

Coordinated attacks on clean energy hits wind energy industry

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Over the past decade, the fossil fuel industry and its well-funded backers have mounted a coordinated campaign to discredit renewable energy and hinder its growth, according to a new report released today by the Sierra Club. The misinformation campaign highlighted in the report is currently evident in the struggle to renew the wind energy Production Tax Credit (PTC) for wind energy. The wind energy PTC helps support the more than 75,000 jobs in the wind industry, but if the tax credit is not renewed before the end of this year, as many as half those jobs could be lost. The American Wind Energy Association estimates that between 2,000 and 3,000 jobs in Minnesota support wind energy.

“Through tactics ranging from contributions to lawmakers to faux ‘think-tanks’ and industry-backed front groups, this concerted campaign to undermine clean energy is destroying jobs, dirtying our air, and leaving America in the dust in terms of energy innovation,” said Margaret Levin, State Director, Sierra Club North Star Chapter.

According to Sierra Club’s new report, *Clean Energy Under Siege*, the fossil fuel industry is not only waging an attack on renewable energy in the political sphere through immense financial contributions to elected officials, but they are also funding a concerted, covert misinformation campaign. Through faux “think tanks,” phony intellectuals, and industry-backed front groups masquerading as “concerned citizens,” the industry is seeking to shift public opinion and discredit renewable energy.

The report follows the trail of money from big polluters, including how the oil and gas industry spent more than \$146 million on lobbying alone in 2011, while big oil tycoons David and Charles Koch gave at least \$85 million to 85 right-wing “think tanks” and advocacy groups over the past decade and a half. Rather than providing the public with education for the greater good, faux “think tanks”, like Manhattan Institute and the Heartland Institute, masquerade as “pro-free market” organizations; yet, they defend oil subsidies and attack renewable energy support. The organizations are funded by fossil fuel companies like Exxon, which has contributed more than \$600,000 since 1998 to the Manhattan Institute and approximately \$676,500 since 1998 to the Heartland Institute.

“This coordinated attack on clean energy in America threatens our business which offers opportunities for low to moderate income people to build wealth through clean energy investments,” said Bukata Hayes, co-founder of Sovereign Systems LLC.

“Minnesota’s congressional delegation should not be swayed by the fossil fuel industry and falsities, they should stand up for wind energy jobs in Minnesota and show their support for clean energy by voting to renew the Production Tax Credit for wind now,” added Reggie Edwards, co-founder of Sovereign Systems LLC.

To read the report *Clean Energy Under Siege* visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/pressroom/downloads/SierraClub-CleanEnergyUnderSiege.pdf>