

## Witch-Hunt 2015

*Leftist politicians and the media try to blacklist scientists who are skeptical about Global Warming*

**By Jim Lakely and James M. Taylor**

**Summary:** If you thought science involves scientists challenging each other's ideas and struggling to see who can best explain the facts, you were wrong—according to a cabal of left-wing activists, politicians, and their media friends. They have launched a crusade to intimidate scientists who dissent from conventional alarmism over Global Warming. Apparently, science should now focus on maintaining an orthodox set of beliefs dictated by the political class, and troubling facts like the failure of global temperatures to rise as predicted must be ignored.

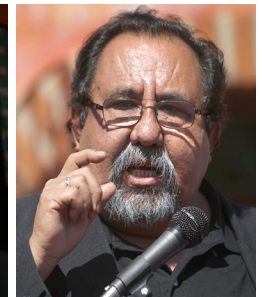
Harvard-Smithsonian scientist Dr. Wei-Hock “Willie” Soon is a dangerous man—so dangerous that he is the target of a blacklisting campaign by some of the country’s most powerful politicians and media outlets.

He is dangerous because he takes a scientific, rather than a political and ideological, approach to the issue of catastrophic, man-made Global Warming. He is dangerous because his qualifications, experience, and knowledge in his field give him credibility and make him worthy of respect.

Dr. Soon has long been a thorn in the side of the anti-science “greens,” but the attacks on him intensified after he published a peer-reviewed paper challenging the views of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). His research showed that the earth is less susceptible to man-made Global Warming than is claimed by the U.N. panel, and he noted the effect on the world’s climate of natural factors, particularly varying levels of radiation from the sun.

How dare he!

Radical environmentalists such as those in Greenpeace and MoveOn.org, and politicians like U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and



During the Little Ice Age, experts blamed witches for climate change. (At upper left, witches are seen conjuring up bad weather.) Today, scientists like Dr. Willie Soon are targeted by witch-hunters like Rep. Grijalva (upper right) and Sens. Boxer, Whitehouse, and Markey.

Sens. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) are among those pursuing Dr. Soon. It’s an assault on academic freedom so broad that even a prominent *proponent* of Global Warming theory has been slammed for refusing to follow the party line on each and every aspect of Global Warming beliefs.

### A McCarthyite assault on science

The politicians’ unprecedented assault on scientists threatens to launch a new Dark Age of government persecuting scientists over the results of their research.

Dr. Soon and three scientific colleagues generated tremendous attention in January 2015, when the *Science Bulletin* of China published their paper, “Why models run hot.” That study showed that the earth’s climate is less sensitive to atmospheric

concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) than the IPCC asserts. In other words, the U.N. panel exaggerates the extent to which a given amount of carbon dioxide raises the earth’s temperature.

The paper or its abstract were downloaded from the *Science Bulletin*’s website some 22,000 times, more than any other paper ever published by the peer-reviewed journal.

**April 2015**

Witch-Hunt 2015

Page 1

Science stands and falls  
on its own merit

Page 4

Green Notes

Page 8

Embarrassed by the paper's finding that the IPCC has greatly overstated the earth's climate sensitivity to carbon dioxide, advocacy groups that actively evangelize for Global Warming—Greenpeace, MoveOn.org, and others—coordinated an attack on Dr. Soon. At the heart of their smear, the activists claimed Dr. Soon violated academic ethics by failing to list some prior grants he had received from energy companies for unrelated papers. The activists claimed the earlier grants created “conflicts of interest” for his more recent *Science Bulletin* paper—a paper for which none of the authors were paid a dime.

To repeat: None of the authors of that paper received any funding to produce it; they did their work voluntarily and on their own time.

The Left's insulting implication, for which there is not a shred of evidence, is that Dr. Soon and the others, rather than following science, concocted their results to do the bidding of their corporate masters. Left-leaning newspapers like the *New York Times* published the activist groups' claims, seldom providing any meaningful counterpoint to the accusations. On the heels of the critical news coverage, leftist politicians jumped into the fray and began using the power of their office to persecute Dr. Soon.

The latest round of attacks started on February 21, when the *Times* ran an article citing a study by Greenpeace and suggesting darkly:

For years, politicians wanting to block legislation on climate change have bolstered their arguments by pointing to the work of a handful of scientists

---

**Editor:** Steven J. Allen  
**Publisher:** Terrence Scanlon  
**Address:** 1513 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036-1480  
**Phone:** (202) 483-6900  
**E-mail:** [sallen@CapitalResearch.org](mailto:sallen@CapitalResearch.org)  
**Website:** [CapitalResearch.org](http://CapitalResearch.org)

**Green Watch** is published by Capital Research Center, a non-partisan education and research organization classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity. Reprints are available for \$2.50 prepaid to Capital Research Center.

---

who claim that greenhouse gases pose little risk to humanity.

One of the names they invoke most often is Wei-Hock Soon, known as Willie, a scientist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics who claims that variations in the sun's energy can largely explain recent global warming. He has often appeared on conservative news programs, testified before Congress and in state capitals, and starred at conferences of people who deny the risks of global warming. . . .

Historians and sociologists of science say that since the tobacco wars of the 1960s, corporations trying to block legislation that hurts their interests have employed a strategy of creating the appearance of scientific doubt, usually with the help of ostensibly independent researchers who accept industry funding.

That's a view of science history that's downright comical. The idea of scientists as “good guys,” except for those bought off by evil corporations, is a myth. The mention of tobacco is a twisted attempt to link skeptical climate scientists to an industry that's almost universally reviled.

Actually, the history of tobacco sheds light on the reliability of scientists. John Quincy Adams, who died in 1848, wrote of his “addiction” to tobacco and, by the beginning of the 20th Century, regular Americans were calling cigarettes “coffin nails.” By contrast, doctors as late as the 1950s prescribed smoking as a way for pregnant women to control their weight.

The idea of “good,” science-based government opposing “evil” corporations is likewise bogus. For example, a top promoter of tobacco in the 20th Century was the U.S. government itself, which subsidized the tobacco industry and helpfully provided cigarettes to its own soldiers. As *Green Watch* editor Dr. Steven J. Allen noted in the April 2013 issue:

Throughout the past century, scientists fell for one con after another, from white supremacy to eugenics, from “scientific socialism” to the “population bomb,” from phrenology (judging personality, including intelligence and criminal proclivities, based on the shape of a person's head) to cata-

strophic man-made global warming. Proponents of Nazism and Communism, which killed hundreds of millions of people, claimed that their beliefs were rooted in science.\*

The *New York Times* article quoted science historian Naomi Oreskes of Harvard: “The whole doubt-mongering strategy relies on creating the impression of scientific debate.” Oreskes opposes the idea that there should be debate on such matters; she is the most prominent proponent of the myth that 97 percent of scientists believe in catastrophic, man-made Global Warming.

In response to the *Times* piece, Terrence Corcoran, editor of the *Financial Post*, wrote:

It must be getting cold in the climate science greenhouse, so cold the denizens have taken to hunting witches and burning them to keep their theories of climate change alive. . . .

In what is clearly a coordinated effort, the hunt for the hides of a few climate skeptics began last weekend when The *New York Times* climate beat reporter, Justin Gillis, co-wrote an attack on Wei-Hock (Willie) Soon, a sceptical scientist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. The *Times* charged Mr. Soon with having “accepted more than \$1.2 million in money from the fossil-fuel industry.”

---

\* **Editor's note:** Scientist-activists have a nearly unbroken record of being wrong about controversial issues. See, as examples, nuclear winter, action-reaction arms control theory, the existence of discrete “races” of humans, the desirability of a ban on DDT, second-hand smoke as a major health threat, the low-fat diet craze, SETI, the effectiveness of early-childhood education and of the look-say method of teaching reading, embryonic stem-cell research, Prohibition, biofuels, various elements of evolutionary theory (including gradualism, ever-increasing complexity, DNA-as-a-blueprint, and intelligent design as nonscientific), Yellow Rain and Agent Orange, the linear no-threshold dose hypothesis, whether atomic testing caused “feble-mindedness,” the dangers of sodium cyclamate sweetener, the impossibility of missile defense, the “Dugway sheep incident” of 1968, and the impossibility of biological weapons and the question of whether the Soviets had a bio-weapons program. —*SJA*

There was nothing new in the charge. Greenpeace has been leaking the story to various media since at least 2011 . . . The Times revival of a dead story seemed odd, but within days the larger purpose became clear.

The larger purpose was to enable a political attack on skeptics.

### Washington's Witchfinders General

In February 2015, the coordination between the eco-Left and their allies in Congress came to fruition. Prompted by the Greenpeace and media "exposé" on Soon, Democrats in Congress saw an opening to intimidate and silence more than just one "skeptic." They wanted to bring the full force of the federal government against all dissent from climate orthodoxy.

This was not an attempt to learn more about the science of the climate, but to publicly bully any who dare to dissent from the government-approved alarmist orthodoxy. The attempt is un-American; it apes the tactics of Sen. Joseph McCarthy—who at least identified actual communists undermining the United States government. Climate-alarmist "skeptics" have the truth of data on their side.

Rep. Raul Grijalva, ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources, wrote a public letter to MIT concerning prominent scientist Dr. Richard Lindzen, who is retired from MIT. The Congressman said he sent the letter after reading the *New York Times* and "documents he received," obviously from eco-activists who planned this whole "controversy."

Grijalva's letter stated:

As you may have heard, the Koch Foundation appears to have funded climate research by Dr. Soon of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, some of which formed the basis of testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space and Technology and the Kansas State Legislature's House Energy and Environment Committee—funding that was not disclosed at the time. Exxon Mobil, in response to an inquiry from the House Science Committee, may have provided false or misleading information on its funding for Dr. Soon's work. Southern Services Company funded

Dr. Soon's authorship of several published climate studies; Dr. Soon did not disclose this funding to many of those journals' publishers or editors.

If true, these may not be isolated incidents. Professor Richard Lindzen at your Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences has testified to the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space and Technology on climate change. He has described the scientific community's concerns as "mainly just like little kids locking themselves in dark closets to see how much they can scare each other and themselves." In 2009 he spoke at a conference held by the Heartland Institute, a group funded in part by Altria and by the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation that proposed to teach children that climate change is a hoax."

Claiming he and his colleagues in Congress "cannot perform our duties if research or testimony provided to us is influenced by undisclosed financial relationships," Grijalva insisted that MIT provide—

A full report of all financial disclosure forms for Lindzen that covers the previous eight years, which was to include all reasons why funding was provided and all "communications regarding the funding"

All "drafts of Prof. Lindzen's testimony before any government body or agency or that which, to your knowledge, he helped prepare for others"

All "communications regarding testimony preparation"

Lindzen, it should be noted, has been retired for several years and has been honored by MIT with the title of "emeritus" professor. No matter: Grijalva wanted "all financial disclosure forms filed by Prof. Lindzen in which MIT is listed as his professional affiliation, even if it is only stated for purposes of identification."

It is not known at this writing whether MIT is complying with Grijalva's order. They would appear to have no reason to comply, and there is certainly nothing to hide in Lindzen's distinguished past. But one gets the feeling that the process is the punishment.

Versions of the Lindzen letter were sent to six other institutions, targeting John Christy

of the University of Alabama, David Legates of the University of Delaware, Judith Curry of Georgia Tech, Robert Bolling of Arizona State, Steven Hayward of Pepperdine, and Roger Pielke Jr. of the University of Colorado, as well as Dr. Soon at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center. Among the peculiarities of that list: Steven Hayward is a public policy professor, not a physical scientist of any sort, and Roger Pielke Jr. is a supporter of some aspects of Global Warming theory (although he dissents on other aspects, such as whether Warming is causing an increase in hurricanes).

Pielke, unfortunately, is living proof that intimidation tactics work. He wrote on his blog:

I have no funding, declared or undeclared, with any fossil fuel company or interest. I never have. Representative Grijalva knows this too, because when I have testified before the US Congress, I have disclosed my funding and possible conflicts of interest. So I know with complete certainty that this investigation is a politically-motivated "witch hunt" designed to intimidate me (and others) and to smear my name.

For instance, the Congressman and his staff, along with compliant journalists, are busy characterizing me in public as a "climate skeptic" opposed to action on climate change. This of course is a lie. I have written a book calling for a carbon tax, I have publicly supported President Obama's proposed EPA carbon regulations, and I have just published another book strongly defending the scientific assessment of the IPCC with respect to disasters and climate change. All of this is public record, so the smears against me must be an intentional effort to delegitimize my academic research.

What am I accused of that prompts being investigated? Here is my crime: [Quoting from the Grijalva letter:] "Prof. Roger Pielke, Jr., at CU's Center for Science and Technology Policy Research has testified numerous times before the U.S. Congress on climate change and its economic impacts. His 2013 Senate testimony featured the claim, often repeated, that it is 'incorrect to associate the increasing costs of disasters with the emission of

greenhouse gases.”

The letter goes on to note that John Holdren, President Obama’s science advisor, “has highlighted what he believes were serious misstatements by Prof. Pielke.” . . .

Congressman Grijalva doesn’t have any evidence of any wrongdoing on my part, either ethical or legal, because there is none. He simply disagrees with the substance of my testimony—which is based on peer-reviewed research funded by the US taxpayer, and which also happens to be the consensus of

the IPCC (despite Holdren’s incorrect views).

Adam Sarvana, communications director for Natural Resources Committee’s Democratic delegation, reinforced the politically-motivated nature of the investigation in an interview: “The way we chose the list of recipients is who has published widely, who has testified in Congress before, who seems to have the most impact on policy in the scientific community.” . . .

So far, I have been contacted by only 2 reporters at relatively small media

outlets. I’d say that the lack of interest in a politician coming after academics is surprising, but to be honest, pretty much nothing surprises me in the climate debate anymore. . . .

The incessant attacks and smears are effective, no doubt, I have already shifted all of my academic work away from climate issues. I am simply not initiating any new research or papers on the topic and I have ring-fenced my slowly diminishing blogging on the subject. I am a full professor with tenure, so no one need worry about me—I’ll be just

## Science stands and falls on its own merit

Theoretical physicist Richard Feynman, a Nobel Laureate and participant in the Manhattan Project, possessed one of the greatest minds of the 20th Century. The British journal *Physics World* in 1999 polled 130 of the world’s leading physicists, and they put Feynman among the ten greatest physicists of all time. His peers on that list were geniuses whose pursuit of science changed the world: Einstein, Newton, Bohr, Heisenberg, Galileo, and Schrödinger.

But only Feynman has become a bit of a YouTube star. Although he died before the modern digital age, some film footage shows his genius. One of the most popular YouTube clips of Feynman comes from a lecture he gave while a professor at Cornell in 1964, just a year before he received his Nobel Prize. Feynman thought it essential to start his lecture with an outline of the scientific fundamentals that informed his career. He told the class how he and his peers look for a new law of science:

In general, we look for a new law by the following process. First we guess it. Don’t laugh, that’s the real truth. Then we compute the consequences of the guess. If this law that we guessed is right, we see what it would imply, and then we compare the computation results to nature. Or we say compared to experiment or experience—compare it directly with observation to see if it works.

If it disagrees with experiment, it’s wrong. In that simple statement is the key to science. It doesn’t make any difference how beautiful your guess is, it doesn’t make any difference how smart you are, who made the guess, or what his name is. If it disagrees with experiment, it’s wrong. That’s all there is to it.

That one-minute statement was so reasonable—so much a part of even a freshman college student’s common sense—that the audience of college kids laughed. That simple statement is no longer a laugh line.

Today, researchers of a certain field who follow the great Richard Feynman’s “Key to Science” are put on a blacklist, and their decades-long careers as academics are in peril. Many peers in the field work behind the scenes to undermine their research and blackball their work from the scientific literature. Well-funded activists hound them constantly by ginning up public relations campaigns to have them fired, and pressure the media to denounce them in the strongest terms—or simply write them out of the public debate altogether. Most egregiously, members of Congress pile on by demanding they surrender every bit of correspondence with colleagues and supporters about their scientific work—a ham-handed but frighteningly effective tactic of intimidation.

Who are these scientists under constant pressure for simply following the scientific method? The brave few who will publicly say that the actual data collected about the climate over the last three decades are troublesome for the hypothesis of catastrophic, man-caused Global Warming.

Consider three simple data points: Atmospheric temperatures have been flat for almost 20 years. While Arctic ice is modestly below the average levels measured since satellites began measuring polar ice in the 1970s, Antarctic ice set a record last year. And while sea level has been rising since the end of the last Ice Age, it is rising no faster now than it did—without major consequence—during the previous century. These are only three data points that defy the alarmist predictions of the United Nations’ IPCC, which in its latest report quietly lowered its estimate of near-term warming.

Climate science is now political science—and it has replaced the scientific method with the bare-knuckle tactics of Saul Alinsky’s *Rules for Radicals*. Richard Feynman would be appalled, because the law of politics—destroy all in your way by any means necessary—is the opposite of the law of science. As Feynman said in his most popular lecture: It’s wrong.

—*JL & JMT*

fine as there are plenty of interesting, research-able policy issues to occupy my time. But I can't imagine the message being sent to younger scientists. Actually, I can: "when people are producing work in line with the scientific consensus there's no reason to go on a witch hunt."

When "witch hunts" are deemed legitimate in the context of popular causes, we will have fully turned science into just another arena for the exercise of power politics. The result is a big loss for both science and politics.

Thus, Pielke threw in the towel.

Congressional bullying has the purpose of making it too annoying for any institution to bother hiring and supporting any scientists who stray from the herd that brays about a global climate crisis caused by man.

Keith L. Seitter, executive director of the American Meteorological Society, wrote in response to the Grijalva letter:

Publicly singling out specific researchers based on perspectives they have expressed and implying a failure to appropriately disclose funding sources—and thereby questioning their scientific integrity—sends a chilling message to all academic researchers. Further, requesting copies of the researcher's communications related to external funding opportunities or the preparation of testimony impinges on the free pursuit of ideas that is central to the concept of academic freedom.

Seitter added that peer review, not political inquiries into funding sources, "is the appropriate mechanism to assess the validity and quality of scientific research, regardless of the funding sources supporting that research as long as those funding sources and any potential conflicts of interest are fully disclosed. The scientific process that includes testing and validation of concepts and ideas—discarding those that cannot successfully withstand such testing—is chronicled in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. We encourage the Committee to rely on the full corpus of peer-reviewed literature on climate science as the most reliable source for knowledge and understanding that can be applied to the policy options before you."

### The Three Senators

On February 25, the very next day after the Grijalva letter was sent, three Democratic senators—Edward Markey of Massachusetts, Barbara Boxer of California, and Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island—sent a letter to 100 companies and nonprofit organizations making similar demands. The Heartland Institute, which has hosted Dr. Soon at several climate conferences, was a recipient of this letter. (Disclosure: The authors of this article work for The Heartland Institute.)

The senators appeared to want to trump Grijalva by asking for documents stretching back a full decade, rather than just eight years. The letter demanded the following information by April 3, 2015:

\* List of funded research efforts (including but not limited to grants, fellowships, scholarships, consulting contracts, contracts, honoraria, and speaking events) on or related to climate, climate change, global warming, environmental issues, air quality, atmospheric or oceanic topics, greenhouse gas emissions, associated impacts of greenhouse gas emissions, carbon dioxide, methane, aerosols, solar radiation, vulnerable animal species or ecosystems, geology, paleoclimatology, meteorology, astrophysics, or heliophysics.

\* For each payment made to individuals and/or organizations associated with the funded research efforts listed above, please provide the following information:

1. Name of recipient;
2. Institutional affiliation;
3. Payment amount and duration of the term of the funded research effort;
4. Reason for payment;
5. Copy of the grant and/or contract, including any terms containing restrictions related to the disclosure of the source of the payments; and
6. Deliverables submitted as part of the funded research effort, including any publications, or written materials.

These senators, of course, have no legal or moral right to this information, and Heartland Institute president Joseph Bast responded sharply to their letter:

First, shame on you for abusing your public office in an attempt to silence public debate on such an important public policy topic. I am grateful that a majority of members on the Committee on Environment and Public Works has strongly condemned your views and tactics.

Second, you repeat the vicious libel that Dr. Wei-Hock 'Willie' Soon failed to disclose funding for his work. Are you not aware that neither his employer, the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, nor the journal that published the scholarly article in question, *Science Bulletin*, has found Dr. Soon violated any of their rules or disclosure policies? Who asked you to repeat that lie?

### The truth about Dr. Soon

When Greenpeace and allied environmentalist groups needed someone to take their smear to the next level, members of Congress were only too happy to oblige. The facts and evidence, however, powerfully refute the claims that Dr. Soon was unduly influenced by prior, unrelated funding or that he violated a duty to declare such funding as a "conflict of interest" regarding any future, unrelated papers.

The majority of grants from energy companies used to support Dr. Soon's research were solicited and received by the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, not by Dr. Soon himself. The Smithsonian staff vetted and approved every grant and then kept about 40 percent of the total as a fee for acting as a firewall between a donor and the researcher.

Prior to conducting research on behalf of the Smithsonian, Dr. Soon would draw up a grant proposal that summarized the scientific questions he planned to research. Third-party entities interested in funding the research made their interest known to the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian then vetted the research proposal and grant offers to ensure the research was scientifically proper and would not present any conflicts of interest. Only after conducting the vetting process did the Smithsonian authorize the research and the funding. The third-party funders wrote their checks directly to the Smithsonian, which was the grant recipient. The Smithsonian then distributed a portion

of the grant money (usually a little more than half) to Dr. Soon as payment for his services

This process, which is not uncommon for universities and other research organizations, means the Smithsonian investigated and certified that none of the grant money it distributed to Dr. Soon posed a conflict of interest. Anyone alleging that Dr. Soon behaved unethically by not reporting Smithsonian grant money as “conflicts of interest” faces an uphill battle to prove that the federally administered Smithsonian ruled incorrectly and also that Dr. Soon knew the Smithsonian had ruled incorrectly. In addition, Soon’s critics normally presume that anyone funded by government agencies has no potential conflict of interest, yet they don’t extend that presumption to Soon’s support from the Smithsonian, which from its origin has been under federal control.

Dr. Soon’s critics presented no facts or evidence to show the Smithsonian was acting dishonestly in approving Dr. Soon’s grants or that the process used to approve those grants deviated from the policies it used to approve grants supporting the work of other scientists at the Center for Astrophysics.

### **Energy companies funding all points of view**

The evidence shows that energy companies, and even those decried as “fossil fuel interests,” fund many different research programs and institutions that have weighed in on all sides of the Global Warming debate. The grants made to the Smithsonian to support Dr. Soon’s work are very small in comparison to grants made to other research organizations.

ExxonMobil donated \$100 million to support Stanford University climate research. General Electric also funds Stanford University climate research. Prominent Stanford University climate researchers include Sally Benson, Noah Diffenbaugh, Chris Field, and Stephen Schneider (now deceased). Each of these scientists has advocated restrictions on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Three of the four have held prominent positions with government research institutions such as the U.N. IPCC and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Similarly, the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation donated \$150,000 to Berkeley Earth, a project run by Richard Mueller, a

climate scientist who argues that humans are causing substantial global warming.

Large “fossil fuel” companies also give sizeable donations to activist groups who adamantly support carbon dioxide restrictions. Chesapeake Energy gave \$26 million to the Sierra Club. BP is a founding member of the Climate Action Partnership. Shell Oil funds the Nature Conservancy. The list of “fossil fuel” companies and industry groups funding organizations that support CO<sub>2</sub> restrictions is nearly endless.

Myron Ebell of the Competitive Enterprise Institute observed that the anti-Soon *New York Times* article seems like a rehash of a press release put out by the radical environmentalists at Greenpeace. He pointed out:

The Greenpeace press release as republished in the *Times* notes that “Mr. [Charles] Koch’s fortune derives partly from oil refining.” Yes, and the biggest charitable foundation donor to environmental pressure groups is the Pew Charitable Trusts, which was founded on the Pew family’s Sun Oil Company earnings. Other major givers to green groups are the various Rockefeller foundations, which are based on earnings from Standard Oil (of which ExxonMobil and Chevron are among the many successor companies).

Ebell might have added that environmentalist billionaire Tom Steyer made his fortune in coal; Al Gore’s family wealth came from Occidental Petroleum, and his recent megawealth came from the sale of his TV channel to oil-backed Al Jazeera; and recently retired Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.V.) is, of course, an heir to a fortune based on oil.

Given the context of energy-company funding for all sides, the Smithsonian’s approval of such funding for some of Dr. Soon’s research is consistent with the experience of scientists at Stanford, Berkeley Earth, and various activist groups who have similarly accepted “fossil fuel” money. The decisions by editors of peer-reviewed journals to publish the work of scholars associated with these institutions—and not to list those grants as “conflicts of interest” regarding subsequent, unrelated work—is also consistent with the decision of those and other journals to publish the work of Dr. Soon and his coauthors.

No other grant recipients claim conflicts from prior funding

Few if any scientists working for universities and other research organizations that receive funding from “fossil fuel interests” report the grants to the editors of scholarly journals when they submit subsequent and unrelated articles for publication. Such prior grants almost never appear in “acknowledgements” of subsequent and unrelated published articles, even when the authors are widely known to have received funding directly from companies and advocacy groups with commercial interests in the debate.

Accordingly, the standard for disclosure proposed by Greenpeace, and which the media has widely condemned Dr. Soon for supposedly violating, is a new and unprecedented standard that few if any scientists, journal editors, or university administrators have ever applied. Worse, Greenpeace is calling for it to be applied retroactively and selectively, against a single scholar whose views happen to be at odds with Greenpeace’s declared views on a controversial topic.

Dr. Soon could not have been aware that such a new standard would be invented and applied to him alone. Without such awareness, Dr. Soon could not have violated ethical guidelines.

Similar funding relationships exist with many prominent scientists on the alarmist side of the Global Warming debate, yet leftist activist groups, the media, and leftist politicians remain curiously silent on their systematic failure to report prior funding grants as “conflicts of interest” for later unrelated research. For example, Dr. Joseph Romm is a paid staffer for the Center for American Progress, an organization funded by renewable power companies and renewable power lobbying groups that has been outspoken in its advocacy for emissions reductions and public investment in renewable energy.

Even though Dr. Romm recently coauthored a paper published in the peer-reviewed journal *Nature* that expresses concern about Global Warming (and, therefore, benefits the low-carbon energy companies that fund his employer and his work), Dr. Romm and his coauthors made no disclosure of this funding. Meteorologist Anthony Watts wrote of the case:

There was no COI [conflict of interest] disclosure whatsoever associated with this paper. The 53 authors include (for example) Joe Romm, Hal Harvey and Amory Lovins each of whom had massive undisclosed financial COI (obviously and easily documented) associated with renewable energy and political advocacy. No doubt other co-authors do as well. Further, several of these co-authors have also testified before Congress without COI disclosure.

Watts went on to make two points:

1. The lack of COI disclosure in this case does not mean that the paper is in any way in error.
2. The lack of COI disclosure in this case does not in any way justify or excuse similar lack of COI disclosure by Willie Soon. But it does point to the incredible selectivity of outrage in standards of COI disclosure, e.g., as applied by the NYT and US Congress. The Soon case and the example here are exactly parallel.

Similarly, Dr. Michael Oppenheimer has longtime ties with the Environmental Defense Fund, an environmentalist advocacy group that receives generous grants from foundations urging CO<sub>2</sub> restrictions. Much of the foundation grant money, moreover, originates from corporations who similarly argue for carbon dioxide restrictions. In the dozens of papers Dr. Oppenheimer has published in the peer-reviewed literature, there do not appear to be any declarations of potential conflicts of interest.

Ironically, Greenpeace itself violates the novel ethical standard it seeks to impose on Dr. Soon. Greenpeace receives funding from foundations (and their funding corporations) that support CO<sub>2</sub> restrictions. Greenpeace's in-house scientists have written or coauthored dozens of articles for peer-reviewed journals raising concern about Global Warming. There is no record of Greenpeace's in-house scientists ever declaring in their papers that Greenpeace's agenda-driven funding represents a conflict of interest.

No campaign of persecution against Dr. Soon can withstand critical examination until and unless those who conduct the campaign similarly hold Dr. Romm, Dr. Oppenheimer, Greenpeace itself, and others accountable for their acceptance of "tainted"

funds and their failure to report such funding as conflicts of interest in all of their subsequent papers.

### Climate "skeptics" are not getting rich

Soon is "accused" of accepting \$1.2 million dollars over about a decade from private companies and foundations for his work. This fact has been morphed in the idea that Soon is swimming in money from Big Oil. Soon would surely like that to be true, but it is not.

No, the big money spigot connects to government funding, which flows easily to those who adhere to the bureaucrat-approved Global Warming hypothesis—and the money stream is literally endless. We have spoken to many scientists at Heartland's nine international conferences on climate change. Few if any of the "skeptics" who attend have reported receiving government grants for proposals to challenge the warming orthodoxy. They have to find their own funding from private sources and then funnel it through their institution, as Soon has done for most of his nearly 25 years at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

Do the math. If Soon has, indeed, attracted \$1.2 million in research grants from private sources over 10 years—and the Smithsonian always first takes its 40 percent cut off the top—that leaves Soon with an income of about \$55,000 a year from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics for his work in the last decade. Remember, too, that figure is "gross income," meaning Soon gave much of that back to the government in taxes. That's hardly the fortune his critics think he makes.

Bottom line: Soon was not paid \$1.2 million (over 10 years) to do climate science on behalf of his funders. The Harvard-Smithsonian took the money from the funders Soon solicited, and then kept a hefty portion. Environmentalist icon Dr. Michael Mann [see *Green Watch* January 2014] is safely ensconced in an untouchable tenure position at Penn State. He surely enjoys an annual salary and professional comfort that exceeds anything Soon has ever experienced. Such are the spoils of toeing the climate-alarmist line.

The question the public and a genuinely honest, skeptical, and curious media need

to ask is: Why is a phony discussion about funding of "skeptical" scientists trumping a rigorous examination of the science of climate?

### Obscuring the issues

The Left's campaign against Dr. Soon and other scientists who question alarmist global warming claims is designed to exploit the public's lack of awareness of the role organizations like the Smithsonian Institution and the editors of peer-reviewed journals play in protecting researchers and readers from undisclosed conflicts of interest. Dr. Soon's affiliation with the Smithsonian is seen by journal editors, his peers, and the general public as a clear indicator that his research is honest and reliable.

Hundreds of scientists who support reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions work for organizations that receive funding from corporations, foundations, or government agencies that have publicly stated financial or ideological interests in the climate change debate, yet few if any of these scientists report any conflicts of interest in subsequent publications. If Dr. Soon is guilty of failing to report potential conflicts of interest from prior funding grants, then all these scientists are also guilty.

Greenpeace simply invented the guilt-by-association theory in an attempt to demonize Dr. Soon and other scientists like him. It's disappointing such a cheap trick fooled so many journalists, but perhaps some of them wanted to be fooled.

*Jim Lakely (jlakely@heartland.org) is director of communications and James M. Taylor (jtaylor@heartland.org) is a senior fellow for environment and energy policy at The Heartland Institute, a 31-year-old free-market think tank based in Chicago.*

**GW**

**The Capital Research Center is a watchdog over politicians, bureaucrats, and special interests in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 states. Please remember CRC in your will and estate planning.**

**Many thanks,  
Terrence Scanlon  
President**

# GreenNotes

“Green” scams such as (almost all) wind power, solar power, and biofuels could not survive in a free-market economy. Those industries are kept afloat by government grants, special-interest tax breaks, and mandates such as requiring that renewable [sic] fuels be used in gasoline and electricity generation. A few people get rich off these schemes and, for the rest of us, the cost is hidden when we pay our taxes, fill our gas tanks, pay our electric bills, or buy food (which is more expensive because farmland is used for biofuels; the industry uses 40 percent of American corn). One factor that makes reform difficult is that **Iowa**—where lots of money rides on wind and biofuels—is the site of the first caucus of the presidential campaign. That leads to pandering by candidates.

For example, **Gov. Scott Walker** (R-Wisc.), who had taken a principled stand against forcing taxpayers and consumers to subsidize biofuels—politically courageous, given that **Wisconsin** is a top ethanol exporter (the #2 state in 2012). Yet Walker, a presumptive presidential candidate, campaigning at the **Iowa Agriculture Summit**, came out for renewing the “Renewable Fuels Standard” that mandates 10 percent biofuel in gasoline. (He said he would phase it out at some unspecified point in the future.) Former **Gov. Jeb Bush** (R-Fla.) said he supports subsidies and mandates for wind and ethanol, phasing them out at some point when there is “a reduction of the need” for them. **Sen. Ted Cruz** (R-Texas) took a different course, saying he flatly opposes the mandates: “I don’t think Washington should be picking winners and losers.” Ironically, even environmentalists have turned against ethanol; the left-wing magazine **Mother Jones** reported, “studies have shown that ethanol is worse for the climate than fossil fuel.”

In fact, more and more criticism of “green” corruption comes from the Left. In a recent report, **Michael Bastasch** of the **Daily Caller News Foundation** cited a study by a left-wing group called **Good Jobs First**: “Which company has gotten the most subsidies from the U.S. government? Would you believe it’s a **Spain-based** green energy company? **Iberdola** has gotten \$2.2 billion in subsidies to operate wind turbines across the U.S.—making it the largest recipient of federal corporate welfare.” The **Obama administration’s** so-called Stimulus allowed companies to receive cash payments in lieu of tax credits for the installation of so-called renewable energy properties. “**EDP-Energias de Portugal**, which [purchased] **Horizon Wind Energy**, has received more than \$722 million . . . **Abengoa**, a [Spanish] solar company with U.S. holdings, got \$605 million in [**U.S. Department of Energy**] grants . . . and allocated tax credits. . . . In total the federal government has handed out more than \$23 billion to U.S. and foreign green energy companies.”

**Lawrence Tribe** was Barack Obama’s professor in law school and, for years, was often mentioned as a possible Democratic nominee for the **Supreme Court**, but now Tribe has angered environmentalists by coming out against the **Environmental Protection Agency’s** “Clean Power Plan” (the main component of the War on Coal). The EPA plan effectively threatens states with draconian, job-killing regulations unless those states adopt ultra-strict plans of their own. Said Tribe: “EPA possesses only the authority granted it by Congress. Its gambit here raises questions under the separation of powers,” because “EPA is attempting an unconstitutional trifecta, usurping the prerogatives of the states, Congress, and the federal courts all at once.”

Coal-fired power plants aren’t the only concern of the EPA, of course. The agency is funding a study by the **University of California-Riverside** to study “particulate emissions” from propane grills. Possible solutions for this problem include requiring that grills have exhaust fans along with drip trays that would be inserted each time people flip meat. In **St. Louis**, protesters launched an effort called **#porksteakrebellion**, while a local state senator introduced a resolution opposing regulation of backyard barbecues.

The EPA also wants to “modify [the] behavior” of hotel guests who shower too long. According to the Washington **Free Beacon**, an EPA grant to the **University of Tulsa** notes: “Most hotels do not monitor individual guest water usage and as a result, millions of gallons of potable water are wasted every year by hotel guests. The proposed work aims to develop a novel low cost wireless device for monitoring water use from hotel guest room showers. This device will be designed to fit most new and existing hotel shower fixtures and will wirelessly transmit hotel guest water usage data to a central hotel accounting system.”

A reminder: The **Tenth International Conference on Climate Change**, featuring experts in various fields related to Global Warming, will be held in **Washington, D.C.** in June. If you’re a fan of *Green Watch*, you may want to attend this conference sponsored by the **Heartland Institute**. For more information, or to register, go to [ClimateConference.heartland.org](http://ClimateConference.heartland.org).