COUNTERMOVEMENT COALITIONS

Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## TIMELINE AND OVERVIEW ................................................................. 1

- Global Climate Coalition ................................................................. 3
- Information Council on the Environment .......................................... 6
- Alliance for Climate Strategies ......................................................... 10
- Coalition for Vehicle Choice ............................................................. 12
- Cooler Heads Coalition .................................................................... 15
- Center for Energy and Economic Development .................................. 18
- Americans for Balanced Energy Choices .......................................... 21
- American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity ................................... 23
- Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth ........................................ 27
- Coalition for Affordable and Reliable Energy ..................................... 30
- Coalition for American Jobs ............................................................. 33
- Partnership for a Better Energy Future ................................................ 36
Countermovement Coalitions:  
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles

Since 1989, U.S. Federal Climate Policy has been besieged by concerted, coordinated attempts to undermine and corrupt the people and policies that threaten corporate profits. The private sectors with the most to lose from environmental regulation - the coal industry, automobile manufacturers, utilities, and oil and gas giants - have been highly successful in creating front groups, astroturf campaigns, and lobbying organizations to manufacture the appearance of public support for deregulation, and to remind politicians of how much they have to lose by opposing corporate interests. An analysis of the financial and political ties among these 12 groups has not existed before this report; this is the first compilation of these groups’ tactics, relationships, and continuing legacy.

The coalitions analyzed here have been directly involved in the failure of significant climate or environmental policy in the U.S. These coalitions demonstrate the insular nature of anti-environmental and climate denialist groups; many of these coalitions share leadership teams, major donors, key members, and mission statements. Multiple coalitions are listed as members of other coalitions, and the majority have financial and staffing ties to well-known trade associations and industry front groups; half of the 12 profiled here received funding from the American Petroleum Institute, 4 of 12 received funding from the Edison Electric Institute, and 5 of 12 received funding from the Western Fuels Association.

Some of these groups were created to continue the work of past coalitions; The Alliance for Climate Strategies, for example, was formed the year after the dissolution of the Global Climate Coalition, and was led by the same director and made up of many of the same members. The Center for Energy and Economic Development merged with the Americans for Balanced Energy Choices to create the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, which continues to operate today. 3 of the coalitions profiled in this report are still active, but the legacy of the other nine continues to manifest in the leadership teams, members, and donors of the still-active coalitions.
The leaders in many of these denial coalitions have held highly influential positions in the Republican party and some are now in positions in the Trump administration with direct control over the future of U.S. climate and environmental policy. For instance, Myron Ebell, Director of the Cooler Heads Coalition (still active) and Director of Global Warming and International Environmental Policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, was the leader of Trump’s EPA transition team in 2016. Robert “Mike” Duncan, leader of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (still active), was the Chairman of the RNC from 2007-2009. Industry-funded policy advisors have been influential in Democratic administrations as well; Energy Secretary Ernie Moniz, nominated by the Obama Administration, was a long time consultant for BP and accepted millions of dollars from the oil and gas industry for studies on the benefits of fracking. Marlo Lewis, also of CEI and a leader of the Cooler Heads Coalition, appeared on Fox in 2017 to urge President Trump to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. Other CHC leaders, particularly Myron Ebell and Steve Milloy, were also influential in Trump’s eventual withdrawal.

Nearly all of these coalitions have engaged in public misinformation campaigns about climate change and pollution, and many had tactics of disseminating misinformation directly to policymakers and members of congress. Understanding the successes and failures of these strategies is essential to exposing these groups and their undue influence today, as is calling attention to the ways in which these patterns have played out throughout the history of corporate denial coalitions. The integrity of our institutions relies on our ability to understand their shortcomings and vulnerabilities; the success of climate denial coalitions in infiltrating these institutions exemplifies the urgent need for a critical examination of their history, strategies, and legacies.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:
Global Climate Coalition

Website: www.globalclimate.org
Years of operation: 1989-2002
Leadership: Glenn Kelly, Gail MacDonald, William O’Keefe
Affiliated Denial Groups: Alliance for Climate Strategies, CO2 Coalition, Edison Electric Institute, Western Fuels Association

The Global Climate Coalition (GCC) was a non-profit industrial organization formed in 1989. The group was notorious for promoting the views of climate skeptics, opposing greenhouse gas regulations, and was instrumental in the U.S. opposition to the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Among its members were groups like the American Petroleum Institute, Chevron, Exxon, Ford, Shell, Texaco, General Motors, and the United States Chamber of Commerce. Even as the GCC actively sowed doubt among policy makers and the public about the veracity of climate change, the group’s own scientists were concluding that anthropogenic climate change from CO2 emissions was happening, and human contributions were to blame.

According to an archived version of the GCC website, the group described itself as representing “virtually every sector of the U.S. [...] including electric utilities, railroads, transportation, mining, manufacturing, small businesses, oil, and coal.” Despite claiming to accept “that there is a natural ‘greenhouse effect’”, the GCC framed greenhouse gases as a necessary protection for Earth “from the freezing rigors of space.” They also accepted that “the Earth’s climate has warmed about 0.5 degrees since the late 19th century,” but claimed that humans are only small contributors to the emissions of greenhouse gases. The primary activities of the GCC were intense lobbying against environmental regulation and PR campaigns, such as a video released to hundreds of journalists which claimed that increased CO2 levels would improve crop production and help solve world hunger.

Key Players

William O’Keefe, President of the GCC, was a key link between the group’s industry interests. O’Keefe was the CEO of the George C. Marshall Institute, which shifted to become the CO2 Coalition in 2015; he was an initial board member of the Coalition. He also served as the Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President for the American Petroleum Institute from 1974 to 1999 while he was also President of the GCC. O’Keefe is a registered lobbyist for industry groups on climate issues for clients including ExxonMobil and API.
Glenn Kelley, the Executive Director of the GCC, was a PR strategist. After the GCC dissolved in 2002, Kelly unsuccessfully attempted to reassemble its members members into another industry advocacy group called the Alliance for Climate Strategies, which Kelly directed out of his own PR office.

Frank Masiano - As the Media Contact for the GCC, Masiano was the touchpoint for industry and PR outfits. Masiano was a member of the Potomac Communications Group, where he worked extensively with the Edison Electric Institute, the Nuclear Energy Institute, and the U.S. Department of Energy, among others. After the breakup of the GCC, Masiano went on to work with the lobbying group and law firm Bracewell and Giuliani, whose clients include Enron, Chevron-Texaco, Pacific Gas & Electric, and The Southern Company.

Funding

Between 1994 and 1997, the GCC’s primary efforts to downplay the threat of climate change were coordinated with campaigns by its members, such as the National Coal Association and the American Petroleum Institute. The latter paid nearly $2 million to fund a “grassroots” letter and phone campaign to oppose a proposed tax on fossil fuels. Industry membership dues provided the revenue for the GCC; these dues totaled $1,224,451 in 1996, and $1,684,212 in 1997. Throughout 1997, the year in which the negotiations around the Kyoto Protocol took place, the GCC spent nearly all of its funding ($1,288,662) on “consultants”, and the rest on lobbying and political expenditures.

Opposition to the Kyoto Protocol

During the early 1990s, countries began mobilizing to address rising greenhouse gas emissions. On December 11, 1997, nearly all countries signed the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty that outlined a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The membership of the GCC strongly opposed the Kyoto Protocol and made their opinions clear to U.S. government officials, leveraging the financial influence of the fossil fuel lobby in future political campaigns. In 1997, the GCC spent millions opposing the Kyoto Protocol by engaging in astroturfing during the negotiations, and launching ad campaigns through the Global Climate Information Project, which was cosponsored by the American Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

The direct influence of the GCC on the U.S.’ decision to oppose the Kyoto Protocol is evidenced by a 2001 State Department Briefing memo on a meeting between the GCC and then-Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, Paula Dobriansky. The role of the GCC in shaping U.S. climate policy is laid out in this memo: “POTUS rejected
Kyoto, in part, based on input from you.” The meeting described in this memo was one of a series of meetings between Dobriansky and fossil fuel representatives in the summer and fall of 2001. The memo, excerpted above, also provides evidence that the Bush administration actively sought further input from the GCC: “interested in hearing from you, what type of international alternatives to Kyoto would you support?” One of President George W. Bush’s first actions in office was to unsign Kyoto.

The Fall of GCC

In March 2000, the GCC announced that they would undergo a “strategic restructuring” with the intention of refocusing the climate debate “back to the real issues.” From 1999-2000, membership atrophied as major players like Ford, GM, and Texaco left the group to avoid bad publicity. The group stopped recruiting individual companies to come on board, and limited membership to “only trade associations” and “other like-minded organizations.” Two years later, the group ended their operations stating that it had “served its purpose” by contributing to a new national approach to global warming”, citing that “The Bush administration will soon announce a climate policy that is expected to rely on the development of new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” a concept strongly supported by the GCC.

Shortly after the breakup of the GCC, former Executive Director Glenn Kelly formed a group called Alliance for Climate Strategies, which shared many of the same members and goals as the now-defunct GCC. Kelly brought many former GCC members along with him to the Alliance, but the new group was short lived and achieved few policy or PR wins.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

Information Council on the Environment

Fig. 1: 1991 ICE newspaper advertisements

Website: N/A
Years of operation: 1991
Leadership: Fred Palmer
Affiliated Denial Groups: Edison Electric Institute, Western Fuels Association, Southern Company

“ICE was very important because it was one of the first attempts to question and challenge the science, for political reasons, and to try to block policy action”
--Professor Naomi Oreskes, Harvard University

The Information Council on the Environment (ICE) was an initiative advanced in 1991 by a coalition of large fossil fuel advocacy organizations, including the Western Fuels Association and the Edison Electric Institute. Its core mission was developing a national strategy to plant seeds of doubt in the American populace about the legitimacy of global warming science. ICE put this objective into action with a targeted twelve-month plan in 1991 that included: 1) securing funding; 2) conducting trial public relations campaigns in several cities to test effective messaging strategies, and; 3) implementing a national climate denial media campaign. ICE’s credibility, and subsequently its activity, collapsed after memorandums framing these objectives and plans were leaked to the public in late 1991. However, their early work in institutional deception programs around climate change set a critical precedent and template for later conservative groups’ efforts.
Key Players

Founding Members: The organizations behind ICE’s formation represent powerful forces in the fossil fuel-intensive utility industry.

- **Western Fuels Association**: This non-profit cooperative founded by Fred Palmer (also ICE vice president) in 1973 officially describes itself as a supplier of “coal and transportation services to consumer-owned electric utilities throughout the Great Plains, Rocky Mountain and Southwest regions.” However, in a 2008 interview with the Kansas Star, Palmer confirmed that “he created a nonprofit society that funneled hundreds of thousands of dollars into a public relations campaign to promote the idea that considerable doubt existed about the effect of carbon dioxide on global warming.” Notable WFA actions include its founding of the Greening Earth Society, a prominent fossil fuel industry advocacy group, and its contribution of $510,000 to ICE’s infamous PR campaign.

- **Edison Electric Institute**: An association founded in 1933 including about 80 large electrical companies claiming to comprise “approximately 70 percent of the U.S. power industry,” Edison Electric Institute conducts high-profile anti-renewable and anti-emissions regulation lobbying and media campaigns, funneling over $100 million dollars since 2008 to independent contractors providing “consulting”, media placement, and advertising services among others.

- **Southern Company**: Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Southern Company is the second largest utility company in the United States and eighth largest in the world. Wielding immense resources and influence, Southern Company has been historically active in fossil fuel advocacy efforts through lobbyists, political contributions, and funding of climate change counter-movement coalitions and foundations. Gale Klappa, a high ranking executive in Southern Company, served as president of ICE.

Science Advisory Panel: ICE engaged professional scientists in its PR campaign, chiefly including (but not limited to) the individuals listed below. These men became the face and voice of the ICE campaign, making appearances in television and radio programming and signing their names to official ICE publications. Operating as a group of ‘credible’ scientists on behalf of the energy industry since the 1980s, this group continues to produce material into the 21st century.

- **Robert Balling**: Trained in geology, Balling has devoted his career since the late 80’s to strengthening the fossil fuel advocacy machine. Fueled by immense streams of oil money-- he was exposed to have received $400,000 in the last decade from contributors such as ExxonMobil, the British Coal Corporation, the Heartland Institute and OPEC. Balling has published books, made countless speeches and media appearances, and worked with dozens of right-wing institutes, coalitions, and think tanks. Balling has regularly questioned the science and reality of climate change: “The scientific evidence argues against the existence of a greenhouse crisis, against the notion that realistic policies could achieve any meaningful climatic impact, and against the claim that urgent action is necessary to reduce the greenhouse threat” and “elevated atmospheric CO2 will produce biological miracles all over the world.”

- **Patrick Michaels**: Michaels is a longtime player in the nucleus of climate denial efforts. Since his involvement in the ICE campaign, Michaels has worked with prominent fossil fuel advocacy groups and think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation, Heartland Institute, and currently is Director of the Cato Institute’s Center for the Study of Science. Throughout three decades of high profile media appearances, speeches, op-eds, and consistent contact with the Koch brothers and other climate denial juggernauts, Michaels has held steadfast in his commitment to climate denial efforts.
• **Sherwood Idso**: Idso is the president of Center for Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change and longtime contributor to denial efforts. Despite a career slightly less robust than the likes of Michaels and Balling, Idso has authored books and articles in peer-reviewed journals and makes frequent media appearances surrounding climate.

**The Test Market Proposal**

The leaked 1991 ICE publication “Test Market Proposal” outlines a 12 month public relations campaign with the goal of understanding and implementing strategies to “reposition global warming as theory (not fact)” on a large scale. A 2015 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists described the campaign as “designed to disparage climate science and cherry-pick the data to highlight claims of cooling temperatures in order to confuse the public,” while ICE preferred to view it as an “awareness program.”

The Test Market Proposal outlines the central objectives of this campaign:

1. “Demonstrate that a consumer-based media awareness program can positively change the opinions of a selected population regarding the validity of global warming”
2. “Begin to develop a message and strategy for shaping public opinion on a national scale”
3. “Lay a solid groundwork for a unified national electric industry voice on global warming”

To accomplish the first objective, ICE detailed a plan to identify which demographics among four cities were most vulnerable to climate misinformation, which mediums of information were most credible and effective, and to what extent people were consciously or passively willing to change their attitude. ICE’s strategy was to bombard residents of Chattanooga, TN, Champaign, IL, Flagstaff, AZ, and Fargo, ND with content challenging the validity of global warming, using interviews to gauge public opinion before and after. For weeks in the spring of 1991, the members of ICE’s Science Advisory Panel followed aggressive schedules of meetings and radio and TV appearances. Meanwhile, ICE got their editorials published in local newspapers and circulated supplemental material for concerned consumers. More detailed information about specific public relations schemes can be found within ICE’s full leaked internal publications.

ICE’s study led them to the following key results:

• Two target audiences vulnerable to climate denial propaganda are 1) “Older, less-educated males from larger households, who are not typically active information-seekers, and are not likely to be green
consumers” and 2) “younger, lower-income women” who are “likely to soften their support for federal legislation after hearing new information on global warming.”

- “Technical sources receive the highest overall credibility ratings, followed closely by activist sources. Industry sources and individual spokespersons receive lower overall credibility ratings than either activist or technical sources.” ICE can be seen as an expert technical source.
- When people hear information about or discuss global warming, they generally will perceive it as a serious issue regardless of the content.
- People respond most strongly to content about global warming from the television compared to radio or newspaper.

**Lasting Impact**

ICE was successful in its third objective, to “lay a solid groundwork for a unified national electric industry voice on global warming.” While little information about ICE exists beyond the leaked documents describing the market testing campaign, it is clear that ICE pioneered frameworks for mass denial activities that are still incredibly relevant today. They discovered that under the guise of a scientific group, denial organizations can effectively undermine climate science. They discovered which target groups would be most susceptible to climate denial and equipped the climate countermovement with the tools to inject arguments disputing climate change into the mainstream societal and political discourse. Almost three decades later, similar actors are working on similar projects adapted to a more internet-oriented populace. The impact of the framework developed by ICE for producing widespread climate doubt, arguably first among the fossil fuel advocacy community, cannot be understated.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

Alliance for Climate Strategies

Website: www.allianceforclimatestrategies.com
Years of operation: 2002-2007
Leadership: Glenn Kelly
Affiliated Denial Groups: Global Climate Coalition, Edison Electric Institute

The Alliance for Climate Strategies (ACS), an industry advocacy group aimed at preventing the creation of mandatory greenhouse gas emissions reductions, was formed after the 2002 dissolution of the Global Climate Coalition (GCC). Glenn Kelly, the former executive director of the GCC, formed the Alliance for Climate Strategies and brought many of the former members of the GCC along with him. ACS shared the same telephone number and office address as Kelly’s PR firm, Kelly Public Strategies. The goals of the ACS, as listed on their now-deleted website, are:

- “Exemplify the principle that voluntary actions are an effective means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”
- “Demonstrate that the ingenuity and technological expertise of American industry can achieve meaningful reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.”

Key Players

- **Glenn Kelly**: Former executive director of the GCC, formed ACS. After ACS disbanded around 2008, Glenn Kelly spent seven years working as a lobbyist for the National Mining Association -- a member of both the GCC and ACS. Kelly is now a lobbyist for Covestro LLC, a subsidiary of Bayer AG, a group which spent over $2 million in 2018 to lobby for Monsanto.

- **Edison Electric Institute (EEI)**: A member of ACS, EEI is a trade association of electric utility companies. EEI was involved in a multi-year campaign to fight the transition to distributed solar power and oppose net metering policies. The chairman of EEI has also denied the science of anthropogenic climate change. As part of their “Vision Actions” in the 2004 release from ACS, EEI pointed to their “individual contributions towards the voluntary sector pledge of the equivalent of a 3% to 5% improvement in carbon intensity,” and also noted that they would be undertaking an initiative to
advocate for the “increased use of coal combustion byproducts in lieu of limited natural resources.”

- **American Petroleum Institute (API):** API, another notable member of ACS, is the largest trade association for the oil and gas industry, and has historically promoted “uncertainty” about climate change. API has also funded groups opposing environmental regulations, like the Cato Institute and Citizens for a Sound Economy.

Throughout the duration of the group’s existence (they are no longer active, and appear to have dissolved around 2008), they released a few “Member Climate Vision Actions,” which profiled vague and unambitious strategies through which their members were “taking voluntary action” to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, thus negating the need for government regulation. Among the members included in these documents are the Edison Electric Institute, the American Petroleum Institute, and the National Mining Association. **API’s contribution** to these “Vision Actions” remained unchanged between 2003 and 2006 (the most recent edition), and claimed an “ultimate goal of having 100% of API’s oil and gas sector membership develop GHG management plans.” The **Executive Overview** of these “Vision Actions” also remained unchanged between the 2003 and 2006 editions. It lauded the “unprecedented strategies and goals to responsibly manage sector-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions” taken by its members, which “clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of voluntary climate policy strategies.”

The work of ACS was largely PR-focused, attempting to recreate the work of the GCC as a highly effective anti-regulatory lobbying group. However, with membership fluctuating between 10-15 industry groups (compared with the nearly 70 members of the GCC), ACS’ outreach strategies appear to have been far less effective. The group also lacked a significant threat of looming environmental regulations or binding climate policies under the Bush Administration; with the exception of **California AB 1493**, which set emissions standards for greenhouse gases from cars in mid-2002, ACS didn’t have targeted policies and imminent threats around which to rally opposition.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:
Coalition for Vehicle Choice (CVC)

Website: http://vehiclechoice.org
Years of operation: 1991-early 2000’s
Leadership: Diane Steed, Jeffrey B. Conley, Ron DeFore
Affiliated Denial Groups: Alliance for Automobile Manufacturers, E. Bruce Harrison & Co., American Legislative Exchange Council, Competitive Enterprise Institute, Citizens for a Sound Economy, Cooler Heads Coalition

“Astro-turf [groups] like the Coalition for Vehicle Choice is the reason why American cars have such low fuel efficiency.” - John Staubel, Editor, PR Watch

The Coalition for Vehicle Choices (CVC) is a now-defunct automobile industry advocacy group that was established in 1991 by the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (AAM), a powerhouse automobile industry coalition. The group was formed through a $500,000 grant from AAM to veteran science denial PR firm E. Bruce Harrison & Co. Their foundational beliefs argue that climate change is based on “dangerous and ridiculous” science spread by “radical environmentalists”, and that “dramatic increases in CAFE standards are inefficient, counterproductive and dangerous.”

Active throughout the 1990’s and dissolving sometime in the early 2000’s, CVC’s main objective was to oppose federal tightening of fuel efficiency standards and, later, U.S. involvement in the Kyoto Protocol. The coalition focused its efforts on both lobbying in Washington and producing technical and public relations content to cultivate mass skepticism towards these policies among politicians, professionals, and the public.

Key Players

Leadership:

- Diane Steed, President. Steed’s career also featured prominent positions in federal government bureaus and with Strat@comm, a PR and lobbying organization closely tied with CVC.

- Jeffrey B. Conley, Executive Director. Before CVC, Conley worked with the E. Bruce Harrison company, a PR firm infamously employed by the chemical industry in the contentious fight against environmentalists during the 1970s and also the firm hired to build CVC in the early 1990s.

- Ron DeFore, Spokesman. DeFore was Vice President for the E. Bruce Harrison PR group, and was communications director for CVC. He denied that CVC was a front group for auto manufacturers, framing it as
a “broad-based coalition” that represented millions of Americans. Some of DeFore’s interviews as spokesman are available online.

Membership:

Full CVC membership in 1996 comprised over 5,500 organizations from the automobile industry and from many others, as well as 35,000 individual members. Notable members include:

- **American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC):** an organization (funded almost entirely by corporations) that links state legislators with corporations to create a pipeline of corporate-interested policy.
- **Citizens for a Sound Economy:** an industry-funded think tank that was co-founded by David Koch, and which primarily promoted deregulation and low taxes. While it was active, CSE was described as a group which “purports to be a grassroots voice of consumers” but was “more accurately, a front group for corporate lobbying interests that refuses to reveal its funding sources.”
- **Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI):** an advocacy group with connections to tobacco disinformation campaigns and climate change denial. ExxonMobil is one of CEI’s top funders. Myron Ebell (described as “one of America’s most prominent climate-change skeptics”) is the Director of CEI’s Center for Energy and Environment. Ebell is also the Chairman of the denial group Cooler Heads Coalition.

**Funding**

CVC’s 1995 tax exemption form, made public by Polluter Watch, shows that its total assets at the end of the year were about $1.15 million. After an initial $500,000 donation from AAM, CVC also received funding from groups like the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers, and the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers of America.

**Opposition to CAFE Standards**

During the first Bush Administration in 1989, the Senate first approved Senator Richard Brian’s bill to improve fuel efficiency standards through the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) framework by 40% by 2001. This would have brought standards to 40 miles per gallon, a figure that exceeds today’s average fuel efficiency by over 15%. The bill never made it past Senate during the Bush administration.

In April of 1994, the Clinton Administration’s Department of Transportation (DOT) proposed a plan to raise standards by 40% from 1998 to 2006, from 20.6 mpg to 26 to 28 mpg, still a difficult shift for many popular models of light trucks and SUVs in the U.S. market. Throughout the Clinton administration, this initiative remained frozen, challenged by opposing bills and overshadowed by international climate negotiations. When President George W. Bush took office in 2000, he extended the freeze on DOT’s proposed CAFE extension.

**Opposition to the Kyoto Protocol**

CVC was also active in opposing U.S. participation in the Kyoto Protocol, a treaty seen as threatening to the automobile industry far beyond fuel efficiency standards. CVC’s 1998 Global Climate Policy states about Kyoto:
“The agreement will hit hard at the U.S. Energy prices for American businesses and families will have to go up, to discourage energy use.” Leading up to the Kyoto negotiations, CVC launched an ad campaign including a three-page ad (sponsored by hundreds of oil companies and car dealers) in the *Washington Post*, painting the Kyoto talks as an attack on the U.S. economy.

**Tactics**

The CVC employed a versatile set of tactics in the 1990’s aimed at spreading skepticism towards the need for fuel efficiency standards and the Kyoto Protocol. The coalition paid for lobbying, public relations and advertising campaigns, writing and distributing technical publications, and organizing rallies. CVC’s 1996 tax forms list the coalition’s accomplishments, shown at right.

Notably, CVC appealed to fear and mistrust through their ad campaigns. The language employed by the group in their petitions and other handouts utilized an emotional appeal to garner public support. One letter, for example, evoked images of hardworking Americans relying on fuel inefficient vehicles. Another publication pictures the Capitol building with the bold title, “Who should choose your next car? You or Congress?”

CVC also relied on appeals to authoritative sources; their publication *What The Experts Say About Climate Change*, for example, pulls excerpts and quotes out of context from reputable publications like *The New York Times*, Harvard University, and the Department of Energy, to create the image of academic legitimacy. However, a close look at whose research is actually referenced reveals discredited climate scientists like Patrick Michaels and Robert Balling.

**Lasting Impact**

Decades later, the battle over fuel efficiency standards rages on. The Obama administration EPA’s ambitious last-minute order to increase fuel efficiency standards to an average of 54 mpg by 2025, and the Trump administration’s subsequent freeze and plans to repeal this initiative (in what a former EPA engineer called “the most spectacular regulatory flip-flop in history”) has thrown CAFE standards back into the political spotlight. Though the CVC is now defunct, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (AAM) has continued spreading climate misinformation in its fight against heightened fuel efficiency policy. The Alliance also has a working relationship with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, as shown by leaked letters from AAM to Pruitt and the prominence of AAM in the EPA’s analysis outlining arguments for loosening standards.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

Cooler Heads Coalition

Global Warming.org
May Cooler Heads Prevail

Website: www.globalwarming.org
Years of operation: 1997- present
Leadership: Myron Ebell
Affiliated Denial Groups: American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, Coalition for Vehicle Choice, Competitive Enterprise Institute

The Cooler Heads Coalition (CHC) has all the classic elements of institutional climate change denial: money from ExxonMobil and the Koch Brothers, attempts to derail renewable energy legislation through a misinformation campaign, and some of the most well known climate deniers as their chairmen. Their website is called GlobalWarming.org - and ironically, the subtitle reads “May Cooler Heads prevail.” In their own words, CHC is “an ad hoc coalition of more than two dozen free market and conservative non-profit groups in the U.S. and abroad that question global warming alarmism and oppose energy-rationing policies.” In practice, however, since their founding in 1997, they have channeled millions of dollars into systematically deconstructing public belief in climate change.

The Cooler Heads Coalition was formed during the Kyoto Protocol negotiations, originally as part of the National Consumer Coalition and a segment of Consumer Alert - both of which are now defunct. The website of the Cooler Heads Coalition is funded by the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), and many of the key actors in the Coalition are also employed at CEI.

Key Players

The CHC website lists Myron Ebell, Marlo Lewis, Chris Horner, and William Yeatman as contributors to the Cooler Heads Digest, a blog on the CHC website. Members of the CHC include the American Conservative Union, Americans for Prosperity, the George Marshall Institute, the Heartland Institute, and the Advancement of Sound Science Coalition.

Myron Ebell led the CHC from its foundation. He is the Director of Energy and the Environment at CEI and was the head of the EPA transition team for Donald Trump; he has been described as the “number 1 enemy to the
climate change community” by Business Insider. CEI operates with a $7 million annual budget from major donors like Marathon Petroleum, Koch Industries, and the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity. In 2003, Ebell fought heavily against any climate change provisions in the Energy Policy Act of 2003, saying “[t]roubling provisions include: creating a White House climate czar and expanding bureaucracy to promote global warming alarmism.” He often references climate change action as “global warming alarmism.” When the Washington Post interviewed Ebell concerning the CHC’s role in Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, Ebell said “he [Trump] made the decision. We helped create the circumstances. When you are persistent, good things can happen.”

Funding

A study by the Climate Investigations Center shows that members of the CHC have received a total of $98 million dollars from ExxonMobil in the period from the Kyoto Protocol meetings to 2015. The Competitive Enterprise Institute sponsors the CHC and funds and contributes to their website. The Competitive Enterprise Institute has received nearly $6 million from the Dunn’s Foundation for Right Thinking, over $6.2 million from Donor’s Trust and the Donor’s Capital Fund, and over $4 million from the Sarah Scaife Foundation. CEI has also received direct donations from the Koch Brothers and ExxonMobil. Americans For Prosperity, a key member of the CHC, received over $15 million from Donor’s Trust and over $65 million from Freedom Partners, a group heavily linked to the Koch Brothers.

Important Dates

1998

Five of the organizations in the Cooler Heads Coalition sent representatives to form the Global Climate Science Communication Plan, which laid out the framework for large-scale media campaigns to undermine climate change science. These organizations were The Advancement of Sound Science Coalition, The George Marshall Institute, the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, Frontiers of Freedom, and Americans for Tax Reform. That same year, Marlo Lewis Jr., former chairman of CHC, testified in front of Congress:

“There are several reasons why we shouldn’t worry about global warming […] [T]he probability of catastrophic warming is low. Indeed, it is not clear global warming is something we should prevent, even if that were easy and cost little. Spending trillions to avoid better weather and a greener planet would make no sense at all.”

2003

The CHC and the Competitive Enterprise Institute hosted a Congressional Staff and Media Briefing titled “Was the 20th Century Climate Unusual?” with prominent climate denialist Willie Soon. The event invitation remarks that “the 20th century is neither the warmest century nor the century with the most extreme weather of the past 1,000 years.”

2004

CHC launched a direct attack on developments in climate change science, using phrases like “climate alarmists” and claiming that the Princeton University study showing a huge increase in carbon dioxide emissions “is out of touch with economic, political, and environmental reality.” At the bottom of this publication, they declare they have an energy expert on hand to participate in interviews: Marlo Lewis, who has been a chairman at CHC, and the “expert” who rebutted Al Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth” testimony in front of Congress. Lewis was published in The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, and Gannett News’ Detroit Free Press
and *USA Today*. By using spokespeople who frequently appeared in mainstream media sources, the CHC was able to associate its message with legitimate publications. Myron Ebell’s plan to attack the McCain-Lieberman climate bill was leaked. In response to a Senate hearing in which the McCain-Lieberman bill was proposed, the CHC wrote “The purpose of the hearing was to promote global warming alarmism.”

2006 In response to Michael Mann’s “hockey stick” graph showing the spike in CO₂ emissions with industrialization, the CHC published a speech by Senator James Inhofe, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in which he calls the issue “just bad science” and references other scientists who dispute Mann’s findings. The CHC website published many “scientific” refutations of Mann’s work.

2015 CHC worked with the Heritage Foundation, CEI, and the Nongovernmental Panel on Climate Change to oppose the Paris Climate Accords.

2016 Myron Ebell, the founder of the CHC, named the leader of Trump’s EPA transition team.

2017 The Cooler Heads Coalition, especially Myron Ebell, heavily influenced President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. Marlo Lewis, a leader of the CHC, appeared on Fox to urge the President to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

The Center for Energy and Economic Development (CEED)

Website: [inactive] http://www.ceednet.org/
Years of operation: 1992 - 2008
Founder: Stephen Miller
Affiliated Denial Groups: AEI Resources, American Electric Power Company, Western Fuels Association, Peabody Energy

“Working at the local, state, and regional levels, CEED communicates the truth about coal—conducting research, dispelling falsehoods, and educating the public and government officials about coal-based electricity’s importance to our way of life.”

The Center for Energy and Economic Development formed in 1992 as an alliance between pro-coal interests and the national railway industry. In the two decades of its existence, membership organizations grew to include representatives from equipment manufacturers, labor unions, utilities, and other infrastructure companies. The group primarily worked to produce misinformation materials and advertising campaigns, particularly on the local and state levels in areas where coal infrastructure was in contention. Archived pages of CEED’s website described its role in amplifying climate change as a debate, with the statement under the subheader “Global Climate Debate” reading, “CEED is working to raise public awareness on this issue. CEED is opposed to the proposed U.N. Global Climate Treaty (the Kyoto Protocol), which will result in the loss of about 3.2 million American jobs and raise energy and consumer costs in all U.S. households for a treaty that scientists cannot even agree is necessary.” In addition to discrediting international climate negotiations, CEED focused on coal plant siting initiatives and opposing environmental externality efforts on the state level.

Membership

CEED’s membership page included its extensive member list, made up of equipment manufacturers, labor unions, utilities, and other infrastructure companies. Notable members include AEI Resources, American Electric Power Company, Western Fuels Association, and Peabody Energy.

Important Dates

1998 After the Clinton Administration signs the Kyoto Protocol, CEED responded with a condemning statement, saying it “shows once again that this Administration is more interested in promoting a political agenda than protecting the future of American working
families, small businesses and senior citizens.”

2000 A digital newsletter sent to CEED members denounced the science that supports the Kyoto Protocol: “Supporters of the Kyoto Protocol may find themselves sweating, but this isn’t due to global warming.” The letter made misleading statements about climate scientist James Hansen’s work on greenhouse gas predictions, and ended with a quote from CEED President Stephen Miller: “Research is not supporting the apocalyptic predictions of climate tragedies from global climate change.”

2008 The Center for Energy and Economic Development (CEED) merged with Americans for Balanced Energy Choices (ABEC) to form the new American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE). The Nation later dubbed this new organization the “the driving force behind coal’s rebranding effort.”

Where did the money go?

CEED focused its efforts on creating publicly accessible and distributable materials on their website for members to disseminate. One PowerPoint, posted in its entirety for visitors in 1998 to adapt as their own, walks audience members through the “debate” over climate science and the Kyoto Protocol. The first slide is shown at right, highlighting the four ways in which the Kyoto Protocol is “wrong.” Another slide posits global warming as a theory refuted by the right-hand column, which includes “actual” facts surrounding weather patterns.

CEED is perhaps most notable for its production of two videos on climate change, posted on the website for the purpose of educating viewers on the “personal stories of real-life Americans who will be negatively affected by this flawed treaty [the Kyoto Protocol] that even the world’s scientists can’t agree is necessary.” The first video is titled “America Speaks out,” and the second is titled “A Flawed Treaty Impacts America.” The videos feature prominent political celebrities, with appearances from both Chuck Hagel and Michael B. Enzi, two former U.S. Senators, and JoAnn H. Emerson and John D. Dingell, two former Representatives. The 15-minute videos are separated by personal testimonies from individuals who claim they will be negatively affected by the Treaty.

While CEED is no longer active, its legacy perseveres. Perhaps the most important of its actions were its legal cases taken against the Environment Protection Agency (EPA). A 2004 case, the Center for Energy and Economic Development v. the EPA, made it all the way to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, challenging the EPA for having overly stringent regional haze requirements.
CEED inserted itself into legal motions against environmental regulations in other ways. In a case that challenged the Administrator of the EPA, Michael O. Leavitt, over pollution regulations, CEED filed a motion to intervene. In a case that the Utility Air Regulatory Group took up against the EPA, CEED personnel served on the Counsel team and briefing team for the challenge. Legal cases like these ensure that CEED’s example and impacts last well beyond the lifetime of the organization itself.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

Americans for Balanced Energy Choices (ABEC)

Website: http://www.balancedenergy.org
Years of operation: 2000-2008
Leadership: Joe Lucas
Affiliated Denial Groups: American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE); Center for Energy and Economic Development (CEED)

Americans for Balanced Energy Choices (ABEC) is a non-profit advocacy organization in the United States that emerged in 2000 and dissolved in 2008, merging with the Center for Energy and Economic Development (CEED) into the American Coalition for Clean Coal and Electricity (ACCCE). Historically, ABEC strongly supported the production of American coal and fossil fuel energy and sought to influence public opinion and policy favorable to oil, coal, and natural gas. ABEC described itself as “designed to promote a dialogue with community leaders across the U.S. on issues involving America’s growing demand for electricity. ABEC will advocate in support of policies that strike the proper balance between protecting the environment and providing for continued economic growth and prosperity for America's working families.” Since its inception, ABEC strategically and persistently tried to engage with citizens by employing evidence that over 50 percent of electricity in the United States originates from the coal industry.

ABEC’s primary tactics were lobbying and PR campaigns. Their archived website features ads (below) describing coal as “affordable”, “essential”, and “increasingly clean.” In 2001, the group released their first three TV ads supporting “clean coal technologies,” which were played close to 1,000 times in Washington D.C. Most of the ads claimed that utility providers “have invested more than $50 billion in new technologies to reduce emissions by one-third, and coal provides more than half of all electrical power.” Between 2002 and 2007, ABEC spent close to $93,000 every year on lobbying efforts at the federal level in D.C.

During this period, ABEC began creating ads that were focused on clean coal technologies, which received negative backlash from the public for misleading messages. In an ad released in 2003, ABEC claimed that “air quality has actually improved, thanks in part to investments of over $50 billion in clean coal technologies.” Further in the ad, ABEC claimed that clean coal technologies would be available as soon as 2020, while also stating that electricity generated from coal is “better for the economy and cleaner for our environment.” Later in 2004, the SFGATE, alongside environmental leaders, released an article calling out ABEC for their misleading ads and campaigns. David Hamilton, director of global warming and energy programs for the Sierra Club in Washington, responded that “no one should think that the eagle ad on CNN reflects grassroots, unbiased thinking.” In this interview, Hamilton alluded to ABEC’s practice of astroturf
lobbying. Gail Hillebrand, a senior attorney with Consumers Union in San Francisco, shared similar sentiments, stating that astroturfing is “when you try to make something look like a grassroots movement when it’s not.”

In 2007, ABEC announced their plans for an ad to air on CNN in a “$10 million bid to promote coal-based energy”; the content of the ad suggested that “coal use is economically efficient and environmentally friendly.” The release of this ad coincided with the introduction of the Lieberman-Warner bill in the Senate (in October 2007) - a bill which aimed to “create a cap-and-trade system for carbon emissions and mandate a 70 percent cut in greenhouse gas pollution by 2050.” The bill was approved by the Senate Committee on Environment of Public Works in December of 2007 but failed to pass the Senate in June of the following year. ABEC agreed with prevailing sentiments that the bill would seriously damage the position of the U.S. economy. Leading up to the 2008 Presidential election, ABEC spent close to $35 million on an ad campaign to garner support for coal-fired electricity, which ran across Iowa, Nevada, and South Carolina. According to the Washington Post, ABEC likely campaigned in these three key swing states due to the prevalent and heated discussion concerning “coal-fired power plants.” This campaign was largely funded by Peabody Energy, CONSOL Energy, and Arch Coal.

While active, ABEC was financially supported by 28 companies and trade associations including Peabody Energy, Arch Coal, Duke Energy, Southern Co., and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. ABEC’s website was very transparent in where their funding came from: “America’s coal-based electricity providers.” However, the website did not disclose how much each company contributed to ABEC. Later, in 2008, ABEC merged with the Center for Energy and Economic Development (CEED) to form the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE), another industry front group which continues to operate today. Stephen Miller, previously involved in co-founding ABEC and CEED, shifted his leadership under the guise of the ACCCE to continue representing the coal industry and their involvement in manipulating public opinion.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE)

Website: [http://www.americaspower.org/](http://www.americaspower.org/)
Years of operation: 2008 - present
Current Leadership: Robert “Mike” Duncan, Former RNC Chairman
Founder: Stephen Miller
Affiliated Denial Groups: Western Fuels Association, Americans for Balanced Energy Choices, Center for Energy and Economic Development

“America can continue to make great progress in improving environmental quality while at the same time enjoying the benefits of using domestic energy resources like coal to meet our growing demand for affordable, reliable and clean energy. In a word...we believe in technology.”

The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE) is another influential voice in climate obstructionism, ranked as Number 3 in Mother Jones’ “Dirty Dozen” series, which profiled the most prominent and influential denialist organizations. The Nation dubbed ACCCE “the driving force behind coal’s rebranding effort” in an article on the messaging of “clean coal.” The notoriety surrounding ACCCE is due in part to its deep ties to the lobbying firm Bonner & Associates, responsible for the forged 2009 letters to Congress, in which fake letters were sent to lawmakers that claimed to be from non-profit groups who opposed climate change legislation. ACCCE is also the brainchild of Stephen Miller, who in 2008 consolidated two other organizations (Center for Energy and Economic Development (CEED) and Americans for Balanced Energy Choices (ABEC)) into ACCCE. The front group currently operates with an annual budget of more than $45 million, and claims to be “the only national trade organization whose sole mission is to advocate at the federal and state levels on behalf of coal-fueled electricity and the coal fleet.” Their main directive is the promotion of “clean coal” through aggressive public advertising campaigns and massive political lobbying and donations.

**Membership**

From their own Membership page: “Our membership is comprised of major industries — electricity generators, coal producers, railroads, barge operators, and equipment manufacturers — involved in generating electricity from coal.” Notable members include American Electric Power, Peabody Energy, the Carbon Utilization Research Council, the Western Fuels Association, and the Kentucky Coal Association.
Important Dates

2008  The Center for Energy and Economic Development (CEED) and Americans for Balanced Energy Choices (ABEC) merged to form ACCCE, with Stephen Miller as President and CEO.

2008  Greenpeace embarked on an investigation that reveals the ACCCE (under it’s former name, ABEC) spent at least $35 million in public relations advertising during the lead-up to the 2008 Presidential election. The campaign was mostly focused in primary and caucus states, and worked to push the idea of clean coal technology. ACCCE also paid CNN $5 million for a sponsorship position of six of the presidential debates, in which no questions on climate or coal were directed at the candidates. In an interview, Stephen Miller was asked about ACCCE’s work, and stated: “We’ve spent a lot of money on t-shirts, trucks and advertising to affect the primary campaign, and it’s working ... The President and the Congress have a role to play to make sure the public sector invests in coal-fired power.”

2009  After an investigation led by Democratic Senators, Stephen Miller admitted that an ACCCE contactor forged letters concerning climate change that were sent to three Congress Members. The letters claimed to be sent from groups opposed to the Waxman-Markey climate bill, but these groups, which included elderly centers and the NAACP, had no knowledge of the letters.

2011  The ACCCE launched an advertising campaign attacking the EPA’s regulation of greenhouse gases, authorized by the Clean Air Act, as unlawful.

2014  When the Obama Administration came out with a widely discussed estimate for the social cost of carbon, the ACCCE released a study titled “The Social Costs of Carbon? No, the Social Benefits of Carbon!” Though the document refuted the estimate, arguing social benefits of carbon are up to 500 times greater than the costs.

2015  The ACCCE published a study titled, “Climate Effects of EPA’s Final Clean Power Plan,” that claimed to quantify the potential climate effects of the plan’s implementation. The report cited the Koch-founded Cato Institute and NERA Economic Model as producing similar climate projections to bolster its findings. The summary concluded that “the climate effects caused by the EPA’s Clean Power Plan are meaningless.”

2017  The ACCCE praised Donald Trump in a statement for his Executive Order that overturned the EPA’s Clean Power Plan: “ACCCE commends President Trump withdrawing bad regulations that are hurting our economy. The Clean Power Plan is the poster child for regulations that are unnecessarily expensive and have no meaningful environmental benefit,” said Paul Bailey, President and CEO of ACCCE. “We look forward to working with EPA Administrator Pruitt to develop sensible policies that protect the environment without shutting down more coal-fueled power plants, one of our most resilient and affordable sources of electricity.”

2017  Former EPA administrator Scott Pruitt spoke at an ACCCE board meeting about his “red team, blue team” strategy and plan to “critique” climate science.
Where does the money go?

ACCCE distributes its massive budget between political lobbying expenditures, campaign donations and advertisement campaigns to sway public interest. The ACCCE does not allocate campaign donations based on the climate denial stance of candidates. Instead, it tends to distribute funds to both parties, based on a candidate’s willingness to appear sympathetic toward the belief in “clean coal.” In fact, the Center for Public Integrity found that during the 2008 campaign season, 87% of Congressional members were recipients of ACCCE donations. The ACCCE contributed to both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. They contributed to both Presidential candidates, too: over $300,000 to John McCain and over $240,000 to Barack Obama. The personal lobbying efforts of Stephen Miller even forced Joe Biden to walk back a statement that Obama’s platform would not be supportive of “clean coal.”

On Obama’s Inauguration Day, the ACCCE ran a TV advertisement sampling Obama’s statements on technology’s capacity to make mining coal “clean.”

In addition to political expenditures, public influence campaigns are ACCCE’s fundamental focus. During campaign season, these ads serve to support specific candidates in swing states, but more generally, they work to build public trust in technology’s ability to produce “cleaner” coal. During the 2008 election season, ACCCE spent more than $40 million on radio and television advertisements, keeping coal front and center in the public’s concerns. During the holiday season of election year, they put out an advertisement (still-frame pictured left) of coal lumps singing Christmas carols. The video’s lyrics included, “Frosty the Coalman is a jolly happy soul / He’s abundant here in America and he helps our economy roll / Frosty the Coalman is getting cleaner every day.” This is one example of the breadth and creativity of ACCCE’s advertising campaigns, all of which aimed to paint coal as harmless, safe, beneficial to the economy, and imperative to the country’s prosperity.

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The ACCCE also produces pro-coal research reports and documents that are made accessible to political representatives and the public via their website. In 2017, they published “Myths about coal-fired power plants,” which analyzes perceived “myths” about coal and then “refutes” them. To support its claims, the report uses material from Bjorn Lomborg, a notorious climate change denier and political scientist. The document begins with the preface:
MYTHS ABOUT COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS

Myth — an idea or story that is believed by many people but that is not true.
(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

- “Myth … Coal-fired power plants are dirty.”
- “Myth … Coal-fired power plants are retiring because of low natural gas prices.”
- “Myth … The U.S. doesn’t need coal-fired power plants.”
- “Myth … Pollution from coal-fired power plants causes premature mortality.”
- “Myth … The Clean Power Plan … takes real action on climate change.”

The last arena in which the ACCCE has exerted influence is legal action, by acting as the plaintiff in anti-regulation cases or inserting themselves as legal counsel or acting as other forms of support in other challenges. The ACCCE has been on the list of challenging organizations in cases against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Wyoming v. United States EPA (2014) and Oklahoma v. United States EPA (2013), among others.

Still in operation today, the ACCCE continues to be an effective anti-climate action lobbying group, with an established repertoire of obstructionist strategies.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth

Website: www.yourenergyfuture.org
Years of operation: 2001-2011
Founder: Initial money from the Nuclear Energy Institute
Affiliated Denial Groups: Partnership for a Better Energy Future, American Petroleum Institute, Edison Electric Institute

The Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth (AEEG), a coalition of oil, gas, and nuclear interests, was founded in 2001 and aggressively fought federal climate change legislation. The group was originally formed to support the Bush administration’s 2001 energy plan, which expanded oil and gas drilling, expanded nuclear power, promoted coal mining, and weakened environmental regulations. As the call for climate change legislation grew louder, AEEG fought back, stoking fears that any energy regulation would lead to energy insecurity and threaten the American way of life. With prominent members like the American Petroleum Institute, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Nuclear Energy Institute, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Gas Association Association, the AEEG had millions of dollars at its disposal and many members on its management team who had been associated with climate denial groups. After successfully battling against the Lieberman Warner Climate Security Act in 2008 and 2009, during which time AEEG hosted “climate change dialogues” across the country with prominent climate deniers as guest speakers, the group largely disbanded. It has been inactive since 2011.

Membership & Key Players

While the membership of AEEG remains secretive, its major players can be inferred from its most recent management team. Frank Bowman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), sat on the most recent management team of AEEG and directed the NEI to give nearly $3 million to the group in 2006. That same year, the NEI, under Bowman’s leadership, was accused by The New York Times of funding a front group called Clean and Safe Energy Coalition, which uses its NEI funding to promote a campaign for new nuclear reactors. Another player on the leadership team was David Parker, President and CEO of the American Gas Association (AGA). AGA has funded astroturf groups like Your Energy America, which promotes pipelines and fracking. The group
promised to stand up to “anti-energy opponents, often out-of-state extremists” that are “spreading misinformation and fear to stop natural gas and energy infrastructure.”

**Jay Timmons**, another member of the management team, is the President and CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers and a co-chair for the Partnership for a Better Energy Future, a climate denial group which was created to oppose Obama’s 2015 Clean Energy Plan.

**Red Caveny**, President and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute, was also a member of the AEIG membership team. He was part of the infamous 1998 Global Climate Science Communications Plan, a blueprint for the well-funded climate change denial movement led by industries threatened by regulation during the Kyoto Protocol. The plan states that “Victory will be achieved when...Average citizens ‘understand’ (recognize) uncertainties in climate science; recognition of uncertainties becomes part of the “conventional wisdom,” the “Media ‘understands’ (recognizes) uncertainties in climate science” and “Those promoting the Kyoto treaty on the basis of extent science appear to be out of touch with reality.”

**Thomas Kuhn**, the President of Edison Electric Institute, was another member with his hands in multiple climate denial efforts. Kuhn was involved in the API Global Climate Science Communications Plan, and the Edison Electric Institute was instrumental in the 1991 climate denial PR campaign by the Information Council on the Environment (ICE) which aimed to “reposition global warming as theory (not fact).”

Even though the Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth has gone silent since 2011, its multimillion dollar ad campaigns warning that any environmental regulation could lead to an energy and economic crisis had a lasting impact. Perhaps their most lasting effect was their well-funded opposition to the Obama-era Lieberman Warner bill for comprehensive climate change legislation. Since the Alliance has dissolved, its major players have led other climate denial groups, like Jay Timmons’ Partnership for a Better Energy Future, formed to oppose the 2015 Clean Power Plan.

**Important Dates**

**2001**

The AEIG launched its website, Wayne Valis, a conservative lobbyist with ties to the tobacco industry, solicited support from industry groups saying in a leaked memo that “to join the coalition, you must agree to support the Bush energy proposal in its entirety and not to lobby for changes to the bill...If you are caught attempting to lobby behind the back of the White House, you will be expelled from the coalition.”

On May 23, William Martin testified on behalf of the AEIG in front of the House Science Committee for the Bush Administration’s energy plan, stating that “The Alliance believes that we must make a national commitment to renew and expand the energy infrastructure – that means the nation’s natural gas pipelines, its electric transmission grid, its power plants, and its oil refineries.”

The AEIG ran a million dollar ad campaign directed towards Congress in 2001 to advocate for the 2001 Bush/Cheney Energy Plan, with television ads that said: “Remember the energy crisis from the ’70s? Since then America's energy use has grown twice as fast as production. No
wonder we're having problems. To protect our quality of life tomorrow, we need more energy today.”

**2003**
AEEG released a [policy briefing note](#) advocating for “clean coal” development through government subsidies. That year, they also [lobbied for oil drilling](#) in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, playing on concerns that America’s dependence on foreign oil was growing.

When the Senate passed the [Energy Policy Act](#) in 2003, which proposed federal renewable energy standards and a carbon cap, AEEG lobbied heavily against those aspects of the bill. The Alliance [claimed](#) renewable energy standards would increase consumer’s electricity costs and dampen growth, and [argued](#) a carbon cap would hurt America’s competitive edge. While they did not explicitly deny global warming, they argued that the U.S. was addressing it sufficiently through “volunteer” programs to cut greenhouse gas emissions and funding new technology for a “coal-based, zero-emissions electricity and hydrogen power plant.” The bill was eventually defeated. For AEEG, clean coal was a perfect way to support fossil fuel interests while maintaining an air of concern over the environment; through the 2000s clean coal was [highlighted](#) on their website’s “Energy Facts” section. Clean coal or carbon capture coal plants have [failed to materialize](#).

**2007**
AEEG became more active again as climate change and environmental legislation began moving through the Democrat-controlled Congress. When Democrat-endorsed energy legislation threatened to roll back the tax breaks given to oil companies during the Bush Administration, AEEG [decried the bill](#) at committee hearings.

**2008**
The tone on their website shifted to appear cooperative with climate change legislators; they listed their primary goal as to “Promote the accelerated development, demonstration, and cost-effective commercial deployment of climate friendly technologies to reduce, avoid, or sequester greenhouse gas emissions.” That goal stands in sharp contrast with their activity that year in which they went across the country fighting the Lieberman Warner Climate Security Act by hosting “climate change dialogues” that [featured](#) leading climate change deniers like the Heartland Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the American Petroleum Institute. They released [Economic Impact Studies](#) for each state on their tour which highlighted how climate change legislation would hurt each state’s economy. Each study hit on the same major points: the Lieberman Warner bill would eliminate jobs, raise energy prices, and hurt industry. The bill eventually [failed](#).

**2009**
The AEEG continued their tour of “climate change dialogues” across America, this time in opposition to the Waxman-Markey bill, which proposed a cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gases. The work of AEEG and other groups funded by oil, gas, and coal companies during the Summer 2009 break in Congress contributed to the bill’s eventual [demise](#).
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

The Coalition for Affordable and Reliable Energy (CARE)

Website: http://www.careenergy.com/
Years of operation: 2001 - 2008
Leadership: Paul Oakley, Executive Director
Publicity Firm: Dittus Communications
Affiliated Denial Groups: Edison Electric Institute, Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth (member group), Peabody Energy

“To balance our growing demand for electricity with the need to protect the environment, all fuel sources will be required to play their proper role. Electricity from coal must be an essential part of America’s energy mix in the 21st century.” - CARE website

The Center for Affordable and Reliable Energy (CARE) operated as a cover group for fossil fuel interests, where it sustained a short-lived but impactful lobbying effort from 2001-2008. CARE self described as “a broad coalition of organizations representing thousands of businesses and individuals that support the development of a sound energy policy for America.” CARE’s primary purpose was lobbying for pro-coal energy policy, mostly at the federal level, though it also participated in advertising campaigns. Members of CARE included some of the largest and most powerful lobbyists in the country, including the free-market, tax reduction lobbying groups of U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the 60 Plus Association. There is notably little published information on CARE in comparison to other denial groups, though an investigation from the Annenburg Public Policy Center revealed that CARE spent approximately $533,000 in 2004 alone on at least 50 print legislative issue advertisements.

Membership

Membership included ultra-conservative groups (i.e. Americans for Tax Reform, Frontiers of Freedom Institute), focused on issues like tax reform, promoting free trade, and market deregulation. Many of the members are some of the most influential lobbyists in Washington, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, an enormous lobbying group with total donations topping $140 million in the 2008 elections alone.
What did CARE do?

CARE’s lobbying efforts centered on emphasizing the competitive cost and economic benefits of increased coal mining. In 2001, pro-coal posters funded by CARE were plastered around the Washington, D.C. subway system to target policymakers. When President Bush emphasized the need for a comprehensive energy strategy in his 2005 State of the Union address, he specifically endorsed the “Clear Skies” legislation, which -- among other things -- promoted greater domestic reliance on energy sources like clean coal. CARE’s press release highlighted their support of the legislation, reading, “Coalition Lauds President’s Commitment to Pass Energy Legislation.” The legislation was introduced by staunch climate denier Senator Inhofe (R-OK).

The advertising and pro-coal propaganda CARE distributed, distorted by not presenting the negative implications, are well-documented in the information available on their website.

Their webpage on “Benefits of Mining” lists the following points, emphasizing the individual benefits that Americans receive from domestic coal production, particularly in comparison to citizens of other nations, which they argue pay more for their electricity:

- “The value of coal produced in the United State each year is nearly $18 million.”
- “Coal mining has a combined direct and indirect impact of $161 billion annually on the U.S. economy. This is $596 for every citizen” (emphasis added).
- “Individual Americans and their families receive a significant amount of personal income as a result of coal mining’s monetary contributions to the economy…”

Their webpage on “Cost Competitiveness” lists the following points about the cost analysis of coal compared to other sources of energy:

- “Coal makes low-cost electricity possible. Low-cost electricity is primarily a factor of fuel prices, and coal is and will continue to be the least expensive option for generating electricity.”
- “The price of natural gas can be very volatile. Between 1999 and 2000, the average price for natural gas increased 67%. In contrast, coal prices for power plants dropped by 1% during this period.”
Another webpage titled “Cleaner Environment” attempts to undermine any effect that coal mining has had on the environment. With pages on air quality, water quality, and land use, CARE tries to outline the ways in which the coal industry is working to not only abide, but actually “exceed government regulations” like the Clean Air Act:

- “The quality of the air in the U.S. is improving even as energy use has increased. The coal-based electricity industry has a strong commitment to the environment that has manifested itself in billions of dollars invested in clean air technology and a record of exceeding government targets for certain types of emissions.”
- “The coal and electric utility companies have effected [sic] significant environmental improvements that meet or exceed government regulations, and they have a strong track record of success on which to build.”
- “Coal is getting cleaner before it ever enters the power plants.”
- “Electric utility and coal mining companies carefully manage hundreds of thousands of acres of land across the U.S. Their responsible land management practices include: tree planting, vegetation control, timber management, fisheries and wildlife protection, transmission and facility line siting, recreation, and education.”

CARE has received many endorsements from fossil fuel corporations. Peabody Energy, a coal company that has undertaken massive advertising campaigns with the tagline “Yeah, coal can do that,” in The Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times of London, highlighted the work of other pro-coal groups. In a 2005 statement in the U.S. Coal Review, the Vice President of Peabody Energy, Vic Svec, “noted that Peabody is not alone in its efforts to advance … coal as a wise fuel choice. Americans for Balanced Energy Choice, the Coalition for Affordable and Reliable Energy and the National Mining Association have done good work.”
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:

The Coalition for American Jobs

Website: [www.coalitionforamericanjobs.com](http://www.coalitionforamericanjobs.com)
Years of operation: 2010-2013
Leadership: Marty Durbin, Jack Gerard
Affiliated Denial Groups: [Americans for Job Security, American Petroleum Institute](http://www.americansforjobsecurity.org)

The Coalition for American Jobs (CAJ) is a now-defunct front group through which groups like the American Petroleum Institute and dark money groups with strong ties to the Koch Brothers could funnel money to pay for ad campaigns. The CAJ often acted as an indistinguishable arm of the American Chemistry Council (ACC), an enormous trade organization representing North American chemical manufacturers. CAJ’s board consisted of then-current or former important members of the ACC, and its listed headquarters are identical to the Washington, D.C. office of the ACC. API’s tax returns, which list donations to CAJ, describe the recipient as “Coalition for American Jobs/American Chemistry Council.”

According to its archived website, CAJ described itself as representing “American businesses, industries and others concerned about the impact of potential EPA action on job creation, including the growth of green jobs.” Among the group’s key members were major extractive and industrial coalitions such as the American Petroleum Institute, the American Chemistry Council, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Paper and Forest Association, the National Association of Manufacturers, and other undisclosed members. CAJ was active from 2010 to 2013, and it was incorporated as a 501(c)6 trade organization, meaning it could lobby for issues related to the business league. It was an affiliation of businesses, which provided the funding for its operations. The group appeared to fold after the 2012 election cycle.

**Important Dates**

**2010** Coalition for American Jobs formed with a $1 million dollar donation from the American Petroleum Institute (API) and is led by Marty Durbin, API’s executive vice president.

**2011** CAJ funded TV advertisements (at right) for Scott Brown, a pro-oil Republican candidate in Massachusetts. CAJ also funded advertising campaigns in states along Obama’s Midwestern Bus Tour which criticized Obama’s EPA regulations.

**2012** CAJ ran advertisements that claimed the Obama Administration’s EPA standards on carbon emissions were destroying American jobs.
**Key Players**

CAJ was led by a board of five officers that included Marty Durbin, Jack Gerard, Cal Dooley, Thomas Gibson, and Michael Walls.

*Marty Durbin* was the leader of CAJ and was executive vice president at the American Petroleum Institute (API), from whom CAJ received $1 million in 2010 and $412,969 in 2011.

*Jack Gerard* was the President, CEO, and lobbyist for API. Before that, he was the CEO and President of the American Chemistry Council. As the President of API, Gerard directed more than $63 million (a third of the API’s budget) to be spent on political ads through the consulting company Edelman. Instead of directly listing API as the source of these ads, they are often attributed to front groups that sound more palatable, like “Energy Nation” or “The Coalition for American Jobs”. Edelman has its own history with PR work for climate change denials. When it represented TransCanada, one of the oil companies supporting the Keystone XL pipeline, Edelman detailed a plan to find unflattering information about TransCanada’s environmentalist foes and publish it under the names of third party groups to deflect attention from the pipeline company. In that same leaked document, Edelman laid out a detailed plan to create astroturf groups in support of TransCanada’s pipeline, saying “Companies like ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Halliburton (and many more) have all made key investments in building permanent advocacy assets and programs to support their lobbying, outreach, and policy efforts.”

*Cal Dooley:* Dooley is the CEO, President and Director of the American Chemistry Council.

*Tom Gibson:* The President and CEO of the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI). He worked as a top lobbyist for the American Chemistry Council prior to joining AISI.

*Michael Walls:* The Vice President of Regulatory and Technical Affairs at the American Chemistry Council.

**Funding**

CAJ was largely funded by Dow and DuPont chemical (now DowDuPont), and by Exxon Mobil. In 2011/2012, CAJ received $442,000 from Americans for Job Security, a group that in 2016 paid over $200,000 in fines to the FEC for illegally concealing their political donors. Americans for Job Security had a $50 million dollar budget in 2012 but has managed to keep their donor list completely private. Americans for Job Security’s tax returns indicate that they serve to shuffle around money between different conservative and Koch affiliated groups; in 2011 they gave $24,550,000 to the Center to Protect Patient’s Rights, a group tied to the Koch Brothers, after receiving nearly $5,000,000 from the group in 2010.
**Where does the money go?**

The Coalition for American Jobs was heavily involved in political campaigns in 2010 and 2012, running ads that criticized EPA regulations and supported candidates who opposed those regulations. In 2010, CAJ ran ads in Virginia criticizing the Obama Administration’s implementation of the Clean Air Act. In 2011, the group funded an ad campaign for candidate Scott Brown (R-MA).

CAJ also created attack ads targeting states along Obama’s 2011 Midwestern bus tour. The messaging for the campaign focused on the EPA’s “unnecessary” anti-smog regulations, and claimed that such policies threatened 7 million jobs and would cost businesses up to $90 billion dollars a year. This estimate came from an economic analysis financed by the National Alliance of Manufacturers and API, both members of CAJ, which other experts declared “fundamentally flawed.”

In 2012, CAJ ran TV ads criticizing the Obama Administration’s EPA regulations, saying that businesses were being stifled by “Washington bureaucrats who want to impose arbitrary regulations on carbon emissions” and urged viewers to “call Washington today- tell them in the worst economy since the Great Depression, we can’t let Washington bureaucrats kill good American jobs.”

Though CAJ is no longer active, many of its donors and members have supported - and continue to support - the actions of other coalitions that also seek to obstruct climate or environmental legislation.
Climate Denialist Organizational Profiles:
Partnership for a Better Energy Future

Website: http://www.betterenergyfuture.org/
Years of operation: 2014-Present
Leadership: Jay Timmons, Karen Herbert
Affiliated Denial Groups: National Association of Manufacturers, Global Energy Institute, Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth

The Partnership for a Better Energy Future (PBEF) is a coalition formed in 2014 consisting of 177 conservative organizations across the country, representing industry groups (primarily manufacturing, agriculture, mining, refining) and foundations devoted to free market principles, fossil fuel interests, and climate denial. The coalition describes its purpose as educating and mobilizing “the broader business community and elected and public officials to address widespread concerns with forthcoming greenhouse gas rules.” From its formation until its dramatic halt in activity in the fall of 2015, PBEF antagonized “forthcoming greenhouse gas rules” in Obama’s EPA’s Clean Power Plan (CPP), which it believed would pose an economic threat to its member organizations. PBEF acted as a tool for smaller-scale organizations to reconcile their specific policy priorities, moving towards sharing resources in a collective assault on the national Clean Power Plan. Its emergence represented a call by national pro-fossil fuel organizations for local actors to associate, to build an anti-CPP movement that extended beyond the fight’s central political juggernauts like ExxonMobil, Southern Company, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

While the PBEF’s member organizations feature some especially prominent influencers of right-wing energy policy and climate denialism such as the American Petroleum Institute, the organization’s direct leadership is tied to the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Global Energy Institute/Institute for 21st Century Energy, whose respective presidents Jay Timmons and Karen Harbert serve as PBEF co-chairs. Both leaders boast impressive careers within the conservative network, and are still central actors today. Timmons, whose NAM has received millions each from Free Enterprise America, Freedom Partners, and the American Petroleum Institute, was recently featured in an October New York Times article about the United States-Canada-Mexico Agreement speaking on behalf of all American “industry groups.” Harbert has been very active in the last decade, advocating for hydraulic fracturing and the Keystone XL pipeline in 2013, testifying in the Senate to ban crude oil exports in 2015, vocally opposing the Clean Power Plan in 2016, and maintaining throughout the position that climate change is “an open discussion” not necessarily caused by human activity.

The PBEF formed amidst the Obama administration’s early formation of a sweeping EPA regulatory mechanism called the Clean Power Plan (CPP). The CPP leveraged EPA’s legal obligation under the 1970 Clean Air Act to regulate all carbon dioxide emissions from major sources—its central goal was to cut carbon emissions from the power sector by 32% from 2005 levels by 2030. The program would set national reductions standards, delegating
implementation approaches to state governments. The CPP targets were central to the Obama Administration’s pledge to the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. Many energy-intensive industry groups represented in PBEF believed the ensuing emissions reductions schemes would be economically unfavorable for them, and were seen as conflicting with the anti-environmental regulation policy core of PBEF’s non-industry groups.

PBEF’s most intense activity in resisting the CPP occurred from 2014-2016. This period constituted the final years of Obama’s presidency and coincided with the CPP’s drafting, introduction, and problematic attempts at implementation. PBEF’s social media platforms provide a telling window into their activity during this period, with their Twitter use demonstrating a clear relationship between PBEF and Obama’s EPA’s Clean Power Plan. Their first Tweet, reading, “@EPA chose political expediency over practical reality, regs devoid of comonsense & flexibility” was posted on June 2, 2014 - the date the EPA first proposed the Clean Power Plan, while their last Tweet, reading “@EPA’s #CleanPowerPlan would lead to closure of coal-fired power plants and further threaten the #reliability of electricity. #mfg #reliability” was posted on August 3, 2015 - the date President Obama signed the plan into law.

During this fourteen month period, PBEF was highly active on Twitter, tweeting and retweeting more than 1,200 times, compared to scattered one-or-twice-a-month retweets throughout fall 2015 and 2016 before tapering off completely. The content overwhelmingly concerns the EPA, the CPP, and other regulations, giving updates, pointing out flaws, giving state-by-state policy impact statistics, and more. Furthermore, PBEF’s retweets provide insights about the network of partner organizations surrounding the coalition -- common pages include the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), The American Coalition for Clean Coal Energy, the U.S. House Energy & Commerce Committee, the Republicans of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works Energy, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and their Global Energy Institute, Peabody Energy, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), and the Pennsylvania Coal Alliance. Most of these organizations are PBEF members, with the key exception of the Senate committee and Peabody Energy, a Fortune 500 coal corporation.

Despite their targeted social media use, information about PBEF in media sources and documentation databases is limited even during their most active years. Reporting about the coalition seems to appear exclusively in pro-climate action research publications, and content published by its member organizations. Because of this, information about the strategies and activities PBEF participated in during their fight against the CPP or about the source and recipients of their funding is limited.

When Donald Trump won the Presidency in November 2016 and his administration’s EPA head Scott Pruitt announced his plan to repeal the CPP, the PBEF’s website blog page as well as its Facebook and Twitter pages went silent. It is difficult to ascertain whether the coalition completely disbanded. As an organization fundamentally created to oppose an EPA program, the shift in leadership represents a win for PBEF’s central mission and thus an understandable decrease in activity.