

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an effort to deceive the public about the reality of global warming, ExxonMobil has underwritten the most sophisticated and most successful disinformation campaign since the tobacco industry misled the public about the scientific evidence linking smoking to lung cancer and heart disease. As this report documents, the two disinformation campaigns are strikingly similar. ExxonMobil has drawn upon the tactics and even some of the organizations and actors involved in the callous disinformation campaign the tobacco industry waged for 40 years. Like the tobacco industry, ExxonMobil has:

- ***Manufactured uncertainty*** by raising doubts about even the most indisputable scientific evidence.
- Adopted a strategy of ***information laundering*** by using seemingly independent front organizations to publicly further its desired message and thereby confuse the public.
- ***Promoted scientific spokespeople*** who misrepresent peer-reviewed scientific findings or cherry-pick facts in their attempts to persuade the media and the public that there is still serious debate among scientists that burning fossil fuels has contributed to global warming and that human-caused warming will have serious consequences.
- ***Attempted to shift the focus*** away from meaningful action on global warming with misleading charges about the need for “sound science.”
- ***Used its extraordinary access to the Bush administration*** to block federal policies and shape government communications on global warming.

The report documents that, despite the scientific consensus about the fundamental understanding that global warming is caused by carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping emissions, ExxonMobil has funneled about \$16 million between 1998 and 2005 to a network of ideological and advocacy organizations that manufacture uncertainty on the issue. Many of these organizations have an overlapping—sometimes identical—collection of spokespeople serving as staff, board members, and scientific advisors. By publishing and republishing the non-peer-reviewed works of a small group of scientific spokespeople, ExxonMobil-funded organizations have propped up and amplified work that has been discredited by reputable climate scientists.

ExxonMobil’s funding of established research institutions that seek to better understand science, policies, and technologies to address global warming has given the corporation “cover,” while its funding of ideological and advocacy organizations to conduct a disinformation campaign works to confuse that understanding. This seemingly inconsistent activity makes sense when looked at through a broader lens. Like the tobacco companies in previous decades, this strategy provides a positive “pro-science” public stance for ExxonMobil that masks their activity to delay meaningful action on global warming and helps keep the public debate

stalled on the science rather than focused on policy options to address the problem.

In addition, like Big Tobacco before it, ExxonMobil has been enormously successful at influencing the current administration and key members of Congress. Documents highlighted in this report, coupled with subsequent events, provide evidence of ExxonMobil's cozy relationship with government officials, which enables

the corporation to work behind the scenes to gain access to key decision makers. In some cases, the company's proxies have directly shaped the global warming message put forth by federal agencies. Finally, this report provides a set of steps elected officials, investors, and citizens can take to neutralize ExxonMobil's disinformation campaign and remove this roadblock to sensible action for reducing global warming emissions.