

FACT SHEET

Mercer Funding of Climate Science Denial

Revolting Lesbians, 2018

IRS Form 990 is the reporting form many federally tax-exempt organizations are required to file with the IRS each year. The form allows the IRS, and the general public, to evaluate a nonprofit's operations, mission, programs and finances. According to 990 filings from 2008-2017, Rebekah Mercer and family have contributed to the following organizations.

Please note that this may not represent the extent to which Mercer has funded climate science denial. She annually gives hundreds of thousands to Donors Trust, a “dark money” operation which allows donors to anonymously give millions to far-right and libertarian organizations of their choosing.

MEDIA RESEARCH CENTER

\$20,466,420

Media Research Center (MRC) sponsors projects that analyze various angles of media. These projects, such as the *Business and Media Institute* and *Free Market Project*, have released reports that claim the national media favors the environmental view on global warming and excludes climate deniers in their coverage. MRC has also contributed to the *ClimateGate* echo chamber, criticizing national media outlets for a lack of *ClimateGate* coverage.¹ MRC also donates to Heartland Institute and was a co-sponsor of their climate science denial conference in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015.²

Rebekah Mercer sits on the board of MRC.

FEDERALIST SOCIETY

\$6,450,000

The Federalist Society (FS) was founded by Charles & David Koch and receives funding from ExxonMobil and Chevron. According to Greenpeace, FS “advocate[s] for inaction on global warming.” They host climate change debates on college and university campuses across the country to introduce students to climate science skepticism. One of their newsletters states:

Global warming is nothing more than an educated guess by many of the same scientists who are still arguing about what happened to the dinosaurs. Perhaps we should think carefully before putting blind faith in people who cannot explain the simple disappearance of tens of millions of creatures, many of which were the size of locomotives.

FS has helped supply key personnel and policy ideas to the Trump administration since his victory in November 2016.³

HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

\$6,688,000

Heartland Institute (HI) is the leading climate change denial think tank in the U.S. HI is proud of the fact it “persuaded Trump that man-made global warming is not a crisis.”⁴ HI sends packages containing anti-science propaganda to every public school science teacher in the nation. The packages contain the organization’s book, *Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming*, along with a DVD rejecting humans’ role in climate change.⁵

According to Greenpeace, since 2007, HI has hosted an annual *International Conference on Climate Change* where dozens of climate-denier organizations converge. On their global warming website, HI has published dozens of articles, dating back to 1996, documenting their perspective that the Kyoto Protocol is unnecessary because “greenhouse gas (GHG) levels will unlikely ever pose a problem.” HI has also been a major part of the *Climategate* echo chamber. The Institute has created dozens of blogs to exaggerate the significance of the incident, claiming “the global movement to ‘do something’ about global warming...stands discredited” and “the IPCC should be disbanded as a threat to mankind.”⁶

Rebekah Mercer was present at the most recent *International Conference on Climate Change*.

CITIZENS UNITED

\$3,800,000

In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled on *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* allowing fossil fuel companies to give campaign finance contributions and lobby politically, an action that has drastically impacted domestic climate policy.⁷

HERITAGE FOUNDATION

\$2,000,000

In 2010, Heritage Foundation (HF) purposefully manipulated a report of The Royal Society (an independent scientific academy of the United Kingdom dedicated to promoting excellence in climate change science), editing out 10-pages to make it appear *the* UK’s scientific authority was uncertain about the occurrence of global warming.⁸

HF promotes junk science, cherry-picks facts, and “purchases” scientists who make a living denying climate change. They have also misinterpreted the impact of global warming on the U.S. economy; twisted news reports to justify false information about

“climate taxes;” and released allegations about economic ruin and job losses from green stimulus investments by Congress.⁹

HF co-sponsored Heartland’ Foundation’s *International Conference on Climate Change* in 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015.

Rebekah Mercer is on the board of HF.

OREGON INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND MEDICINE	\$2,265,000
---	--------------------

Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine (OISM) dismisses climate change as a “false religion.” Art Robinson, one of the founders of OISM, is known for his role in developing the *Oregon Petition*, a list of approximately 31,000 “scientists” who dispute the existence of man-made climate change. Analysis of the petition has found only 39 of 31,000 signers have a qualified relation to climate science.^{10,11} OISM co-sponsored Heartland Institute’s *International Conference on Climate Change* in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012.

MANHATTAN INSTITUTE FOR POLICY	\$2,184,225
---------------------------------------	--------------------

Manhattan Institute for Policy (MIP) claims on its website, “Liberals have seized upon outlandishly improbable climate scenarios to urge drastic and immediate action.” This Mercer-funded think tank recently published a piece entitled *Cure for Cold: More Drilling, More Pipelines* (January 4, 2018).¹²

GOLDWATER INSTITUTE	\$1,750,000
----------------------------	--------------------

The Goldwater Institute (GI) is a member of the State Policy Network that attempts to discredit climate science. In 2006, Goldwater published an article by Robert Balling, an Arizona State University scientist who received funding from ExxonMobil and the coal industry, that encourages and promotes doubt over global warming. In 2008, GI fought against passage of a renewable energy standard in the state of Arizona.¹³

MOVING PICTURE INSTITUTE	\$1,700,000
---------------------------------	--------------------

Moving Picture Institute (MPI) sponsors ultra-conservative films, such as *Mine Your Own Business* (2006), which criticizes environmental activists for opposing mining projects around the world.¹⁴ The film's directors, Ann McElhinney and Phelim McAleer, also directed the pro-fracking film, *FrackNation*, and the climate change-denial film, *Not Evil, Just Wrong*.¹⁵ According to The New York Times, *Mine Your Own Business* was “...financed by Gabriel Resources, a Canadian mining company.” Greenpeace and other environmental groups have denounced the film as corporate propaganda.¹⁶

Heartland Institute has donated to MPI. Rebekah Mercer sits on MPI’s board.

YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION**\$1,200,000**

Young America's Foundation's (YAF) mission statement: "YAF introduces young people to conservative ideas through conservative conferences, speakers, campus lectures and initiatives." YAF's website states, "You can challenge your school's climate change proponents by hosting one of Young America's Foundation's speakers."¹⁷

YAF co-sponsored Heartland's *International Conference on Climate Change* in 2009.

CATO INSTITUTE**\$1,200,000**

Greenpeace surmises, "The Cato Institute is focused on disputing the science behind global warming and questioning the rationale for taking action." The institute's 2009 *Handbook for Policymakers* on global warming begins with the suggestions that Congress should "pass no legislation restricting emissions of carbon dioxide" and should "inform the public about how little climate change would be prevented by proposed legislation."

In 2012, Michaels wrote "an unofficial, scientifically-irrelevant 'addendum'" to the U.S. government's *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*. His Cato report was designed to be virtually identical to the U.S. government assessment (in aesthetics, layout and topical content) except for its notably unsubstantiated conclusions on climate science.¹⁸

ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE**\$1,100,000**

Illinois Policy Institute (IPI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is a member of the State Policy Network (SPN), a group that has supported some of the most vocal organizations denying man-made climate change. Members include Heartland Institute, Cato Institute, and Heritage Foundation.¹⁹ According to Huffington Post, in 2011, SPN members' combined fundraising totaled more than \$83 million and included significant contributions from the Koch brothers.²⁰

CENTER FOR DEFENSE OF FREE ENTERPRISE**\$800,000**

Center for Defense of Free Enterprise (CDFE) has received funding from ExxonMobil. It opposes the *Endangered Species Act* and has been at the center of the anti-environmentalist *Wise Use* movement. CDFE Vice President, Ron Arnold, has said, "We want to destroy environmentalists by taking away their money and their members. We are sick to death of environmentalism and so we will destroy it. We will not allow our right to own property and use nature's resources for the benefit of mankind to be stripped from us by a bunch of eco-fascists."^{21,22,23}

CDFE co-sponsored the Heartland Institute's *International Conference on Climate Change* in 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014.

EMPIRE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY
--

\$400,000

Empire Center for Public Policy is an New York based “think tank” grounded in libertarian “free-market” principles and “personal responsibility.” Its website promotes a brief called *Green Overload* which severely criticizes Gov. Cuomo’s initiative to make NY state a “national leader” by having renewables provide 50 percent of the state’s electricity by 2030.²⁴

CO2 COALITION

\$320,000

CO2 Coalition is an organization devoted to spreading information “proving” that carbon dioxide is good for the environment and is not contributing to climate change. The organization produces material “debunking” the global scientific consensus on climate change, presented as scientific studies. The material on the organization’s website refers to climate change as “climate variability” and “stability.” Their mission statement declares that their purpose is “educating thought leaders, policy makers, and the public about the important contribution made by carbon dioxide to our lives and the economy.”²⁵

COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL POLICY

\$275,000

Council for National Policy’s (CNP) exclusive conferences feature speakers who promote and echo doubt over settled climate science. Recent CNP speeches denying the premises or conclusions of credible climate research include:

Czech Republic President Vaclav Klaus: “The increase in global temperatures in the last years, decades and centuries has been very small and because of its size practically negligible in its actual impact upon human beings and their activities.”

Michelle Bachmann (as a U.S. Representative): “Global warmism [sic] is not a scientific consensus; it is a belief system.”²⁶

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT LEGAL INSTITUTE

\$200,000

Energy and Environment Legal Institute (E&E) has received funding from coal producers. E&E has taken legal action including suing the EPA, attacking climate scientists, challenging the constitutionality of Colorado’s renewable energy standard, and suing NASA for the release of records of a climate scientist. E&E frequently is involved in politics, including writing a letter to Trump asking him to ignore criticism of Scott Pruitt. The institute released a video preceding the UN Climate Change

conference in 2017 in which they urged Trump to “withstand pressures by global elites to impose the devastating climate policies” and argued that the Paris Treaty is directly responsible for killing poor people. They have produced other videos with similar claims that climate change policies are causing harm to the “most vulnerable among us” and killing the poor and elderly in Europe.²⁷

REASON FOUNDATION

\$150,000

According to Greenpeace’s *Polluter Watch*, Reason Foundation (RF) regularly advocates for the fossil fuel industry.²⁸ RF promotes fracking and claims fracking is the reason for lower CO2 emissions in the U.S. RF regularly publish articles and studies opposing climate regulations as well as content suggesting the social costs of carbon are too high. They contend a warming of 3-degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels will actually be beneficial for society. Articles from RF’s website have titles such as, *The Social Cost of Carbon Underestimates Human Ingenuity, Overestimates Climate Sensitivity* and *Obama’s Clean Power Plan is Bad News for California*.²⁹

RF co-sponsored Heartland’s *International Conference on Climate Change* in 2012.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CARBON DIOXIDE AND GLOBAL CHANGE

\$125,000

CSCDGC is run by a family of climate change deniers in Arizona. According to their mission statement, their goal is “discovering and disseminating scientific information pertaining to the effects of atmospheric CO2 enrichment on climate and the biosphere.” CSCDGC receives funding from Exxon Mobil, as well as other fuel companies. The organization releases a weekly newsletter, CO2Science, with the purpose of “[separating] reality from rhetoric in the emotionally-charged debate that swirls around the subject of carbon dioxide and global change.”^{30,31}

AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE UNION FOUNDATION

\$120,000

American Conservative Union Foundation (ACUF) hosts the *Conservative Political Action Conference* annually in DC. According to *Polluterwatch.org*, “CPAC has heavily promoted unscientific viewpoints on climate change and numerous other environmental issues that imply a need for government regulation over polluting industries. Rather than hosting actively-publishing scientists who represent the 97%-99% majority view of climate change experts, CPAC hosts industry-funded lobbyists and think tank personnel who have routinely dismissed the findings of scientists.”³²

STATE POLICY NETWORK

\$100,000

The State Policy Network (SPN) is a group of free market think tanks in the U.S. started by industrialist Thomas A. Roe in 1992 at the urging of Ronald Reagan.

In a “policy exchange” promoting the views of Marlo Lewis, Jr. of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, SPN has claimed, “the EPA's ever-increasing mandates, from the revised air standards for ozone to the new greenhouse gas emissions standards, will severely impact state economic growth.”

SPN supports the work of many of the most vocal promoters of climate change skepticism including the Heartland Institute, Cato Institute, and Heritage Foundation.³³

ENCOUNTER FOR CULTURE AND EDUCATION	\$50,000
--	-----------------

Encounter for Culture and Education is based in New York City and uses *Encounter Books* to publish ultra-conservative books. Some of *Encounter's* published titles include:

Climate Confusion: How Global Warming Hysteria Leads to Bad Science, Pandering Politicians and Misguided Policies That Hurt the Poor

Green Tyranny: Exposing the Totalitarian Roots of the Climate Industrial Complex

The Great Global Warming Blunder: How Mother Nature Fooled the World's Top Climate Scientists

Regulators Gone Wild: How the EPA is Ruining American Industry

*The Bad Science and Bad Policy of Obama's Global Warming Agenda*³⁴

CLAIRE BOOTH LUCE POLICY INSTITUTE	\$25,000
---	-----------------

Claire Booth Luce Policy Institute (CBLPI) encourages college students to bring conservative speakers to campuses to promote right-wing ideas and challenge liberal professors and classmates. One of their featured speakers is a policy advisor at Heartland Institute. CBLPI is responsible for publications such as *Climate Change Data Deception: Former NOAA Scientist Exposes the Climate Change Data Deception Behind the Paris Agreement*.³⁵

TOTAL FUNDING BY REBEKAH MERCER & FAMILY	\$53,368,645
---	---------------------

Sources

1. <https://www.mrc.org/>
2. <https://www.desmogblog.com/heartland-institute#ICCC>
3. <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/global-warming/climate-deniers/front-groups/federalist-society-for-law-and-public-policy-studies/>
4. <https://www.heartland.org/>
5. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/climate-change-skeptic-group-seeks-to-influence-200000-teachers/>
6. <https://www.heartland.org/topics/climate-change/index.html>
7. <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/beyond-citizens-united-how-supreme-court-empowered-very-wealthiest-elections>
8. <https://grist.org/article/2010-10-01-heritage-gate-hypocritically-misrepresents-scientists-words/>
9. https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Heritage_Foundation
10. <https://www.skepticalscience.com/OISM-Petition-Project.htm>
11. <https://www.desmogblog.com/directory/vocabulary/8641>
12. <https://www.manhattan-institute.org/>
13. https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Goldwater_Institute
14. <https://www.thempi.org/>
15. https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Moving_Picture_Institute
16. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/19/movies/19stra.html>
17. <https://www.yaf.org/>
18. <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/global-warming/climate-deniers/front-groups/cato-institute/>
19. https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Illinois_Policy_Institute
20. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/14/state-policy-network-kochs_n_4275899.html
21. <https://www.desmogblog.com/center-defense-free-enterprise>
22. <http://www.sciencecorruption.com/ATN167/00920.html>
23. <https://exxonsecrets.org/html/orgfactsheet.php?id=23>
24. <https://www.empirecenter.org/>
25. <https://co2coalition.org/>
26. <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/global-warming/climate-deniers/front-groups/council-for-national-policy/>
27. <https://www.desmogblog.com/energy-environment-legal-institute>
28. <http://polluterwatch.org/Reason-Foundation>
29. <https://reason.org/topics/environment/>
30. <http://www.co2science.org/>
31. <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/global-warming/climate-deniers/front-groups/center-for-the-study-of-carbon-dioxide-and-global-change/>
32. <http://polluterwatch.org/american-conservative-union-cpac>
33. <https://www.desmogblog.com/state-policy-network>
34. <https://www.encounterbooks.com/about/>
35. <https://cblpi.org/>

Updated 18 December 2018 by Jo Macellaro