change, underwriting a huge network of foundations, think tanks, and political front groups. Indeed, the brothers have funded opposition campaigns against so many Obama Administration policies—from health-care reform to the economic-stimulus program—that, in political circles, their ideological network is known as the Kochtopus.

In a statement, Koch Industries said that the Greenpeace report "distorts the environmental record of our companies." And David Koch, in a recent, admiring article about him in *New York*, protested that the "radical press" had turned his family into "whipping boys," and had exaggerated its influence on American politics. But Charles Lewis, the founder of the Center for Public Integrity, a nonpartisan watchdog group, said, "The Kochs are on a whole different level. There's no one else who has spent this much money. The sheer dimension of it is what sets them apart. They have a pattern of lawbreaking, political manipulation, and obfuscation. I've been in Washington since Watergate, and I've never seen anything like it. They are the Standard Oil of our times."

[...]

In a 2002 memo, the Republican political consultant Frank Luntz wrote that so long as "voters believe there is no consensus about global warming within the scientific community" the status quo would prevail. The key for opponents of environmental reform, he said, was to question the science—a public-relations strategy that the tobacco industry used effectively for years to forestall regulation. The Kochs have funded many sources of environmental skepticism, such as the Heritage Foundation, which has argued that "scientific facts gathered in the past 10 years do not support the notion of catastrophic human-made warming." The brothers have given money to more obscure groups, too, such as the Independent Women's Forum, which opposes the presentation of global warming as a scientific fact in American public schools. Until 2008, the group was run by Nancy Pfotenhauer, a former lobbyist for Koch Industries. Mary Beth Jarvis, a vice-president of a Koch subsidiary, is on the group's board.

Building upon reporting by Joe Romm of the blog *ClimateProgress*, among others, Mayer also noted controversy related to a Koch-funded exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History:³⁰⁴

The David H. Koch Hall of Human Origins, at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, is a multimedia exploration of the theory that mankind evolved in response to climate change. At the main entrance, viewers are confronted with a giant graph charting the Earth's temperature over the past ten million years, which notes that it is far cooler now than it was ten thousand years ago. Overhead, the text reads, "HUMANS EVOLVED IN RESPONSE TO A CHANGING WORLD." The message, as amplified by the exhibit's Web site, is that "key human adaptations evolved in response to environmental instability." Only at the end of the exhibit, under the headline "OUR SURVIVAL CHALLENGE," is it noted that levels of carbon dioxide are higher now than they have ever been, and that they are projected to increase dramatically in the next century. No cause is given for this development; no mention is made of any possible role played by fossil fuels. The exhibit makes it seem part of a natural continuum. The accompanying text says, "During the period in which humans evolved, Earth's temperature and the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere fluctuated together." An interactive game in the exhibit suggests that humans will continue to adapt to climate change in the future. People may build "underground cities," developing "short, compact bodies" or "curved spines," so that "moving around in tight spaces will be no problem."

*Such ideas uncannily echo the Koch message. The company's January newsletter to employees, for instance, argues that "fluctuations in the earth's climate predate humanity," and concludes, "Since we can't control Mother Nature, let's figure out how to get along with her changes." Joseph Romm, a physicist who runs the Web site *ClimateProgress.org*, is infuriated by the Smithsonian's presentation. "The whole exhibit whitewashes the modern climate issue," he said. "I think the Kochs wanted to be seen as*

some sort of high-minded company, associated with the greatest natural-history and science museum in the country. But the truth is, the exhibit is underwritten by big-time polluters, who are underground funders of action to stop efforts to deal with this threat to humanity. I think the Smithsonian should have drawn the line.”

Cristián Samper, the museum’s director, said that the exhibit is not about climate change, and described Koch as “one of the best donors we’ve had, in my tenure here, because he’s very interested in the content, but completely hands off.” He noted, “I don’t know all the details of his involvement in other issues.”

An internal email sent to Koch employees, warning them of a forthcoming article in the *New Yorker*, was obtained and published by the *National Review*.³⁰⁵ The National Review Institute received \$10,000 from the Charles Koch Foundation in 2010.³⁰⁶

Notably, this email directed employees to Koch’s *Discovery* newsletter, which had previously published inaccurate statements about climate change (see examples above, and more examples below). It also referred Koch employees to a new crisis management web page called “Koch Facts.” In-text reference return: Page 40

2010: Publication of “Koch Facts” Webpages

[KOCH STATEMENT]

On the heels of the widely circulated *New Yorker* article, Koch launched an aggressive public relations website called “Koch Facts.”³⁰⁷

“Recent media stories attempt to demonize Koch’s 40 years of unwavering, transparent, lawful and principled commitment to economic freedom and market-based policy solutions,” the website warned, before shifting focused to a new position statement on climate change:

Climate change

Long before climate change was a key policy issue, Koch companies and Koch foundations worked to advance economic freedom and market-based policy solutions to societal challenges. A free society and the scientific method require an open, honest airing of all sides, not demonizing and silencing those with whom you disagree. We’ve strived to encourage an intellectually honest debate on the scientific basis for claims of harm from greenhouse gases. Because it’s crucial to understand whether proposed initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases will achieve desired environmental goals and what effects they would likely have on the global economy, we have tried to help highlight the facts of the potential effectiveness and costs of policies proposed.

Greenpeace

The Greenpeace report mischaracterizes Koch companies’ efforts and distorts the environmental record of our companies. Koch companies have long supported science-based inquiry and dialogue about climate change and proposed responses to it. Koch companies have put tremendous effort into discovering and adopting innovative practices that reduce energy use and emissions in the manufacture and distribution of our products.

In addition, Greenpeace’s unsubstantiated and inaccurate assertion - that all funds given by Koch Industries and Koch foundations to a broad group of organizations from 2005 through 2008 were focused on climate issues - breaks down immediately upon examination. As the organizations involved have affirmed, they focus on numerous public policy issues and the funding in question supported many projects outside the scope of energy or environmental matters.

The website featured the letter from Patrick Moore, previously published in the Koch Industries *Discovery* newsletter in April 2010 (as detailed above).³⁰⁸

In the year that followed, Koch Facts was reformed as a microsite, focusing on the myriad media reports that followed the *New Yorker* article. The site frequently published the company's correspondence with journalists, featured articles that Koch found favorable, and generally responded aggressively to any notable example of criticism.³⁰⁹ Among dozens of examples, Koch's general counsel demanded a correction from the *New Yorker*.³¹⁰ The website also maintained a visual counter "Measuring the Fixation at the New York Times," with a running tally of articles related to the company.³¹¹

A growing index of issues addressed on the Koch Facts web pages eventually included the Keystone XL pipeline, reports of the company's petroleum coke pollution in Chicago and Detroit, its involvement in funding Proposition 32 (a ballot initiative in California), its support for Americans for Prosperity and ALEC, and many other issues.³¹²

December 2010: AFP Event Featuring Senator James Inhofe

As part of Americans for Prosperity (AFP)'s work to undermine the 2010 United Nations climate change conference in Cancún, Mexico, AFP collaborated with Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), now deceased, who is known for being the most steadfast climate change denier in modern US political history.³¹³

Inhofe recorded a video for AFP to play for attendees at its event in Cancún, lamenting that he was unable to join them in person, as he had planned to. In the video, Inhofe repeated his famous accusation that "global warming is probably the greatest hoax ever perpetrated upon the American people."³¹⁴

Inhofe thanked AFP for inviting him, acknowledging an award the organization had previously given him, and noting his friendship with AFP's state director in Oklahoma.³¹⁵

Let me end up by saying how grateful I am to the Americans for Prosperity for organizing this this event tonight, which is being broadcast live to over 20 states. In particular, I want to say thank you to my good friend, and head of the Oklahoma chapter of the AFP, Stuart Jolly. He's done a terrific job and I understand there's a large party back in Oklahoma tonight as well. Stuart, it was just two years ago that I joined you [and] a number of Oklahomans in Washington when I was lucky enough and fortunate enough and honored enough to receive the AFP's top award at the Defending the American Dream dinner that night. ... Keep up your good work. And for those of you in Cancún this week: stay strong, take no prisoners, and enjoy the party.

Over the course of his career as a US Senator, Inhofe received over \$111,000 from Koch Industries' PAC and employees—second only to Lockheed Martin, at \$136,000.³¹⁶

January 2011: David Koch *ThinkProgress* Interview

[KOCH STATEMENT]

On January 5, 2011, *ThinkProgress* reporter Lee Fang filmed David Koch exiting the U.S. Capitol after the swearing-in ceremony for the new Republican Speaker of the House.³¹⁷ Fang asked David Koch, chairman of the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, about climate change science, as Americans for Prosperity president Tim Phillips attempted to disrupt the interview. Speaking over Phillips, Koch indicated that he did not accept the science of climate change, as *ThinkProgress* transcribed.³¹⁸

FANG: Why does Americans for Prosperity focus so much on the science of climate change? I'm just curious why they spread so much information that denies the existence of climate, of global warming?

KOCH: Well... I think it's uh, regulating CO2 excessively is going to put—uh really damage the economy.

FANG: Do you believe in climate change yourself? [...] Do you believe in climate change yourself, Mr. Koch?

KOCH: Climate does fluctuate. It goes from hot to cold. We have ice ages.

FANG: *But do you believe carbon pollution affects climate change? [Koch shrugs]*

April 2011: Charles Koch's First Public Interview on Climate Change

[KOCH STATEMENT]

In their first joint interview since Jane Mayer's 2010 *New Yorker* article, and the numerous media reports that followed, Charles and David Koch were featured in a profile by the *Weekly Standard's* Matthew Continetti.³¹⁹ The article was heavily framed around topics examined in Mayer's article, and the interview appears to be the first time that Charles Koch commented publicly on climate change science:

The Kochs' chief heresy, according to Mayer, was their dismissive attitude toward global warming alarmism. Charles and David were deemed "anti-science." The brothers—both of whom held master's degrees from MIT and ran successful companies that refined oil, produced chemicals, and manufactured polymers—scoffed at the accusation. "These people aren't interested in science," Charles said. "Science isn't about consensus. Science is about skepticism, about challenging the status quo." The Kochs believed the cost of a carbon-free economy would be too high. "There's a direct correlation between the energy use of a country and its standard of living," David said. "If your energy use is massively reduced, it's going to damage your standard of living." The available data didn't justify the cost. "With the uncertainty and the politicization of the science so far," Charles said, "to go spend trillions of dollars a year changing the whole world economy to satisfy something this uncertain, because you have some religious zealots like Al Gore going around preaching this—it doesn't make sense."

Several undisclosed conflicts of interest surfaced after this interview was published, regarding author Continetti and other *Weekly Standard* employees. Writing for *Politico*, reporter Ken Vogel noted:³²⁰

The 8,400-word Weekly Standard story, accompanied by an illustration of an angry and deranged-looking mob preparing to burn the brothers at the stake, marks the Kochs' most direct and robust response yet. It was written by Matthew Continetti, the Standard's opinion editor and the recipient of a 2008 fellowship from a foundation that has received at least \$165,000 from Charles G. Koch Foundation since 2002.

Citing another article by Vogel, *ThinkProgress* journalist Lee Fang reported that the *Weekly Standard's* editor at the time, Michael Goldfarb, was contracted to do public relations for Koch Industries via Orion Strategies, among other relevant disclosures the article did not include:³²¹

In over 8,000 words of hagiography, Continetti did not find space to disclose that his fellow opinion editor at the Weekly Standard, Michael Goldfarb, is currently employed by Koch Industries to help improve the company's political image. Or that the Weekly Standard's reporters routinely attend Koch's secret political strategy and fundraising meetings. Or that Continetti had received a fellowship funded by the Phillips Foundation, a nonprofit heavily reliant on Koch funds. Or that the Weekly Standard is owned by billionaire Phil Anschutz, a friend of the Koch brothers and an attendee of Koch donor events.

In addition to confirming Goldfarb's role as a "crisis communications" consultant for Koch, *Politico's* Ken Vogel had also reported that Goldfarb and two other Koch consultants attended Charles Koch's summit for major political donors in late January 2011, an event that was subject to a protest attended by hundreds of people.³²²

Bonjean, Goldfarb and Soderlund traveled to Rancho Mirage, where Goldfarb and Soderlund moved mostly unnoticed through the crowd of protesters Sunday, and could be seen talking to representatives from the relatively few media outlets on the scene. Though they were not quoted in stories, much of the national coverage of the conclave counterbalanced the protesters' charges...

The details of Orion Strategies' contract with Koch Industries are not a matter of public record. It is unclear if Orion's crisis communications included any specific effort related to climate change science.

2011–2014: Koch Climate Denial Contradicted by Richard Muller’s BEST Study

[KOCH ACTION]

In what many regarded as an effort to continue supporting scientists with contrarian positions regarding unnatural global heating, the Charles Koch Foundation provided early funding to the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature (BEST) project in 2011, which was later disclosed to be a grant in amount of \$150,000.³²³

The BEST project was led by a physicist named Dr. Richard Muller. For years, Muller had written articles casting doubt upon the rigor of studies of global average surface temperature trends, such as Michael Mann’s widely-recognized “hockey stick” graph.³²⁴ In one such post, from 2003, Muller cited research conducted by Willie Soon and Sallie Baliunas criticizing Mann’s work—without noting that Soon and Baliunas’ research was financed by the American Petroleum Institute.³²⁵

Some prominent climate “skeptics,” like Anthony Watts, whose views were promoted by Koch Industries in previous years,³²⁶ anticipated that the BEST project was a promising opportunity to continue disputing the conclusions of the scientific majority.³²⁷ As detailed previously in this report (see above), Koch Industries quoted Muller in a company newsletter published in 2010, as part of its position against passing legislation designed to mitigate climate change.³²⁸

However, when the BEST study concluded its initial reassessment of global temperature data, Muller famously began to walk back his skepticism and eventually reversed his previous positions on the subject. In October 2011, Muller wrote an op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal*, in which he affirmed that global average surface temperatures were indeed warming, but he did not yet make the explicit link to fossil fuels.³²⁹ (The *Wall Street Journal* editorial board did not print this op-ed in its US newspapers—at the time, at least one member of the editorial board at the *Journal* had professional affiliations with Koch.)³³⁰

The major shift in Muller’s position came in July 2012, when his statements caught up with the rest of the scientific community. In a *New York Times* op-ed, Muller announced that not only was he convinced that global warming was real, but “humans are almost entirely the cause”:³³¹

Call me a converted skeptic. Three years ago I identified problems in previous climate studies that, in my mind, threw doubt on the very existence of global warming. Last year, following an intensive research effort involving a dozen scientists, I concluded that global warming was real and that the prior estimates of the rate of warming were correct. I’m now going a step further: Humans are almost entirely the cause.

Charles Koch appears to have discontinued funding the subsequent phases of the BEST project after 2012.³³² (Seven years later, Charles Koch’s top nonprofit executive, Brian Hooks, continued to take credit for supporting the project’s first phase as recently as 2019, in a recorded interview he did sitting next to Charles Koch, as detailed below).³³³ Contrasting Charles Koch’s financial support for the initial phases of Muller’s BEST study, Koch executives continued to dispute aspects of climate change science that Muller himself did not.³³⁴ This appears to have continued for a few years, until a public relations makeover for Charles and David Koch that was in full effect from 2015-2016, as detailed below.³³⁵

The following subsections contain references of statements made by Charles Koch Foundation staff reacting to Muller’s research, as well as interviews in which Muller discussed private conversations with Charles Koch and his foundation’s officers. *In-text reference return: Page 48 Page 76*

October 2011: Charles Koch Foundation Statement on BEST Study Preliminary Results

[KOCH STATEMENT]

Muller's Wall Street Journal op-ed was published on October 21, 2011. The op-ed announced the preliminary findings of Muller's work before a full peer-review was conducted.³³⁶ His position had not yet shifted in terms of attributing the warming his study observed to human activity.³³⁷

Several days later, on October 27, the Charles Koch Foundation published a reaction, emphasizing that Muller's study did not examine "the cause of warming on our climate."³³⁸

"The Charles Koch Foundation has long supported, and will continue to support, sound, nonpartisan scientific research intended to benefit society by informing public policy and advancing an understanding of the costs and benefits of proposed solutions. Among the research the foundation recently supported is a project by Professor Richard A. Muller in partnership with the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and several other foundations. That research is undergoing peer review now but has already received significant media interest. The research examined recent global surface temperature trends. It did not examine ocean temperature data or the cause of warming on our climate, as some have claimed," said Tonya Mullins, director of communications for the foundation.

July 30, 2012: Muller Confirms Direct Conversations with Charles Koch

[KOCH STATEMENT]

Following Muller's high-profile *New York Times* op-ed in earlier in the month, Muller confirmed that he had spoken directly with Charles Koch before the first phase of the BEST project. In an interview with the now-defunct podcast, *Greenpeace Radio*, published on July 30, 2012 and transcribed here, Muller answered questions posed by Greenpeace's James Turner:³³⁹

RICHARD MULLER:

We have had...our funding: one quarter of it came from the Koch Foundation. Most of the rest came from organizations that might be considered liberal, or certainly Democratic, if you look at the people who funded us, they do vote Democratic. We get some funding from Koch, everyone's paid attention to that.

I did talk to Charles Koch before this [first phase of the study], I haven't spoken to him since. But he emphasized from the very beginning that he was concerned that there were valid issues in the science, and what he wanted us to do was to string out those issues. And he didn't know what answer we would get any more than we knew, and he just wanted it to be put on a solid, firm foundation. I believe that's what his intention was, that's what the [Koch] Foundation wanted, and that's what we've done.

JAMES TURNER, FORMER GREENPEACE COMMS OFFICER:

Are you confident that he will--subject to his own satisfaction with your work--accept your findings?

MULLER:

I can't make guesses as to what people will accept and what they won't accept. I can simply say that he gave us no indication of what he hoped we would find, and emphasized several times that what he really wanted us to do was good, first rate science. And that's what we've done.

Coincidentally, another interview published on the same day by the *U.S. News & World Report's Whispers* blog also quoted Muller, indicating that he had multiple conversations with both Charles and David Koch about his research:

"People think they can look into the minds of Charles and David Koch," says Muller, who himself was previously a climate change denier. "But I have had conversations with them, where they are interested in the science and the proof, so that these issues [on climate change] would be resolved."

[...]

Elizabeth Muller, executive director of the Berkeley Earth Project, tells Whispers she too believes the Koch brothers are genuinely interested in the science.

Muller points out that the Arlington, Va.-based foundation's \$150,000 grant for the study was "unrestricted," and that the study's stated purpose was to "increase the transparency" of climate change studies.

The proof will be in the pudding, however, if and when the Koch Foundation decides to support the second phase of the Berkeley study, which will focus on ocean surface temperatures, but will also continue to explore mankind's role in climate change.

Though two foundations have already renewed their funding for the second phase, says Muller, the Koch Foundation is not among them.

Koch Foundation spokesperson Tonya Mullins would not reveal to Whispers whether funding would be renewed, but she called the research the foundation has supported both "independent" and "sound."

August 2, 2012: According to Muller, Koch Expressed “Delight” after BEST Study [KOCH INFORMED]

Continuing his press tour following his *New York Times* op-ed in July 2012, Muller confirmed in an interview with *Democracy Now!* that he had communicated with the Charles Koch Foundation since the final, peer-reviewed results of his study were published:³⁴⁰

Well, the Koch Foundation provided about one-quarter, or maybe it was one-sixth, one-sixth of our funding, and they made it clear to us that why, the reason they funded us, was because we did recognize that these issues were real, issues that Michael Mann didn't accept as real, but I think he was wrong. I think there were valid questions, and we addressed them, and they've expressed nothing but delight that we have been able to reach a conclusion. So I think this cartoon-like characterization of the Koch Foundation as being right-wing deniers, I found that to be completely wrong.

August 12, 2012: Muller CBC Interview References Conversations with Charles Koch

[KOCH INFORMED]

In an interview that aired on *CBC Radio* on August 12, 2012, which was partially transcribed by the *Deep Climate* blog, Muller again shared some insight from his interactions with Charles Koch about the BEST study:³⁴¹

They're actually very thoughtful people. You should read some of the books that Charles Koch has written. He's very thoughtful, very deep. And from the beginning, he and I shared a concern there were issues that had not been addressed in a clearly transparent and objective way. And he wanted those answered. And no he never gave any hint whatsoever what answer he was hoping for, if any.

[...]

He knew that the science was in trouble, there were things wrong with it. People called him a denier because he was being properly skeptical about things that hadn't been answered. That was silly. And from the beginning he made it absolutely clear all he wanted to do was good science.

June 2013: Koch Subsidiary Sponsors CEI Fundraising Dinner

[KOCH ACTION]

At its annual fundraising dinner on June 20, 2013, a *Washington Post* article offered a rare disclosure of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's corporate sponsors.³⁴² Among the many fossil fuel companies and lobbying groups that sponsored the event, three of Charles Koch's entities were listed, giving a combined \$30,000: Koch Companies Public Sector, the Charles Koch Foundation, and Americans for Prosperity.³⁴³

As with previous years, CEI was actively working to discredit the science of climate change in 2013. As *The Guardian* reported in September 2013, CEI was disputing the validity of ever-more certain proclamations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in the lead up to that year's round of global climate negotiations in Warsaw, Poland.³⁴⁴

According to a draft of the "Summary for Policy Makers" dated June, seen by the Guardian— the most important part of the document – the scientists will argue that the evidence points to 95% certainty that climate change is occurring and is caused mainly by greenhouse gases released by humans – up from 90% certainty in the previous 2007 report.

[...]

The real impact of the report – the latest since 2007 and only the fifth such assessment since 1992 – will not be felt until governments meet this year in Poland to discuss a global response to warming, aiming to forge a treaty to replace the 1997 Kyoto protocol, which was rejected by the US and which placed no obligations on big developing countries such as China, now the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases.

[...]

To those who are in disagreement with climate science, however – even though recent research has found that more than 90% of scientific studies support the finding that climate change is happening as a result of human actions – the remaining areas of uncertainty, such as the role of the oceans in absorbing heat and the role of clouds and human-made aerosols in deflecting the sun's rays from the earth's surface, are a cause to doubt more than a century of climate science. Myron Ebell, director of the centre for energy and environment at the right-leaning US thinktank Competitive Enterprise Institute, and one of the US's most prominent climate sceptics, told the Guardian: "The science contradicts the modellers' dire predictions. The divergence between reality and model projections in the last two decades provides strong evidence that global warming, although it may become a problem some decades in the future, is not a crisis and is highly unlikely to become a crisis. We should be worried that the alarmist establishment continues using junk science to promote disastrous policies that will make the world much poorer and will consign poor people in poor countries to perpetual poverty."

May 2013: Koch Industries Newsletter Alleges “Vigorous Debate” on Climate Science

[KOCH STATEMENT]

The May 2013 edition of Koch's *Discovery* newsletter included an article titled “What's the best energy policy?” that alludes to the fact that human industrial activity contributes to climate change, before directing readers toward misleading material produced by an employee of the Koch-funded Cato Institute.³⁴⁵

In the context of the conclusions of Richard Muller's Koch-funded BEST study less than a year previous (detailed above), the information that Koch circulated to its employees and the public in its May 2013 *Discovery* newsletter appear to be particularly averse to scientific fact and the scientific consensus in 2013. The following selections of text are illustrative of the article's general focus and tone.³⁴⁶ In-text reference return: Page 32 Page 52 Page 55

Carbon Concerns

In general, the most affordable forms of energy come from fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and natural gas. Compared to these energy sources, alternative fuels such as solar and wind power are considerably more expensive (and less reliable).

Burning fossil fuels to generate electricity or provide power necessarily releases carbon dioxide, or CO₂, into the atmosphere.

Carbon dioxide, a gas, is what we exhale every time we breathe. Erupting volcanoes, decaying trees, wildfires and the animals on which we rely for food all emit CO₂.

This by-product, which is essential for plant life and an unavoidable aspect of human life, is at the center of today's climate change controversies.

Degree of change

There is a vigorous debate about what effects carbon emissions may or may not have on our future climate.

Many scientists have estimated that the earth's atmosphere has warmed by about 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit since 1880.

Those who believe that increased CO₂ emissions inevitably lead to global warming believe this change is directly attributable to the widespread use of fossil fuels.

Because they believe further warming will have catastrophic effects, they have waged a war on carbon for many years.

A matter of policy

In 2009, some policymakers proposed new legislation called "cap-and-trade," which would set a cap on carbon emissions and allow businesses to buy, sell or trade permits for emitting carbon.

[...]

If the goal is really to reduce carbon emissions, it's worth noting that the U.S. is doing a good job of achieving that goal without cap-and-trade programs.

In Europe, where carbon cap-and-trade was imposed years ago, carbon emissions are actually up, not down. The same is true for European energy prices, which have become more expensive.

[...]

In the U.S., which has no national cap-and trade program, carbon emissions and energy prices are both down in recent years.

The article then makes a paradoxical shift in focus toward the company's own efforts to reduce its own emissions:³⁴⁷

As several Koch companies have shown, there is a better way. By focusing on more efficient use of energy, it is possible to lower emissions without imposing even more environmental restrictions.

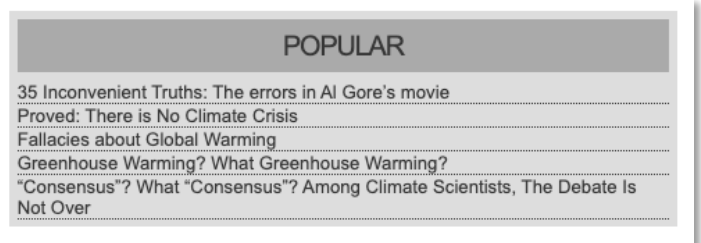
INVISTA is an excellent example. That company is aggressively [sic] pursuing a goal of reducing its energy intensity by 20 percent by the year 2020.

The *Discovery* article ends with a link to a report published by the Science and Public Policy Institute (SPPI), pasted after the article text in a noticeably distinct font.³⁴⁸ At the time, clicking this link directed users to a webpage

featuring an SPPI report titled “Analysis of US and State-by-State Carbon Dioxide Emissions & Potential ‘Savings’ in Future Global Temperature & Global Sea Level Rise,” by Paul Knappenberger.³⁴⁹ At the time, Paul “Chip” Knappenberger was employed by the Cato Institute, where he worked within Cato’s Center for the Study of Science along with Patrick Michaels, a high-profile contrarian climatologist known to collaborate directly with Koch, who is now deceased.³⁵⁰ Knappenberger’s report for SPPI included a bulleted summary of his conclusions, starting with the following statement:³⁵¹

*Using assumptions based on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Reports *, if the U.S. as a whole stopped emitting all carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions immediately, the ultimate impact on projected global temperature rise would be a reduction, or a “savings,” of approximately 0.08°C by the year 2050 and 0.17°C by the year 2100— amounts that are, for all intents and purposes, negligible.*

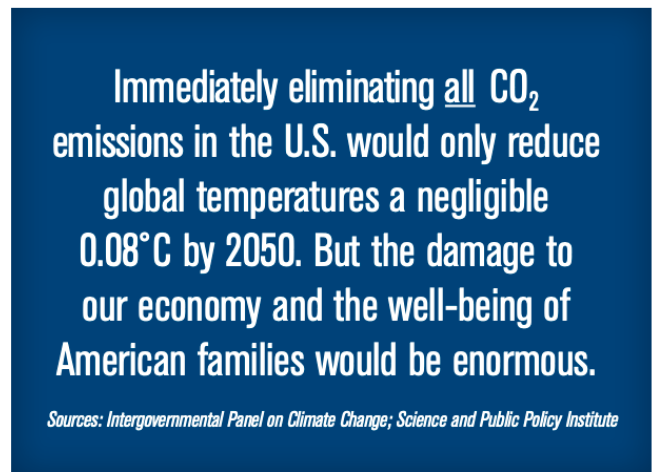
Knappenberger’s SPPI report was positioned underneath a roundup “Popular” SPPI articles, with titles such as “Proved: There is No Climate Crisis,” and “Fallacies about Global Warming.” The page contained links to publications from longtime climate denial organizations like the Heartland Institute and the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change. The “Popular” articles list is identical in archives of this web page from May 1 through July 2, 2013.³⁵²



The SPPI report concluded that a “complete and immediate cessation” of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States would also have a “similarly small” impact on sea level rise, and that any reductions in U.S. carbon dioxide emissions would be quickly subsumed by China. This was, and remains, a popular argument to deter citizens in various industrialized nations from taking decarbonization seriously, combining nationalistic and fatalistic reasoning.³⁵³

A similar conclusion is included in large text on the Koch *Discovery* article, citing SPPI and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The statement is written in such a way as to misrepresent the conclusions and recommendations of the IPCC leadership at the time, among other existing research comparing the costs of climate mitigation with the costs of inaction.³⁵⁴

It is unknown if this issue of the Koch newsletter was advertised internally to the company’s employees, as was confirmed with a similar issue from 2010, as detailed above.³⁵⁵ The May 2013 *Discovery* newsletter remains published on the Koch website as of October 2024.³⁵⁶



2014: Climate Science Denial Statement by Koch Lobbyist Philip Ellender

[KOCH STATEMENT]



Philip Ellender. Image via Koch, Inc.

In an interview with journalist Christopher Leonard, later published in his 2019 book, *Kochland*, Koch senior lobbyist Philip Ellender cast doubt upon the severity and causes of climate change:³⁵⁷

“I’m not a, you know, climatologist or whatever,” Ellender said. “Over the past, I think, hundred years, the earth is warmer. Over the past roughly eighteen, it’s cooler.... Whether or not the increases and fluctuations are anthropologic or not is still a question.”

This fallacious argument was a common talking point among those hoping to shift conversation about climate science away from established facts in the global average surface temperature record. The argument relies on cherry-picking a short time frame of temperature data in order to distract from the obvious longer-term trend of warming. By 2014, this argument had already been debunked many times over.³⁵⁸ In-text reference return: Page 38

June 2014: Koch Executive Richard Fink Dismisses Climate Concerns at Koch Donor Summit

[KOCH STATEMENT]

During a gathering of political donors convened by Charles Koch in June 2014, several surreptitious recordings were made from inside the secretive event and published by *The Undercurrent*’s Lauren Windsor. Among the many revelations from these recordings were comments made by Richard Fink relating to climate change science:³⁵⁹

“The environmental movement. Occupy Wall Street. These kids are searching for meaning. They’re protesting the 1 percent. They are the 1 percent, but they’re protesting the 1 percent. The environmental movement and climate change. It’s not about climate change.

“I studied climate change for six years. I can’t figure it out, quite frankly. Charles is ahead of me on this. I’m not a climatologist, but I’m not completely stupid. I can tell you I meet with people, particularly in California, that are convinced the world is going to burn up in, you know, a year or two. They don’t know the answer -- they don’t even know the question, because it’s not about climate change. It’s about a cause. It gives their life meaning.” In-text reference return: Page 30



Richard Fink. Photo via FreedomFest 2016.

It is unclear if Fink produced any internal reports related to his purported investigation into climate change for “six years,” and what kinds of interaction he may have had with Charles Koch about that effort. At this point in time, Fink was still Charles Koch’s top advisor, a longtime Koch Industries lobbyist, and the head of several Koch foundations that financed policy and campaigning organizations, including those that opposed efforts to mitigate climate change.³⁶⁰

Fink was responsible for developing Koch’s strategy for manufacturing policy outcomes, known as the “Structure of Social Change.”³⁶¹ Fink’s Structure adapted a manufacturing theory written by the late Austrian economist Friedrich von Hayek, one of Charles Koch’s collaborators and major ideological influences.³⁶² In Fink’s adapted Structure, rather than manufacturing physical goods to be sold, he sought to manufacture policy victories. The first step of this process was to support the development of intellectual products at universities. Think tanks were then financed to turn the more abstract academic theories into policy models. Finally, advocacy organizations would be funded to pressure politicians to enact the policies—politicians that often could also be incentivized through campaign finance and lobbying efforts.³⁶³ This Structure of Social Change is the reason why the development and financing of ideological university centers has long been a priority for Charles Koch, with hundreds of universities receiving

hundreds of millions of dollars from Koch foundations since the early 1990's, even more so since the mid-2000's.³⁶⁴ As with many Koch-funded organizations, Koch-funded professors have espoused positions that are inconsistent with the body of evidence produced by climate scientists, even instructing students to disregard the scientific evidence in favor of contradictory political opinions.³⁶⁵

2014: Molex Claims Emissions Reductions after Merger with Koch

[KOCH MITIGATION]

In December 2013, Koch Industries completed its \$7.2 billion acquisition of Molex, a manufacturer of electronic connectors and components. As Molex's 2014 Social Responsibility report noted, "in calendar 2014, we completed energy audits that are helping us drive progress towards our greenhouse gas reduction goal."³⁶⁶ In an accounting of the direct and indirect emissions produced by the company's operations, a footnote explains, "We follow the guidelines set forth in The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard (Revised Edition) for estimating GHG emissions and setting the boundaries."³⁶⁷

2015 – 2016: Koch's Public Relations Makeover

After several years of a combative relationship with the press, Koch Industries initiated a significant effort to attract more favorable attention, deflect criticism, and control the narrative around its brand. Charles and David Koch began making themselves more available to the press, conducting a series of interviews in relatively controlled settings.³⁶⁸ Koch Industries and its affiliated nonprofits began taking up positions on a selection of policy issues that would allow them to interrupt the established media narrative of Koch's partisan alliance with the Republican party.³⁶⁹

Koch Industries executives—including Charles Koch—gradually made statements indicating an acceptance of the fact that the global climate is changing due to human activity.³⁷⁰ These statements often continued to undermine conclusions that few climate scientists would dispute, but they did not resemble the aggressive anti-science sentiments expressed by the company at the beginning of the decade.

However, Koch executives made public statements in contradiction with each other, sometimes just days apart. One at least one occasion, Charles Koch appeared to contradict his own position from a previous interview, walking back his acknowledgement that human activity was responsible for at least part of the measured increase in global surface temperatures. Charles Koch and his company's executives consistently continued to cast doubt upon the veracity of climate change modeling studies and links to extreme weather events. Koch executives' statements generally served to distract from the severity of climate change. *In-text reference return: Page 38 Page 55*

August 4, 2015: Charles Koch *Washington Post* Interview

[KOCH STATEMENT]

On August 4, 2015, the *Washington Post* published an interview with Charles Koch, after reporter Matea Gold sat with the Koch CEO during one of his biannual political donor summits. The "wide-ranging conversation" included questions related to climate change, and might represent the first public statement from any Koch Industries executive that acknowledged that human activity contributes to a warming planet.³⁷¹

Q: Are you worried about climate change?

A: Well, I mean I believe it's been warming some. There's a big debate on that, because it depends on whether you use satellite measurements, balloon, or you use ground ones that have been adjusted. But

there has been warming. The CO2 goes up, the CO2 has probably contributed to that. But they say it's going to be catastrophic. There is no evidence to that. They have these models that show it, but the models don't work ... To be scientific, it has to be testable and refutable. And so I mean, it has elements of science in it, and then of conjecture, ideology and politics. So do we want to create a catastrophe today in the economy because of some speculation based on models that don't work? Those are my questions. But believe me, I spent my whole life studying science and the philosophy of science, and our whole company is committed to science. We have all sorts of scientific developments. But I want it to be real science, not politicized science.

While the statement was a step toward reality for Charles Koch, his heavily-qualified statements placed great emphasis on “debate,” scientific models that “don’t work,” and “politicized science.” *The Guardian* did line-by-line fact check of Koch’s statements, conducted by three climate scientists, who unequivocally condemned Koch for making numerous points they described as “untrue,” “demonstrably wrong,” and casting “doubt on the rigour of the scientific method.”³⁷²

September 2015: Charles Koch *Forbes* Interview

[KOCH STATEMENT]

Not long after his *Washington Post* interview, Charles Koch met with *Forbes* reporter Daniel Fisher at the Koch Industries headquarters in Wichita, Kansas. When asked about the topic of climate change, Koch’s position seemingly regressed to one that did not accept the human influence on global warming.³⁷³

Koch Industries is deeply involved in the carbon economy, with refineries, chemical plants and energy-gobbling manufacturers like Georgia-Pacific. Yet Charles Koch lobbied to end ethanol subsidies, favors exports of crude oil that would theoretically raise his price of raw materials, and supports the XL pipeline even though it would force his Minnesota refinery to bid more for heavy Canadian oil. I started by asking him his views on global warming, and he rattled off from memory statistics going back to 1880 comparing atmospheric CO2 levels to temperature.

Q. Is this evidence of CO2-induced global warming?

A: It's highly probable that CO2 has contributed to that.

Q. Is it good science to conclude humans are the cause?

A. It's not settled, it's not certain. Anybody who says something this complex is settled is not using good science.

Q. Is current energy policy too focused on fighting carbon emissions?

A. The present policies of subsidizing and mandating inefficient alternatives is counterproductive. The enormous cost and unreliability of wind and solar are making people's lives worse. They're increasing the cost of energy, they're corrupting the business community, increasing corporate welfare, and they're counterproductive. On the other hand, if people believe this is a problem, or could be a problem, then it's worth investing a certain amount in, not by government mandating, but by letting companies like ours and others innovate to find economic solutions that will make peoples' lives better today and in the future. Because there are economic alternatives to fossil fuels and because they reduce whatever risk there is that CO2 emissions can cause real harm in the future.

April 2016: Koch Executive Jim Mahoney’s Climate Denial in Koch Industries “Perspective” Column

[KOCH STATEMENT]

On April 1, 2016, longtime Koch executive and director James Mahoney wrote a company “perspective” op-ed that characterized climate change as a natural phenomenon, downplaying the role of carbon dioxide from human activity.³⁷⁴ As with Charles Koch’s recent interviews at the time, Mahoney also cast doubt upon the legitimacy of climate models, which by that time had proven to be accurate in predicting various aspects of climate change.³⁷⁵

My degree is in chemical engineering. In my many years of experience with Koch, our engineers have relied heavily on models that predict how our facilities will operate. If we found that a model couldn’t accurately predict what was going to happen in a process unit, we abandoned that model and began working on new ones.

To some degree, I believe this approach is valuable to the global debate about climate change.

Do I think the climate is changing? Sure. It always has and always will. The average global temperature is up about eight-tenths of one degree Celsius since 1880.

But overall, the climate change models have been nowhere close to accurate in predicting what our temperatures or climate would do in recent years. In fact, the models have consistently overestimated the effects of increasing CO2.

That variability and inaccuracy is troubling. If we rely on flawed models to develop environmental policy, we’re likely to get flawed policy.

Before we condemn the poor of this world to a life without abundant and affordable energy, we need to strive for accurate information — not “information” that is driven by politics.

Mahoney’s column remained on the Koch website until at least late May of 2022.³⁷⁶ The article no longer appears to be published on the Koch, Inc. website, as of October, 2024. *In-text reference return: Page 30*

April 8, 2016: Koch Executive Sheryl Corrigan Says Charles Koch Accepts the “Climate is Changing”

[KOCH STATEMENT]

In a video interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, published on April 8, 2016, Koch Industries’ Director of Environmental, Health and Safety Sheryl Corrigan announced her version of Charles Koch’s position on climate change.³⁷⁷ Prompted by a question from the *Journal*’s associate editor John Bussey, Corrigan responded as follows:

Bussey: The environment has been a flashpoint in the reputation of Koch publicly—Charles being ambiguous about...to what degree humans have a role in climate change. He acknowledges that things are heating up. It’s kind of hard to say that they aren’t. But he says, “Look, you know, maybe not humans.” What is Koch’s position on climate change?

Corrigan: Look I think Charles has said, “the climate is changing,” so the climate is changing. I think he’s also said, and we believe, that humans have a part in that. I think what the real question is, and I think it’s something that we’ve talked about pretty much all day today, is what are we going to do about it. Right? What is the right answer?

[...]

What I think needs to happen, and what our company is really focused on is we want to make sure that the policies and the actions that we take are good for people. Right? We want to make sure that the things that we do going forward are good today and good into the future. And one thing that we know isn’t the answer is picking winners or losers, because we’re not good at that [referring to the government].

April 2016: Charles Koch ABC Interview

[KOCH STATEMENT]

Beginning on April 23, 2016, ABC began publishing clips from an extended interview in Charles Koch's office at his corporate headquarters in Wichita.³⁷⁸ An extended interview was published on ABC's Powerhouse Politics podcast, and included a five minute exchange in which reporter Jonathan Karl pressed Mr. Koch to respond to questions about the existence and causes of climate change.³⁷⁹ Charles Koch again cast doubt upon the legitimacy of climate modeling, and conceded that CO2 released into the atmosphere by human activity contributed to warming, although he used language designed to make the amount of measured warming sound infinitesimal.

ABC has not preserved the podcast online, but audio of the interview was republished on YouTube by American Bridge 21st Century, and partially transcribed here:³⁸⁰

Karl: *One more issue, climate change.*

Koch: *Right...*

Karl: *You're not one of these guys who denies the existence of climate change? You don't deny the earth is getting warmer?*

[...]

Koch: *What do I believe the science is on climate? CO2 is a greenhouse gas, it contributes to warming. You look back over the last 160 years of temperature change—the temperature rose about four tenths of a degree in the first 80 of those years, when the CO2 went up very little. Over the last 80, it's gone up quite a bit more, let's say thirty percent. And the temperature's increased five tenths of a degree. So it's increased one tenth more than it did in the period when CO2 didn't go...[trails off]. Now these models show that it should have climbed much more. So we don't have all the answers, unlike the claims of people who are pushing it. But it's undoubtedly contributed to at least that difference, and there are many other variables...so go ahead.*

Karl: *So you acknowledge that the earth is warming?*

Koch: *Absolutely. It's warmed nine tenths of a degree over the last 160 years.*

Karl: *And human activity has contributed to that? Although you would argue that it's less than...*

Koch: *Well I'm not arguing, those are what the measurements show. It's contributed much less than their models that are predicting catastrophe show. So the question is, okay, no. The basic question is, is the climate changing due to CO2 in a way that's going to be catastrophic and unmanageable? Or is it changing in a mild and manageable way? I believe the evidence is overwhelming that it's changing in a mild and manageable way. And so, these policies that are being introduced in the United States, as a matter of fact, under their own models, will have virtually zero impact on the future temperature or other aspects of the climate. And in fact, I think they make matters worse, because they get people going after the subsidies rather than innovating.*

What we're doing in the company is we're working on reducing energy consumption, we're in biofuels, we're developing processes to make chemicals out of CO2. So we're doing a tremendous amount not to get subsidies, but because we believe we can do this economically through innovation. Whereas these policies are making people's lives worse. They're raising the cost of energy for no benefit. And guess who suffers the most? The poorest people use three times the energy as a percentage of income than the average American. So when we raise the cost of energy, make it unreliable, it benefits the wealthy, who are getting these subsidies, and hurts the poorest people. And you look at these policies, as a matter of fact, some of them generate more CO2. Like subsidies to make wood pellets to burn, and then we ship them to

Europe...[slaps his hands on his lap] I mean it's crazy, not approving the Keystone pipeline. That oil's going to be produced. Now it's going to be shipped by rail, or by ship to China. So it generates more CO2.

Karl: So should a reduction of CO2 be a policy goal?

Koch: Well...I think if it can be done economically without making people's lives worse then that's fine. But we shouldn't be setting up subsidies. We shouldn't be doing more corporate welfare, which is hurting the whole system, hurting society, hurting the poor the most, to accomplish that. We need to get towards permissionless innovation, so companies like us who are working on it—and Bill Gates, who says he's going to put billions into this—so he can innovate. So we're not against any of these forms of energy. We're for forms of energy that make people's lives better rather than worse.

April 2016: Charles Koch's Bathroom Reading Includes Climate Change Misinformation

[KOCH ACTION]

As part of his trip to the Koch headquarters to interview Charles Koch, ABC journalist Jonathan Karl Tweeted a photo of Mr. Koch's personal office bathroom.³⁸¹ One anonymous observer from an obscure online blog noted that the large pile of books included Bjorn Lomborg's *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming* and the late James Inhofe's *The Greatest Hoax*.³⁸²

It is unknown if Charles Koch read either text, but Koch Industries did feature Lomborg's *Cool It!* on its climate position statement webpage from 2010-2011, as detailed above.³⁸³ Lomborg's book was heavily scrutinized for several inaccuracies at the time of its release, as was his prior work.³⁸⁴

Inhofe's book appears to have been less publicly scrutinized, perhaps because his extreme denial of climate change is well known and written into the book's very title.³⁸⁵ Over the course of his career as a US Senator, Inhofe received over \$111,000 from Koch Industries' PAC and employees—his second-largest campaign contributor.³⁸⁶



Photo Credit: Jonathan Karl via Twitter, April 24, 2016.

The collection of books in Charles Koch's bathroom do not appear to include any that offer a perspective of climate change that reflects the scientific consensus. *In-text reference return: Page 45*

June 2016: Charles Koch's Second *Washington Post* Interview

[KOCH STATEMENT]

Several months after the *ABC News* interview, Charles Koch did another major interview with the *Washington Post* in which the topic of climate change came up. His statements, published on June 5, 2016, were similar to those made to *ABC*:

China and India are going to do what they're going to do anyway. So we just hurt ourselves, even under their theory. And their theories aren't working very well, because they keep predicting all these theories that aren't happening. And if they start happening, or they get evidence, and they'll enter into a debate rather than shut down anybody who has questions about it or wants to challenge any aspect of it, then I get a lot more sympathetic, yeah. If we're all trying to find the truth of the matter, then I'm all for that. I'm all for applying the Republic of Science on climate, as I am on anything.

[...]

KOCH AIDE: There's a lot of varying reports on what Charles's position on climate change actually is. So I think it would be a good idea if—

CK: Yeah, I say that a lot of what is done by the climate lobby is anti-science. But there is some science behind it. Like, there are greenhouse gases, and they do contribute to warming. But if you look at the last, say, 160 years, the first 80 of that period, they went up four-tenths of a degree. And now, the second 80 that CO2 has gone up, what, 30 percent or something, it's gone up five-tenths of a degree. And there's been in the last 30 or 40 years, there's been no real increase in storms or bad weather.

Charles Koch's rejection of the link between extreme weather and climate change was contrary to scientific research being published at the time, with many scientists becoming more confident in the link by the year 2016.³⁸⁷

July 2016: Charles Koch Q&A Event with *Fortune* Magazine

[KOCH STATEMENT]

In what appears to be the fifth, and final, time that Charles Koch went on record addressing climate science from summer 2015 through summer 2016, Koch again made similar comments in a *Fortune* interview at a public event, which was filmed.³⁸⁸ Koch's comments were made in response to a question posed by an attendee of the event named John Vane, which *Fortune* transcribed:³⁸⁹

John Vane: Thank you. My question is do you believe in anthropogenic climate change? And given the risks of being wrong, don't you think it might make sense to err on the side of caution?

Koch: Oh, precautionary principle at work here. Good. No, that's a great challenge. Yeah I believe it's been warming and I believe that the evidence is there are such a thing as greenhouse gases, and they're contributing to that.

But I don't think anybody knows how much. I don't think science is settled. I mean how could it be? The people who are projecting, or who have these models, okay, if we do this the other could be increased by one and a half degrees to four and a half or six.

The ocean could rise 20 feet or two feet. So it is not settled. As a matter of fact, science is never settled.

Vane: But you've been very outspoken about subsidies to renewable energy.

Koch: Oh, subsidies to everything. I think this is a big part of what's hurting this country is cronyism and corporate welfare.

Vane: Some of which you get.

Koch: Oh yeah, so we make a lot of money off of it as any established company because it's endemic in the economy. But what I object to is not studying – I think there ought to be more study. It is not the scientific method to criticize and try to silence those who are challenging it.

If we want to have more progress, we need to welcome just as we do in our company, welcome challenges to this rather than name calling and trying to shut them up.

Vane: Some people think your challenge has a little more clout than other peoples' because you can put a lot of money behind it.

Koch: Well that would be good. I would hope so. I haven't seen I have a lot of clout but I'm looking forward to that day.

July 2016: Koch Lobbyist Philip Ellender Comments on U.S. Senate Hearings

[KOCH STATEMENT]

On the week of July 11th, 2016, a series of U.S. Senate hearings were conducted by senators who sponsored a resolution condemning the “efforts of corporations and groups to mislead the public about the harmful effects of tobacco, lead, and climate.”³⁹⁰ The effort was led by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Koch was a frequent focal point during the floor speeches.³⁹¹

In response, Koch lobbyist Philip Ellender published a statement pushing back on assertions made by the senators, framing climate change as an unsettled “debate” and dismissing some specific concerns:³⁹²

When it comes to the continued politicization of climate science, we firmly believe that all sides of the debate must recognize that the stifling of an open and free exchange on this issue will result in a loss of the scientific standards that were essential to creating our modern world and conveniences we have today. With that said, to date, dire predictions such as the polar ice cap melting by 2014 and 20 foot sea level rises have not occurred. As climate science continues to evolve, it is important that the government not take measures that will cripple our economy and overly impact the poor, but instead allow energy innovation to progress in line with market demand – not mandate.

Ellender’s reference to claims of the “polar ice cap melting by 2014” appears to refer to statements made by Al Gore from 2007-2009, which were found to have exaggerated the most aggressive climate modeling done by one particular team of scientists in a 2008 study.³⁹³ Assuming Ellender was indeed referring to Al Gore, his statement misrepresented Gore’s claim by making no distinction between a permanent, year-round melting of Arctic ice, and a complete melting of sea ice in the summer months only, as Gore had claimed. Ellender appears to use this unspecific example as a way to dismiss the very real threat of melting Arctic sea ice, an indisputable trend that many scientists had expressed concern over for many years.³⁹⁴ Melting Arctic ice is one of several major factors contributing to sea level rise, one of the most significant threats resulting from climate change.³⁹⁵

Ellender’s reference to predictions of a potential rise in sea levels by 20 feet appears to greatly exaggerate the conditions and time frame with which scientists have predicted that possibility. It is unclear who—if anyone—made a serious claim that sea levels would rise 20 feet by the time of Ellender’s statement, as he alleged. Predictions of such severe sea level rise have generally involved much longer time frames and are relative to local high tide, among other nuances.³⁹⁶ By the time of Ellender’s statement, scientists already made it clear that just a few feet of sea level rise would likely cause significant harm and cost to societies around the world.³⁹⁷

October 2016: Koch Celebrates Molex Singapore’s Efforts to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

[KOCH MITIGATION]

On October 5, 2016, Koch posted an update celebrating an award received by Molex’s subsidiary in Singapore for energy efficiency improvements.³⁹⁸ The article linked from the Koch website quotes Molex Singapore senior manager of manufacturing services Sebastian Choo:³⁹⁹

"Our programme has led to a consistent track record in energy efficiency improvements (eg, more than 10 per cent year-on-year improvement on greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) over the last five years, resulting in achieving our corporate five-year GHGs reduction goal ahead of target). Molex Singapore will continue to strive to achieve a year-on-year improvement for 2016-2018."

November 2016-2020: Koch Victories in the Trump Era

November 2016: Koch Donor Network Helps Shapes the Trump Transition Team

[KOCH ACTION]

After Donald Trump's surprise victory over Hillary Clinton in November 2016, a hoard of industry lobbyists, policy professionals and wealthy political donors began visiting Trump Tower in New York City, jockeying for cabinet positions and seeking to influence the incoming administration's priorities.⁴⁰⁰

Several Koch affiliates were involved in developing that cabinet as part of Trump's transition team in late 2016, led by Mike Pence, who for years was a favored politician among Charles Koch's network of donors.⁴⁰¹ Americans for Prosperity chair Frayda Levin was amazed at the Koch donor network's influence on this process, telling *Politico*:⁴⁰²

"In creating the Koch network, I don't think that we ever envisioned that we would be supplying staffers to this semi-free market, semi-populist president," ... "But we're happy that he's picking people who have that free market background, particularly because on many issues, he is a blank slate, so anybody with expertise is in an amazing position to shape his agenda."

Department of Energy and Department of the Interior Transition Teams:

The transition teams that formed for Trump's executive agencies included a variety of people connected to the Koch company and its many affiliated nonprofits.⁴⁰³ At least three lobbyists for Koch Industries were involved in shaping Trump's Department of Energy (DOE), including Mike McKenna and Michael Catanzaro, both of whom were registered lobbyists for Koch in 2016.⁴⁰⁴ Catanzaro eventually stepped down from his role on the transition team, but in the years that followed, continued to work for Trump.⁴⁰⁵ Emails published by the *Washington Post* documented Catanzaro's recommendations to Trump to either "ignore...the [climate] science being conducted by Federal agencies," or to review and challenge it, a suggestion Trump attempted to set into motion when he appointed the CO2 Coalition's William Happer to the National Security Council (as detailed below).⁴⁰⁶

When Catanzaro stepped away from the DOE transition team, he was replaced by Tom Pyle, a former Koch Industries lobbyist and longtime employee of the Institute for Energy Research, an organization that was originally co-founded by Charles Koch.⁴⁰⁷ Trump's Interior Department transition was led by Doug Domenech of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, which had received millions of dollars from Koch foundations by 2016 (and millions since).⁴⁰⁸

Environmental Protection Agency Transition Team and Scott Pruitt:

Many other longtime climate change misinformers served on Trump's transition team for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which had long been a major target of their campaigning. The team was led by the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI)'s Myron Ebell, who informally included many other climate change deniers and fossil fuel spokespeople as part of the transition effort.⁴⁰⁹ Among the people working closely with Ebell at Koch-funded organizations were his CEI colleague, Marlo Lewis, the Cato Institute's Patrick Michaels, the Heritage Foundation's David Kreutzer, Craig Rucker and Marc Morano of the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT), and Christopher Horner and David Schnare of the Free Market Environmental Law Clinic.⁴¹⁰

Some of these people were longtime participants in CEI's Cooler Heads Coalition, led by Ebell and launched with support from Koch and Exxon in 1997 (as detailed above). Ebell's cohorts in the transition team also reportedly included people that had participated in the 1998 American Petroleum Institute "Global Climate Science Communications" team (as detailed above), such as Steve Milloy, and former Exxon lobbyist Randy Randol.⁴¹¹

During the transition period, Trump nominated then-Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to lead the EPA. Pruitt was a beneficiary of Koch's political spending and a collaborator with many Koch-funded organizations during his time as the Oklahoma AG. Koch's political action committee had previously donated \$10,000 to Pruitt's election campaigns for the state AG office from 2010-2014.⁴¹² Koch gave \$400,000 to the Republican Attorneys General Association in 2016, an organization Pruitt had chaired and fundraised for.⁴¹³ Other oil and gas executives that had close relationships with Pruitt were also known participants in Charles Koch's donor network during the Obama presidency.⁴¹⁴

Emails released from the Oklahoma AG office under public records requests revealed even more connections to organizations with particularly close ties to Koch Industries, including the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), and the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM), the lobbying organization for oil and gas refinery companies.⁴¹⁵ Koch Industries (and its subsidiaries) was a longstanding member of the boards of both organizations at the time, in addition to serving on internal committees at both groups.⁴¹⁶ In addition to Koch Industries' corporate membership at ALEC, numerous Koch-controlled nonprofits also paid to attend and influence ALEC's internal task force meetings.⁴¹⁷ Pruitt had a close but dysfunctional relationship with many of the career climate change deniers that served as part of the Trump EPA transition team process. Their work to gut the EPA from the inside out is detailed below.

Koch Nonprofit Executives, Consultants, Lawyers and Politicians the Trump's Cabinet:

In addition to steering Trump's regulatory priorities during the post-election transition, numerous staff from Charles Koch's organizations took positions in Trump's cabinet, as did many Koch-funded politicians. These appointments were detailed in a report published by Public Citizen published in November 2017.⁴¹⁸ Besides Pence and Pruitt, the most notable Koch alumnus joining Trump's White House was legislative affairs director Marc Short, who worked for Koch's umbrella nonprofit, Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce (later known as The Seminar Network, and now known as Stand Together).⁴¹⁹ Another Freedom Partners executive, Mike Roman, now known for his work to overturn the 2020 election, conducted "surveillance and intelligence gathering" for the Koch network, as *Politico* reported.⁴²⁰ Top Trump advisor Kellyanne Conway had previously been a consultant for Freedom Partners and Americans for Prosperity.

Public Citizen identified dozens of other examples, including several other employees, attorneys and consultants that worked for Freedom Partners and Americans for Prosperity, employees of the heavily Koch-funded departments and groups at George Mason University, Koch-funded politicians, and executives from Koch-funded organizations, like the Texas Public Policy Foundation and the Cato Institute.⁴²¹

2017-2019: Koch Contracts with John Stossel

[KOCH ACTION]

From 2017-2019, the Charles Koch Institute (now known as Stand Together Fellowships) disclosed contracts to John Stossel's company, JFS Productions, totaling \$1,541,715.⁴²²

John Stossel has a long history of hosting television and Internet TV segments that feature marginalized climate change "skeptics" who instruct viewers to doubt the science of climate change.⁴²³ Segments dismissing the severity of various environmental pollution problems date back to Stossel's time as a host of *ABC's 20/20*, his years as a host on the *FOX Business Network*, and his more recent self-produced Internet TV series, *Stossel TV*.

Stossel TV is administered by the Center for Independent Thought (CIT), a nonprofit directed by Stossel. CIT is a longtime recipient of grants from Koch foundations, receiving \$397,688 from 2007-2019.⁴²⁴ *Stossel TV* publishes its videos on YouTube, in addition to its own website.

At times, Stossel's company and nonprofit appear to have produced overlapping content. In 2019, Stossel wrote an article on "Climate Myths" featuring discredited climate contrarian scientists, including the late Patrick Michaels, Willie Soon, and David Legates. The article was syndicated by JFS Productions to platforms like the *Daily Signal*, which is published by the Koch-funded Heritage Foundation.⁴²⁵ The article posted on the *Stossel TV* website included an embedded video segment called "Are We Doomed?" which included footage of Michaels, Soon and

Legates.⁴²⁶ All of the scientists featured in Stossel’s 2019 video and accompanying article have financial ties to Koch.⁴²⁷ That year, JFS Productions received over \$500,000 from the Charles Koch Institute and the CIT received \$72,688 from the Charles Koch Foundation.⁴²⁸

Dozens of syndicated articles discussing climate change attributed to JFS Productions have circulated from 2007-2024. In the three-year period that Stossel’s company was known to contract for the Charles Koch Institute, at least 13 articles downplaying the urgency of climate change were published by JFS Productions.⁴²⁹ Other syndicated opinion columns that were labeled as products of JFS Productions explicitly defended the political activity of Koch Industries and its owners, including a column in 2017, the first year that the Charles Koch Institute disclosed consulting payments to JFS.⁴³⁰

It is unclear if JFS Productions has continued to receive any financing from Koch since 2019. The nonprofits under Koch’s control have not listed JFS in any tax filing disclosures from 2020-2022, although there exist many Koch-controlled limited liability companies affiliated with these nonprofits that would not have to make such disclosures.⁴³¹ Nor would Koch, Inc or its subsidiaries.

2017 – 2019 “Red Team” Push to Undermine Climate Change in Trump’s EPA

[KOCH ACTION]

During Donald Trump’s time as president, a group of longtime climate science deniers and climate policy obstructionists had high hopes not only to dismantle a wide variety of climate-related regulations, but strike at the core of the executive branch’s ability to take action on climate change.⁴³² Specific goals included reversing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s “endangerment finding,” which justified EPA efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions, and to end or undermine the U.S. National Climate Assessment reports.⁴³³

The EPA under Scott Pruitt began signaling its antipathy for climate science during Trump’s first year in office. As *HuffPost* summarized in June 2017, the EPA “erased its website dedicated to climate change, purged dozens of scientific advisory board members, and pressured a top scientist to alter her congressional testimony to include more political ‘talking points.’”⁴³⁴ At the invitation of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, affiliates of Koch-funded organizations like the Competitive Enterprise Institute and the CO2 Coalition plotted a “red team-blue team” strategy to have an internal “review” of climate change science made up disproportionately of a distinct minority of scientists who did not accept the severity of climate change.⁴³⁵ The Heartland Institute assembled a list of 150 “experts” that it trusted to dispute climate science and sent it to the EPA, as emails obtained by the Climate Investigations Center revealed.⁴³⁶ But Heartland and its cohorts were also concerned about the competence of Pruitt, emails showed, and they brainstormed tactics to increase pressure on Pruitt to dispose of the endangerment finding.⁴³⁷

Trump advisors, including White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, disagreed with the red team-blue team approach, and the effort faltered.⁴³⁸ The climate contrarians who had assisted with Trump’s transition teams continued to meet at conferences organized by The Heartland Institute, where they plotted strategies, interacted with Trump administration officials, and celebrated victories, like the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and enabling increased extraction for oil & gas companies.⁴³⁹ But they never achieved their top goal of erasing the EPA’s endangerment finding, an effort that officially died when Pruitt’s replacement at the EPA, former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler, decided not to end the endangerment finding.⁴⁴⁰

As efforts to unravel the endangerment finding were in limbo, hopes were placed on the shoulders of the Koch-funded CO2 Coalition’s William Happer, who was already in correspondence with Pruitt’s staff about the “red team” effort and had earned President Trump’s admiration for his regressive positions on climate science.⁴⁴¹ Happer’s time in the Trump White House is detailed immediately below. *In-text reference return: Page 70*

2017-2020: Koch Grants to the CO2 Coalition and William Happer’s White House Appointment

[KOCH ACTION]

William Happer came into the Trump administration through the National Security Council, after previously being involved in the effort to facilitate a regressive “red team” climate science debate within the U.S. EPA.⁴⁴² Happer was a Princeton University physics professor, with no formal training as a climate scientist, and a member of the Koch-funded CO2 Coalition.⁴⁴³ He had previously been exposed for his consulting arrangements with the coal mining company Peabody Energy.⁴⁴⁴ After his appointment to the National Security Council, Happer reportedly attempted to find ways to advance the goals of the faltering “red team” strategy he had attempted at the EPA.⁴⁴⁵

As with the EPA, the effort was met with internal resistance. Happer exited the Trump administration after a year, reportedly due to concerns from “White House advisers who viewed the plan to openly attack climate research as a risk to Trump's prospects for reelection.”⁴⁴⁶ Happer’s reputation of making inflammatory comments did not appear to help. As *The Guardian* reported in 2019:⁴⁴⁷

In 2017, when Happer was reportedly under consideration to be Trump’s science advisor, he sent a letter to a Jezebel reader arguing that the “demonization of CO2” “really differs little from the Nazi persecution of the Jews, the Soviet extermination of class enemies or ISIL slaughter of infidels”.

Happer’s organization, the CO2 Coalition, received several grants from Koch foundations exceeding \$76,000 during Trump’s term in office.⁴⁴⁸ The group was formed in 2015 after the closing of its predecessor organization, the George C. Marshall Institute, itself a prominent anti-climate organization that received \$620,000 from Koch foundations from 2004-2015.⁴⁴⁹

Additionally, a multi-billion dollar donor advised fund called National Philanthropic Trust gave the CO2 Coalition \$201,500 in 2022.⁴⁵⁰ Koch-controlled grants to the Trust total at least \$97.5 million from 2019-2022.⁴⁵¹ Due to the inherent anonymity involved in grants that are funneled through donor advised funds, we can only speculate about a possible connection between Koch and the CO2 Coalition—or any other grantee—via the National Philanthropic Trust.

2018: The Koch Network’s “Laundry List” of Policy Victories from the Trump Administration

[KOCH ACTION]

Despite some of the most lofty goals of climate change contrarians failing during Donald Trump’s presidency, many of their efforts to stall climate mitigation were successful. Charles Koch’s organizations tracked and celebrated these victories. In early 2018, a document surfaced that illustrated the many policy and regulatory victories that Donald Trump’s administration and the Republican-controlled Congress delivered to Charles Koch and his network of donors.⁴⁵²

The organization behind the document was known as the Seminar Network Chamber of Commerce, a 501(c)6 business league nonprofit that has changed its name multiple times (it is now known as the Stand Together Chamber of Commerce).⁴⁵³ While the group’s name has changed, its IRS Employer Identification Number has been consistent, as has its role as a coordinating body and fundraising vessel for the broader network of donors coordinated by Koch since its founding in 2014. As summarized by *The Intercept*:

Documents obtained by The Intercept and Documented show that the network of wealthy donors led by billionaire industrialists Charles and David Koch have taken credit for a laundry list of policy achievements extracted from the Trump administration and their allies in Congress.

The donors have pumped campaign contributions not only to GOP lawmakers, but also to an array of third-party organizations that have pressured officials to act swiftly to roll back limits on pollution, approve new pipeline projects, and extend the largest set of upper-income tax breaks in generations.

“This year, thanks in part to research and outreach efforts across institutions, we have seen progress on many regulatory priorities this Network has championed for years,” the memo notes.

The document highlights environmental issues that the Koch brothers have long worked to undo, such as the EPA Clean Power Plan, which is currently under the process of being formally repealed, and Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, among their major accomplishments. The memo also highlighted administration efforts to walk back planned rules to strengthen the estate tax in a list of 13 regulatory decisions favored by the network.

Numerous cuts to environmental regulations, and permitting approvals for fossil fuel projects, were listed in the document.⁴⁵⁴ In a section titled "Removing Regulatory Burdens," Koch celebrated ongoing or completed attempts to roll back the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan and Waters of the U.S. rule, Bureau of Land Management rules protecting waterways, fracking limitations, and permitting of controversial oil pipeline projects. Almost every regulatory victory in this list was related to the environment, as the following images show.

REMOVING REGULATORY BURDENS

Continuing to remove the burden caused by unnecessary and harmful regulations imposed during the Obama Administration—at both the state and federal level—remains a key focus of the Network's overall strategy. By leveraging the Network's policy, grassroots, and communications capabilities to build the public case for smarter approaches to regulation, we've already seen progress toward this goal. In the first eleven months of President Trump's Administration, the White House and Congress have closely followed the Network's Roadmap to Repeal, with Congress utilizing the Congressional Review Act more than any other time in its history.

This year, thanks in part to research and outreach efforts across institutions, we have seen progress on many regulatory priorities this Network has championed for years. **Notable developments at the federal level include:**

- CFPB Arbitration Rule – *Repealed by Congressional Review Act*
- EPA Waters of the U.S. Regulations – *In Process of Being Formally Repealed*
- Keystone XL Pipeline, Dakota Access Pipeline – *Permits Approved*
- BLM Stream Protection Rule – *Overtaken*

- EPA Clean Power Plan – *In Process of Being Formally Repealed*
- Infrastructure Project Permit Streamlining – *Executive Order Issued*
- Review Antiquities Act Abuse – *Executive Order Issued*
- BLM Rule Preventing Fracking on Federal and Indian Lands – *Rescinded*
- Withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement – *Withdrawn*
- EPA "sue and settle" practices – *Ended*
- Treasury Department estate-tax rules – *Eight Rules Repealed*
- Expanded joint employer/independent contractor standards – *DOL Rescinded, Amendment Passed in House*
- Repealed Obamacare limits on short-term insurance plans – *Executive Order Issued*

State legislatures, particularly in states with a strong Network presence, have also made significant progress toward removing harmful and unnecessary regulations. For example, Wisconsin this year went so far as to enact the nation's first REINS Act, which will require legislative approval of any issued regulation that has an impact above a certain cost threshold.

Perhaps just as significant as the obstructions to national and international climate change mitigation efforts was the large corporate tax cut legislation passed by Congress, with support from the Trump administration. One study estimated that Koch and its owners might have received tax cuts between \$1 billion to \$1.4 billion, annually.⁴⁵⁵ The Koch document acknowledges that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was the Koch network's "top policy priority" in 2017.⁴⁵⁶ *The Intercept* summarized the network's efforts to support the tax cuts:

To win support for the Republican tax legislation, the Koch network claims that it organized over 100 rallies in 36 states, contacted over 1.8 million activists, and knocked on over 33,000 doors. The group also

spent freely on digital and television advertisements, with \$1.6 million in TV spots to support the legislation in Wisconsin alone.

While many media reports depicted a tense relationship between President Trump and the Koch family, the evidence suggests that Trump's presidency was massively beneficial toward advancing Charles Koch's business interests and political goals.⁴⁵⁷ Dozens of people who went to work for the Trump administration came from Charles Koch's organization, as summarized above.

2017 – 2020: AFP Spent Millions to Support Trump Supreme Court Justice Appointments

Trump established an extreme conservative majority in the United States Supreme Court, an effort that involved Americans for Prosperity spending millions of dollars. AFP spent "seven figures" on advertising and public relations campaigns to support the confirmations of justices Neil Gorsuch (in 2017), Brett Kavanaugh (2018) and Amy Coney-Barrett (2020). According to media reports and AFP press releases, the total cost of these efforts was between \$3 million to \$10 million.⁴⁵⁸

Since the appointment of these three Supreme Court justices, Koch has been dealt major victories in the form of rolling back environmental protections and regulatory processes designed to limit pollution. Most of these rulings have happened since Donald Trump's presidency ended. Perhaps the most obvious victory for Koch, and other polluting companies, was a June 2022 ruling that significantly restricted the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from being able to limit greenhouse gas pollution. As summarized by Sharon Lerner for *The Intercept*:⁴⁵⁹

The original case was about the Clean Power Plan, the Obama administration's effort to limit carbon emissions from power plants, which are the second-largest source of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. But that plan no longer exists, having been struck down by the Trump administration. Nor does its Trump-era replacement. In practical terms, the ruling will hamstring the Biden administration, which has pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions 50 percent economywide by 2030. The administration is in the process of crafting its own rule affecting power plant emissions, which is expected next year.

Lerner noted that several organizations with particularly notably financial or qualitative connections to Koch were involved in the case:

The case itself can also be tied directly to Koch. The challengers are 27 Republican attorneys general, who were supported by the Koch-funded Republican Attorneys General Association. At least four Koch-funded entities have filed amicus briefs in the case: the Cato Institute, which was co-founded by Charles Koch; the Competitive Enterprise Institute; the New Civil Liberties Alliance; and Americans for Prosperity.

In the long term, it could turn out that the most significant victory delivered by the Supreme Court to Koch is the reversal of the 1984 decision *Chevron v. Natural Resources Defense Council* on June 28, 2024. The ruling dismantled the "Chevron doctrine," which has implications for environmental, public health, consumer and workplace safety regulations of all kinds, including those intended to limit pollution and protect the environment and public health. As summarized by the Sierra Club:⁴⁶⁰

The Supreme Court on Friday threw into question the future of climate and environmental regulation in the United States, scrapping a decades-old legal precedent that gave federal agencies leeway to interpret laws according to their expertise and scientific evidence. The impact of the decision to scrap the so-called Chevron deference will take years to become clear, but it could allow for far more legal challenges against regulations by agencies like the EPA and the Department of the Interior that have a huge role in the climate fight.

[...]

“What’s at stake [in the decision] is whether courts are going to defer to agencies interpreting statutes,” said Michael Burger, the director of the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University, “or whether courts are going to stop doing that, and with more regularity take it on themselves to interpret the statutes even when they’re ambiguous, which means they may be in the position of making more policy choices.”

One of the many organizations under the control of Charles Koch through his umbrella organization, the Stand Together Chamber of Commerce, was involved in the litigation.⁴⁶¹ As the *New York Times* reported:⁴⁶²

The lawyers who represent the New Jersey-based fishermen are working pro bono and belong to a public-interest law firm, Cause of Action, that discloses no donors and reports having no employees. However, court records show that the lawyers work for Americans for Prosperity, a group funded by Mr. Koch, the chairman of Koch Industries and a champion of anti-regulatory causes.

The law firm’s board of directors includes a top lawyer at the firm that has represented Koch Industries in a range of cases, like the company’s past defense against lawsuits linked to its handling of petroleum coke, a byproduct of oil refining, and in its opposition to stronger regulations on the substance.

The lawyer also represents Koch Industries in an ongoing lawsuit filed by the Minnesota attorney general that accuses the company of deceptive practices related to climate change.

Other members of the board include executives at groups predominantly funded by Mr. Koch or by Koch Industries, America’s second-largest privately held company, after Cargill.

In recent comments, longtime Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky noted that rolling back the *Chevron* doctrine was a longtime goal, more so than the heavily contested Supreme Court ruling that struck down abortion rights established by *Roe v. Wade*. As the *New York Times* reported in July, 2024:⁴⁶³

For those who led the drive to place Justice Gorsuch and two other conservatives on the court during the Trump administration, a sweeping series of rulings by the Supreme Court this year that shrank the power of federal agencies was the true victory. Their longtime target, the so-called administrative state, has been beaten back with the overturning of the 40-year-old Chevron doctrine and a flurry of other decisions aimed at reining in federal government reach — just as they envisioned it.

[...]

Limiting the power of federal officials was a longstanding goal of members of the Federalist Society, the conservative group seen as an incubator for the type of judges that Mr. [Donald] McGahn and others sought when they moved to quickly populate the courts with conservative jurists after Mr. Trump’s election.

“Dismantling the administrative state and empowering people who are actually elected to make decisions has been the motivating force” for nearly every “Federalist Society-type lawyer,” Senator Mitch McConnell, the Kentucky Republican and minority leader, said in an interview.

Mr. McConnell spearheaded the judicial confirmation effort in the Senate as majority leader, beginning when he blocked President Barack Obama from filling a Supreme Court vacancy in 2016, and then working hand in hand with Mr. McGahn once Mr. Trump was elected to push scores of his judicial nominees to the bench.

*“I think the left thought that all we ever talked about was *Roe v. Wade*,” Mr. McConnell said. “Frankly, I can’t even remember it coming up. This was the unifying issue,” he said of the attempt to rein in federal agencies.*

Koch had supported the efforts of the Federalist Society, and Senator McConnell, for years before the ruling that struck down the *Chevron* doctrine. The Federalist Society has received millions of dollars from Koch foundations in recent decades, including \$2.6 million during President Trump’s term in office.⁴⁶⁴ In addition to receiving hundreds

of thousands of dollars from Koch's political action committee and employees as a Senator,⁴⁶⁵ McConnell had previously coordinated directly with Charles Koch and his network of political donors, as the *New Yorker* reported in a profile of McConnell.⁴⁶⁶

McConnell's disrespect for Obama mirrored the views of rich conservative corporate donors like the Kochs, who underwrote many of the campaigns that enabled Republicans to capture the majority in the House of Representatives in 2010, and in the Senate four years later. In the 2014 midterm elections alone, the Koch donor network, which has a few hundred members, spent more than a hundred million dollars. In 2014, shortly before Republicans took the Senate, McConnell appeared as an honored guest at one of the Kochs' semi-annual fund-raising summits. He thanked "Charles and David," adding, "I don't know where we would be without you." Soon after he was sworn in as the Senate Majority Leader, he hired a former lobbyist for Koch Industries as his policy chief. McConnell then took aim at the Kochs' longtime foe the Environmental Protection Agency, urging governors to disobey new restrictions on greenhouse gases.

April 2019: Charles Koch and Brian Hooks Reference Support for Muller's BEST Study

[KOCH STATEMENT]

At the 2019 Global Philanthropy Forum, Charles Koch and his top nonprofit executive, Brian Hooks, took part in an interview where they were asked about the effort of Koch foundations to promote a "minority view" of climate change "under the guise of ideological pluralism."⁴⁶⁷

In response, Stand Together CEO Brian Hooks invoked Koch's support for Richard Muller's Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature (BEST) project:

Jane Wales: Some academics say, 'well gee, under the guise of ideological pluralism, some philanthropists will come in and try to promote an idea that is otherwise not sustainable.' Right? It can be demonstrated to be...not so good. What do you say to that criticism?

Koch: Well, I'd say...well tell me what these...if we're supporting ideas that aren't viable, I mean, I want to know! I don't want to be supporting them either! Will you let me in on that?

Wales: I'll let you in. Well, I think the thing that's most visible--but this is not so much--is the is the notion of climate change. And, sort of, you know--is there a uniform view, you know, if the majority of scientists feel this way, is, you know, a minority view really of equal weight? That would be...

Hooks: There's a lot of misinformation out there about our support for university programs. Climate change is actually not an area that we've made almost any investments in at the university level because we haven't really seen an opportunity to make a difference, to add value to that conversation. We've supported some programs. We supported the project at Berkeley, called Berkeley Earth, with a wonderful physicist named Richard Muller, whose work demonstrated that once you get rid of all the noise there's a relationship between carbon in the air and greenhouse gases and warming. So we contributed to that project. But that was maybe six or seven years ago we haven't done much since.

In 2019, Brian Hooks was the top executive at several of Charles Koch's most important nonprofit organizations: the Stand Together Chamber of Commerce, Stand Together Trust, Stand Together Foundation, Charles Koch Institute, the Charles Koch Foundation, the Mercatus Center and the Institute for Humane Studies.⁴⁶⁸ His combined salaries from the Charles Koch Institute (now known as "Stand Together Fellowships") and the Stand Together Chamber of Commerce exceeded \$1.3 million in 2019.⁴⁶⁹

It is noteworthy that Hooks was familiar with Koch's support for Richard Muller's BEST project (detailed above), as Hooks was not in a leadership role at the Charles Koch Foundation while it was financing Muller's work in 2011.⁴⁷⁰ It is unclear if Hooks understood the distinction between the BEST project and Berkeley University, which was not affiliated with Muller's work.

Hooks' mention of "support for university programs" shifts focus away from the support provided by multiple Koch foundations to numerous organizations that have engaged in activity that produced misinformation about climate change science and opposition to climate policies, as many of the examples in this report show.⁴⁷¹ At the same time, Hooks did not mention any of the other Koch-funded university operations that have participated in producing questionable material about climate change. Professors at universities like George Mason University and Florida State University promoted misinformation on climate change while their departments received funding from the Charles Koch Foundation, including by writing such misinformation into textbooks and misinforming students in the classroom.⁴⁷² In-text reference return: Page 40

June 2019: CEI Fundraiser Dinner Undisclosed Koch Sponsorship

[KOCH ACTION]

As the *New York Times* reported, the annual fundraising dinner of the Competitive Enterprise Institute on June 20, 2019 featured a variety of recognizable corporations, including tech companies like Google and Amazon.⁴⁷³ The *Times* reported on the clash between the commitments of these companies and CEI's work against U.S. participation in the Paris Climate Agreement, among other recent work:

Analysts at C.E.I. do advocate on a wide range of policies, including opposing antitrust laws, an issue dear to tech and telecom giants as well as other major corporations.

Still, the organization is arguably best known for its work disputing the science of climate change, and the corporations' support comes at a time when the think tank has played an outsized role in the Trump administration. The head of the environment program at the C.E.I., Myron Ebell, led the Trump administration's transition team at the Environmental Protection Agency, spearheaded the opposition to the Paris Agreement.

Most of the event's sponsors were disclosed in the conference's printed program, in the style of the popular TV show *Game of Thrones*.⁴⁷⁴ The Charles Koch Foundation was listed among the evening's "Silver Sponsors," which appears to correspond to a \$10,000 grant.⁴⁷⁵

One sponsor was omitted from the sponsorship list and only disclosed to the event's attendees. In her closing comments, the evening's master of ceremonies, Katherine Mangu-Ward, thanked two "sponsors tonight" including "the Koch Companies Public Sector," and prompted a "round of applause for them."⁴⁷⁶ Koch Companies Public Sector (KCPS) is the lobbying arm of Koch Industries. Mangu-Ward does not specify the level of KCPS' support, which conference materials indicated ranged from \$5,000 to \$100,000.⁴⁷⁷

January 2020: Book by Charles Koch Notes Effort to Reduce CO2 Emissions at Koch Industries

[KOCH STATEMENT]

On January 1, 2020, Koch Industries published an electronic and hardcover version of a book by Charles Koch titled *Continually Transforming Koch Industries Through Virtuous Cycles of Mutual Benefit*.⁴⁷⁸

As part of his summary of Koch's environmental commitments, Charles Koch wrote, "Our businesses have also reduced CO2 emissions by nearly 10% during the past four years."⁴⁷⁹

2021–2024: Koch Opposition to Climate Initiatives During the Biden Presidency

After celebrating unprecedented achievements against climate and environmental policies in the Trump era, Charles Koch's fleet of nonprofits resumed the oppositional stance during Joe Biden's term in office that it had taken during the eight years of Barack Obama's presidency. U.S. Senate lobbying disclosure records compiled by OpenSecrets show that Koch, Americans for Prosperity and the AFP Action super PAC increased lobbying expenses significantly during Biden's term in office.⁴⁸⁰

Top targets of Koch-controlled and Koch-funded organizations included efforts by U.S. Senators and Congressmembers to advance any perceived form of "Green New Deal" legislation, and the "Build Back Better" legislative package that was adapted into the Inflation Reduction Act, which became law. These efforts are detailed below, along with several statements related to greenhouse gas emissions published by Koch Industries (now known as Koch, Inc. as of mid-2024).

2021 Koch Environmental Stewardship Webpage

[KOCH MITIGATION]

Koch's 2021 "Environmental Stewardship" page mentioned efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions in a section titled "Smart Transport:"⁴⁸¹

We're using smart software in logistics to improve environmental performance. The smart software efficiently plans routes and minimizes the miles spent driving with an empty trailer, thereby reducing carbon dioxide emissions from daily operations. In one year, this helped cut the fuel consumption of trucks across multiple facilities by 615,000 gallons of fuel, saving nearly 6,250 metric tons of annual CO₂ emissions.

Another page on the Koch website elaborates further:⁴⁸²

Those deadhead miles are not only a drag on a trucker's time but they also are bad for the environment, a carrier's bottom line, other road users, and the trucker's family. That is because U.S. trucks burn through billions of gallons of expensive diesel per year on freightless trips, emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere unnecessarily. And when truckers have to be on the road, away from their loved ones, they would much prefer to be hauling a full trailer.

But Koch Industries is reducing the dreaded deadhead hours, which avoids the unnecessary, greenhouse-gas emitting burning of hundreds of thousands of gallons of diesel, and ultimately brings a better work-life balance to thousands of truckers. You can see this in action at Georgia-Pacific's corrugated box plant in Albany, Georgia, which has more than 170 trucks pass through its docks each week.

2021-2022: Koch Lobbying and AFP Ad "Blitz" Against Climate & Infrastructure Legislation

[KOCH ACTION]

During President Biden's first year in office, climate mitigation efforts were incorporated into the "Build Back Better" (BBB) legislative package, a multi-trillion dollar plan intended to address a wide range of issues from Biden's election platform. The proposed package eventually grew to incorporate hundreds of billions of dollars for clean energy development, along with other provisions intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (although

carbon pricing was not among them).⁴⁸³ The House of Representatives approved the bills within the BBB package, but the Democrats' thin hold on the U.S. Senate was a major obstruction to efforts to pass the legislation.⁴⁸⁴ Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) stood against many of the bill's climate and clean energy provisions specifically, and its overall spending projections.⁴⁸⁵

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) opposed the effort every step of the way. In May 2021, AFP announced it was initiating a "seven figure" advertisement campaign to pressure key politicians and their constituents to reject the Biden administration's infrastructure bill, known as the American Jobs Plan, which was part of the BBB package.⁴⁸⁶ The legislation included incentives for electric vehicles, clean energy and energy conservation.⁴⁸⁷

As the Center for Media and Democracy summarized, "The campaign targets 27 U.S. House Democrats in swing districts and will use social media advertising, phone calls to constituents, direct mail, and rallies in over 100 cities to denounce the plan."⁴⁸⁸ In a press release explaining its campaign, AFP cited limitations of the Trump-era tax cut legislation (which was estimated to benefit Koch by at least a billion dollars annually) and provisions resembling the Green New Deal as reasons for its opposition to the BBB and Infrastructure legislative package.⁴⁸⁹

Four months later, in September 2021, AFP expanded its advertising campaign against the BBB legislation. AFP announced a "new multi-million dollar ad blitz" that would target 22 members of Congress and three U.S. Senators.⁴⁹⁰ As summarized by the Hill:⁴⁹¹

The connected TV, radio, direct mail and online ad blitz argues that the bill would lead to more government control and higher inflation. It will target 25 Democrats, including moderates who have expressed reservations about the \$3.5 trillion price tag such as Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) and Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.).

The Hill also reported that smaller "six-figure" ad campaigns against the legislation were also announced by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Businesses. On paper, the U.S. Chamber's revenue and spending in 2021 exceeded the combined financials of AFP, the AFP Foundation and the AFP Action super PAC by tens of millions of dollars.⁴⁹² But AFP's affiliate organizations in Koch's "Stand Together" network—Stand Together Chamber of Commerce, Stand Together Trust, and Stand Together Fellowships—had combined revenue and spending figures that eclipsed the U.S. Chamber's by hundreds of millions of dollars that year—a sum that excludes the budgets of dozens of other Koch-controlled organizations.⁴⁹³

The next year, while BBB negotiations were stalled, the Hill reported that AFP announced an even larger "eight-figure ad campaign" that sought to hang the consequences of inflation upon the Biden administration, framing the BBB legislation as part of the problem.⁴⁹⁴ AFP's prewritten letter for citizens to send to members of Congress referenced the "trillions" of dollars in spending implied by the BBB legislation, while the campaign's videos featured interviews with people concerned about choosing to spend money on gas or groceries.⁴⁹⁵ This was virtually the same message used over two decades before by AFP's predecessor organization, Citizens for a Sound Economy, in its 1998 commercial to rally the public against U.S. participation in global climate negotiations, as detailed above.

It is unclear exactly how much these three advertising campaigns cost, but the AFP press releases imply that the total was at least \$12 million. This spending was in addition to lobbying expenses reported by AFP and Koch Industries, both of which reported lobbying activity related to the bills that were part of the the BBB package in 2021 and 2022.⁴⁹⁶

AFP was not alone. A litany of Koch-funded organization opposed the BBB package, including the Alliance Defending Freedom, American Energy Alliance, American Legislative Exchange Council, Competitive Enterprise Institute, Goldwater Institute, Heritage Action, Independent Women's Forum, and Texas Public Policy Foundation, among others.⁴⁹⁷

In July 2022, the BBB impasse ended when a surprise compromise between Senator Manchin, Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and the Biden administration was announced through a new bill titled the Inflation Reduction Act.⁴⁹⁸ Following the announcement, the new bill was quickly passed by the Senate and then the House, and signed into law a matter of weeks.⁴⁹⁹ While the Inflation Reduction Act had far fewer climate mitigation provisions than the

original BBB package, it contained large tax credit provisions to subsidize the growth of clean energy infrastructure and limitations on industrial pollution.⁵⁰⁰

As with the BBB package, AFP opposed the Inflation Reduction Act, launching ads targeting Senators Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema (at the time, a Democrat from Arizona) in a last-ditch effort that the organization said would cost six-figures.⁵⁰¹ In August 2024, during the first year anniversary of the law passing and with a national election approaching, AFP announced, “Don’t Forget the Senators Who Made Historic Inflation a Reality.”⁵⁰²

Conclusions

In March 2023, longtime Koch executive Dave Robertson became co-CEO of the company with Charles Koch, who was 87 years old at the time of the announcement.⁵⁰³ The company officially renamed itself “Koch, Inc” in 2024. At the time of publishing this report, Charles Koch is about to turn 89. In an announcement that surprised many, Charles Koch’s son, Chase Koch, announced he was stepping down as CEO Koch Disruptive Technologies and taking on a different role in the company better suited to his talents, speculating that he might not ultimately be interested in being Koch’s CEO.⁵⁰⁴

Over the last four years, Charles Koch does not appear to have made any public statements about climate change. His public interviews seem to have been carefully selective, mostly about promoting the positively-framed aspirations of his latest book, *Believe in People*.

While the authors feel that it has long been part of the conventional wisdom that Koch Industries has been a key force in manipulating public opinion against climate change science, we believe that the references assembled in this report reveal a few important patterns:

First of all, Koch Industries and its top executives were warned about climate change long before the general public. The company had information in the early 1970’s and 1980’s, as documents from the American Petroleum Institute and National Petroleum Council show.

Second, it did not take long for Koch to decide that its strategy was to finance a mishmash of efforts to oppose restrictions on carbon emissions, including public relations efforts that denied the science of global warming, as well as intellectually contradictory efforts that accepted some of the fundamentals of the science, but chose to focus on any and all policy and regulatory solutions that might help hasten climate mitigation efforts. We are far from the first researchers to conclude this, but certain documents confirm Koch’s involvement in ways that had not before, such as its support for the Competitive Enterprise Institute the year that it helped launch the Cooler Heads Coalition.

Third, when Charles Koch financed Richard Muller—a scientist he likely trusted produce studies that ran contrary to the scientific consensus on climate change—his company continued to circulate deceptive statements to its employees and the public after being briefed on the conclusions of Muller’s research. Official company publications and statements made in public and private events by top Koch executives indicate a deep-seated commitment to rejecting the basic facts of climate change.

Fourth, while the positions and statements of Koch Industries and its top executives have slowly shifted toward reason, the company’s lobbying and political priorities have not. Koch-controlled organizations and many more Koch-funded organizations have not ever appeared to support any viable climate mitigation policy effort.

Finally, even though Charles Koch’s company and nonprofits have fought climate mitigation policies and regulations tooth and nail, with complete consistency, the company has no problem engaging in its own greenhouse gas reduction efforts when it seems to believe there is a profit opportunity, whether material or in the form of goodwill.

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\$6.5 million from the Charles Koch Charitable Fund in 2022. See [PDF p. 25 of the Charles Koch Charitable Fund 2022 IRS Form 990](#)

\$12.5 million from CCKC4 in 2020. See [PDF p. 24 of the CCKC4 2020 IRS Form 990](#).

\$20 million from Zero Zero One in 2020. See [PDF p. 22 of the Zero Zero One 2020 IRS Form 990](#).

\$35 million from Zero Zero One in 2019. See [PDF p. 17 of the Zero Zero One 2019 IRS Form 990](#).

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