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CPC and SEEC Hold Forum on Oil Industry Deception Campaign

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WASHINGTON — Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) Co-Chairs Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) and Keith Ellison (D-MN), along with the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC), today held a forum titled “Oil Is The New Tobacco”.

The forum examined issues surrounding the fossil fuel industry’s concerted efforts to deceive elected officials, investors, and the American public on the reality of climate change.

Speakers included members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, Kathy Mulvey from the Union of Concerned Scientists, Ed Garvey, a Former Researcher at Exxon, Naomi Oreskes, Harvard Professor and Author of Merchants of Doubt, and Natasha Lamb, Arjuna Capital’s director of equity research and shareholder engagement.

“The fossil fuel industry has spent thirty years delaying

action on climate change, and it has cost us lives, health and safety,” said **Rep. Ellison**. “Whether it’s dangerous storms like Sandy or Katrina, droughts in Africa, or asthma attacks in smog polluted cities, climate change is posing serious risks that we could have acted to prevent decades ago. Instead, Exxon and the fossil fuel industry put their profits ahead of the health of the planet and all of us. No more. Let’s stand up to Exxon and the fossil fuel industry to demand that they give us the truth and get out of the way on positive climate action.

“It takes more than a few companies with deep pockets to change the course of American politics,” **Rep. Grijalva** said. “It takes a party whose leaders are willing to protect those companies and repeat their talking points. Big Oil and their allies in the Republic Party have turned lies into policy for years, keeping sound science out of the debates where we needed it most. Allowing this scheme to continue will only ensure another decade of political paralysis as we inch ever closer to irreversible harm to the only planet we have to call home.”

“I was honored to take part in the Progressive Caucus Forum on Fossil Fuel Industry Deception Campaign and be joined by a panel of rock stars including Naomi Oreskes, Kathy Mulvey, Ed Garvey, and Natasha Lamb,” said **Rep. Ted Lieu**. “While we still have a Congress where Republicans regularly deny the existence of climate change, this forum is hugely important to continue to pressure ExxonMobil and other fossil fuel industries and hold them accountable. ExxonMobil’s actions may have imperiled all of humanity, and I urge ExxonMobil and other fossil fuel industries to get serious about acting to find solutions to our climate crisis.”

“For years, our mission to act on climate has been hamstrung

by groups who knowingly ignored the reality of climate change and actively worked against efforts to protect our environment,” said **Rep. Paul Tonko**. “Today, we made progress toward not only uncovering those efforts, but putting a stop to them for good. I thank my colleagues and climate champions, Reps. Ellison, Lieu and Cartwright for their work to advance the efforts of SEEC and bring to light the real relationship between the fossil fuel industry and climate change.”

“I applaud my colleagues in the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Sustainable Energy and Environment Caucus for making a conscious effort to address this important issue. The fossil fuel industry has been determined to mislead and distract the American public about climate change and it is about time we do something about this. It is necessary that we ensure proper financial disclosures to protect our national security, financial institutions, and American investors,” **Rep. Matt Cartwright** said.

“Throughout this Congress, I have been working to address financial disclosures, especially as they relate to climate change. I introduced H.R. 4792, Efforts to Modernize SEC Industry Guides for Oil, Mining, and Gas, which directs the SEC to update its financial disclosure methods for climate-related risks.”

“Between 1998 and 2005, ExxonMobil funneled nearly \$16 million to a network of some 40 front groups to disseminate misinformation about climate science,” said **Kathy Mulvey, Climate Accountability Campaign Manager for the Union of Concerned Scientists**. “Like the tobacco companies before them, major fossil fuel companies are aggressively fighting against efforts to hold them accountable, even as damning evidence of their campaign to deliberately sow confusion and block action to address global

warming continues to surface. Today's forum is indicative of the growing momentum to pressure companies like ExxonMobil to take responsibility for their role in climate change and stop spreading climate disinformation.”

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