

Fossil Fuel Execs Refuse To Denounce The American Petroleum Institute As The Industry-Funded Trade Group Lobbies Against Climate Policies

SUMMARY: At today's House Oversight Committee hearing on fossil fuel misinformation, executives from Exxon, Shell, Chevron, and BP were asked to reckon with their claims to support climate policies while continuing to fund the American Petroleum Institute's (API) anti-climate efforts. Yet when faced with this hypocrisy, the executives remained silent or even stood by their funding of API.

Big Oil Execs Claim To Support Climate Policies, But Continue To Fund The American Petroleum Institute While It Lobbies Against Meaningful Climate Mitigation Efforts

Exxon, Chevron, Shell, And BP Rejected Multiple Opportunities To Denounce API's Anti-Climate Campaigns, Choosing Instead To Hypocritically Support A Trade Group Fighting Policies They Claim To Support.

At The Congressional House Oversight Committee's Hearing On Fossil Fuel Disinformation, Rep Rho Khanna Asked Shell President Gretchen Watkins Three Times To Ask Her Fellow Witness, American Petroleum Institute (API) CEO Mike Sommers, To Stop Opposing Electric Vehicles. "Will you take the opportunity today to tell him that his opposition to electric vehicles is wrong, and that instead of opposing tax credits on electric vehicles that he should support them? [...] Can you just tell him to stop the electric vehicles advertising? If you say that today, he'll stop. You give him \$10 million a year. [...] Could you tell him that today? Just tell him please stop the electric vehicles advertising. It would help us in congress. Just tell him to stop." [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]

- **Shell President Gretchen Watkins Repeatedly Refused To Denounce API's Actions, Instead Reiterating Shells Claims To Support Electric Vehicles.** "We're a member of the API for a number of reasons. [...] We have a number of ongoing conversations - [...] I would like to speak on behalf of Shell. Here at Shell, we firmly believe electric vehicles are a part of the future." [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]

Rep. Khanna Went On To Pose The Same Question To Exxon CEO Darren Woods And BP America CEO David Lawler, Asking The Executives To Further Justify Their Support For API As Their Oppose A Methane Fee. "You know who has been advertising against the methane fee? API. Half a million dollars in the last three months in Facebook advertising alone against the president's agenda on the methane fees that you supported this morning in your great statement. [...] Can you please, please tell API to stop the advertising on the methane fee?" [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]

- **Gretchen Watkins Responded That Shell Is Not Fully Aligned With API.** “There are several places where we are not fully aligned with the API –” [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]
- **BP American CEO David Lawler Responded That They Speak With API And Support Green Climate Solutions, Failing To Criticize The Trade Group Or Request They Stop Their Anti-Climate Solution Efforts.** “Mr. Khanna, we’ve been in active communication with API from the time I joined – [...] Well I speak for BP, Mr. Khanna, and we’ve been supportive of the green climate solution –” [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]
- **Exxon CEO Darren Woods Dismissed The Question, Stating Members Don’t Always Agree.** “Chairman Khanna, we engage discussion on many policy issues at API. There’s a diverse set of members, as Mr. Sommers said, over 600 members. Members don’t always agree on everything.”

Chevron, Exxon, BP, And Shell Refused To Commit To Leaving API If They Continued To Undermine Climate Policies Or Have An Independent Audit To Verify They Were Not Funding Climate Disinformation.

Rep Khanna Was Met With Silence When He Asked Executives From API, The Chamber Of Commerce, Exxon, BP, Chevron, And Shell To Commit Leaving API If They Continue To Lobby Against Electric Vehicles. “Will each of you commit to leaving API if they continue to lobby against electric vehicles?” [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]

Rep Khanna Was Met With Silence When He Asked Executives From API, The Chamber Of Commerce, Exxon, BP, Chevron, And Shell To Commit To An Independent Audit To Verify Funds Were Not Going To Climate Denial. “Would any of you commit to having an independent audit to verify that none of your funds are going to climate denial.” [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]

Shell Failed To Commit To Not Funding Any Group Engaged In Climate Disinformation.

Rep Khanna Asked Shell President Gretchen Watkins To Pledge To Not Fund Any Group Engaging In Climate Disinformation. “Ms. Watkins, come on. Would you commit to saying you’re not going to fund any group that’s going to engage in climate disinformation, at least?” [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]

- **Gretchen Watkins Responded That Shell Will Continue To Be An Active Member Of API.** “Chairman Khanna, what I’ll commit to is continuing to be an active members of the API. And we discuss many issues in API, some of which have to do with climate policy.” [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]

The American Petroleum Institute – Using Funding From Exxon, BP, Shell, And Chevron - Has Fought Against The Climate Policies These Companies Claim To Support.

ExxonMobil Pledged To Collaborate With The Biden Administration. “We’re going to work very closely with the administrations around the world. I can tell you, with the Biden administration, I’ve already had a number of discussions with them around what we’re thinking of doing in this space and how we might help but have been very clear we need legal and policy frameworks to support those investments, particularly for large-scale commercial opportunities. And the good news is they’re interested in that and interested in continuing that conversation. So work to be done there, but I think very promising.” [SEC EDGAR, DEFA14A, [03/31/21](#)]

BP “Touted Support” For The Paris Agreement. “In contrast, BP and Shell have touted support for the Paris Agreement, invested in renewable energy, and announced their intent to achieve net-zero emissions.” [Union of Concerned Scientists, [02/12/21](#)]

- **BP Said It “Looks Forward To Working With the Biden-Harris Administration.”** “bp looks forward to working with the Biden-Harris Administration on their energy and climate agenda. bp’s ambition is to become a net zero company by 2050 or sooner and help the world do the same, so we strongly support President Biden’s ambition for the US to reach net zero by mid-century. ‘During this pause on the sale of new federal oil and gas leases we plan to work closely with the administration on developing well-designed climate policies, including the direct federal regulation of methane, that will help advance the US and the world toward net zero. We support their push to transition the US toward a lower carbon energy mix – just as we are doing as a company striving for net zero – and believe hydrocarbons have a role to play in the energy transition.’” [BP America Press Release, [1/27/21](#)]

Shell Aimed To Become Net-Zero Emissions Energy Business By 2050 Or Earlier, Supporting The Most Ambitious Goal To Tackle Climate Change In Paris Agreement. “Shell is aiming to become a net-zero emissions energy business by 2050 or sooner. We intend to meet our customers’ demand for cleaner energy, keeping in pace with society. This supports the most ambitious goal to tackle climate change laid out in the Paris Agreement: to limit the rise in average global warming to 1.5°Celsius. It is going to take a lot of work. And, today, Shell’s business plans will not get us to where we want to be. We are on a journey and recognise the need to change. We must also work with our customers as they make changes too” [Shell - Sustainability, Accessed [3/29/21](#)]

Chevron Is “Committed To Helping Address” Climate Change. “At chevron, we’ve been very clear about where we stand. We accept the scientific consensus. Climate change is real. And the use of fossil fuels contributes to it. We are committed to helping address this challenge. I also want to address directly a concern expressed by some of those calling for today’s hearing. While our views on climate change have developed over time, any suggestion that chevron is engaged in an effort to spread disinformation and mislead the public on these complex issues is simply wrong.” [YouTube, Oversight Committee, [10/28/21](#)]

API Routinely Opposes Climate Policies, Continuing To Do So As Congress Attempts To Pass Its Largest Climate Bill Ever.

The American Petroleum Institute (API) Launched A Seven-Figure Ad Campaign Attacking Portions Of The Congressional Reconciliation Package. “The American Petroleum Institute, meanwhile, is releasing its own batch of ads as part of a seven-figure campaign opposing measures in the reconciliation package such as methane fees that it says punishes American energy. The ads are airing in over 140 congressional districts and key swing states including Arizona, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Minnesota, Georgia and Nevada.” [*Politico Pro*, [09/13/21](#)]

- **HEADLINE: "Congress Is Debating Its Biggest Climate Change Bill Ever. Here's What's At Stake."** [NPR, [09/15/21](#)]

API Has Engaged In Efforts Across States To Oppose Electric Vehicle Investment. “In Illinois and Iowa, the American Petroleum Institute joined with Americans for Prosperity – a political group funded by the Koch oil empire – to oppose utilities’ electric vehicle investments. The owner of a large refinery joined other industrial interests to oppose utility charging and shared mobility plans in Minnesota. In Massachusetts, API teamed with gasoline marketers and convenience stores to oppose an electric vehicle charging buildout from the utility National Grid. [...] And in Maryland, API aligned with convenience stores, gasoline stations and truck-stop owners to oppose utilities’ electric vehicle plans.” [*Politico*, [09/16/19](#)]

- **API CEO Mike Sommers Argued That Government Support Of Electric Vehicles Would Be Bad For Americans.** “Electric-vehicle (EV) technologies may appear to offer clear-cut solutions to modern challenges, but government action to limit Americans’ transportation choice could leave everyday drivers high and dry.” [API, [02/08/21](#)]

API Attacked A Potential Methane Fee Two Days Before The Hearing. “The American Gas Association (AGA), American Petroleum institute (API), Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA), and Interstate Natural Gas Association of America (INGAA) reiterated calls for Congress to withdraw a new tax on natural gas – described as a “methane fee” – from the proposed budget reconciliation bill.” [API, [10/26/21](#)]

Larger Companies Like Shell, BP, Chevron, And Exxon Pay More To Be Members Of API.

API Is Funded By Membership Fees That Are Based On The Size Of The Company. “Oil and natural gas company dues are volumetrically based, so it depends on the size of the company and its involvement in the API segments. Pipeline dues are based on total pipeline throughput in barrel-miles of crude oil, refined petroleum products, and other hazardous liquids as defined in 49 CFR part 195 for all pipeline systems owned or operated by your company (including subsidiaries). Dues for service and supply members are based on sales to the U.S. petroleum industry, beginning at \$1,600.” [API, FAQ, accessed [10/28/21](#)]

Exxon Shareholders Have Previously Attempted To Hold The Company Accountable For Its Trade Group Funding.

Exxon Shareholder Sought To Have The Company Evaluate And Report On How Its Lobbying Expenditures - Including Trade Groups - Aligned With The Paris Agreement. “Shareholders request that the Board of Directors conduct an evaluation and issue a report within the next year (at reasonable cost, omitting proprietary information) describing if, and how, ExxonMobil’s lobbying activities (direct and through trade associations) align with the goal of limiting average global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius (the Paris Climate Agreement’s goal). The report should also address the risks presented by any misaligned lobbying and the company’s plans, if any, to mitigate these risks.” [SEC EDGAR, Schedule 14A, [03/16/21](#)]

Exxon’s Board Opposes The Proposal, Arguing That Perfect Alignment With Trade Associations Is “Impractical” And That The Trade Associations They Are Affiliated With Are “Well Aware” Of Exxon’s Stance On Climate. “While it would be impractical to expect perfect alignment among ExxonMobil’s policy positions and those of every trade association, and not possible for any single member of a given association to ensure that was the case, the Company encourages trade associations to support initiatives that it believes in, including the goals of the Paris Agreement. The Board believes the trade associations in which ExxonMobil participates are well aware of the Company’s support for the Paris Agreement. Considering the above, the Board believes the elements of this proposal have already been met or surpassed, and it is therefore unnecessary.” [SEC EDGAR, Schedule 14A, [03/16/21](#)]