



The Left's Anti-Energy Coalition

How Well-Funded
Activist Groups Are Working To
Undermine U.S. Energy Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Virtually every major national policy issue is at root an energy issue. Inflation, technology, agriculture, foreign policy, trade—all are impacted by the availability and reliability of affordable power. There is nearly universal, bipartisan recognition of the importance of a sound energy policy to the future prosperity of the United States and the world generally. In a U.S. economy increasingly reliant on power-hungry modern technologies such as artificial intelligence, the attacks by left-wing activist groups on our energy sector risk hamstringing U.S. competitiveness and driving up electricity costs for American families.

While the Trump administration works to implement an affordable, reliable, and resilient energy strategy, vocal elements of the left still cling to an anti-energy ideology that consistently impedes the development of a U.S. energy infrastructure on the scale required to meet modern challenges. At the root of this intransigence is a sprawling and lavishly funded advocacy apparatus determined to undermine American energy security in the service of radical political and ideological agendas. While they represent a small and nationally unrepresentative group of activists, this network nonetheless exerts enormous influence over U.S. policymaking through its capture of significant segments of the progressive movement and its leaders.

Of particular concern are these groups' and their senior leaders' links to and demonstrated affinity for foreign powers, including governments explicitly hostile to continued U.S. prosperity. Without a stable and growing U.S. energy infrastructure, the country risks falling behind its global competitors and adversaries in economic and policy realms that will determine the makeup of the global order for the next century. It's no surprise, then, that Beijing, Tehran, and Moscow would prefer Americans pay ever higher prices for energy resources. An influential domestic lobby aligned with those foreign powers is unconscionable.



Defending America's energy future begins with exposing and confronting the radical activists working to undermine it.

Policymakers must be fully aware of both the harm they intend to do to future U.S. prosperity and their suspect motivations for doing so. Recognizing the need to stay shrouded from scrutiny, this network employs legal maneuvers to hide its

finances and operations from public view, frequently conducting work through "dark money" nonprofits that allow anonymous funding from wealthy interests foreign and domestic. Our investigation pulls back the curtain on this dark money network and the radicals using it to hijack American energy policy at the expense of U.S. prosperity, competitiveness, and sovereignty.

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THE NETWORK AT A GLANCE: HOW THE ANTI-ENERGY APPARATUS OPERATES

A sprawling network of advocacy groups, activists, and funders is shaping U.S. energy policy through its outsized influence on Democratic politics and policymaking and through its fervent opposition to the Trump administration's efforts to unleash American energy. The network's policy program consistently obstructs energy development, suppresses technological innovation, and privileges foreign competitors over American workers. Uniting these groups is not sustainability but control: the ability to dictate which forms of energy production and industrial growth are permitted, under what conditions, and by whom.

At the center of the network are a handful of tax-exempt nonprofits, foundations, and "dark money" intermediaries, formed with the explicit purpose of hiding the sources of their funds and, in many cases, the activities those funds support.

Groups like the Tides Foundation, the Energy Foundation, and the dark money clearinghouse Arabella Advisors serve to mask the true identities of funding for the network, while in many cases allowing key nodes in the network to operate entirely shrouded from public and policymaker scrutiny—all while operating as ostensible charities funded by tax-deductible contributions.

With the aid of that sprawling, anonymously funded infrastructure, organizations in this anti-energy network operate as nominally independent advocacy outfits. In reality, the network is closely knit and well-coordinated, sharing key staff, pushing the same political messaging, and operating in a collaborative fashion to advance shared radical political and policy objectives. Leaders move fluidly between organizations in the network, and among supportive government bodies and private consulting roles. The result is an advocacy apparatus that, while seemingly disparate and independent, functions as a coherent and coordinated lobbying force against U.S. energy prosperity on several fronts.



U.S. ENERGY
FOUNDATION



Arabella
Advisors

- **Partisan Alignment:** The climate activist network's funders include the Democratic Party's top donors. They therefore exert immense influence over the party's ideological and policy agendas.
- **Policy Capture:** A revolving door between the advocacy network and the offices of Democratic policymakers provides seamless coordination between left-wing advocacy groups and their allies in government.
- **Regulation:** Voters' emphasis on economic growth and affordability above left-wing ideology rewards energy abundance above climate alarmism, so network advocates frequently seek to direct administrative and regulatory policies that do not rely on democratic support.
- **Litigation:** Increasingly frustrated by policy inaction, members of the network have turned to the courts to try to shape the U.S. energy system via legal actions against disfavored policymakers, companies, and advocacy groups.
- **Protests and Sabotage:** Where legal actions fail, network members have relied on illegal demonstrations and sabotage to interrupt official government proceedings and block the development of energy infrastructure.

These common tactics have enabled a tightly knit and highly coordinated activist network to wield substantial influence over U.S. energy policy, despite being wildly unrepresentative of American public opinion and the consensus of policymakers and experts not beholden to its ideological capture.



KEY PLAYERS: ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ANTI-ENERGY COALITION

Union of Concerned Scientists

In June 2012, the nonprofit Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) [organized a conference](#) in the scenic seaside community of La Jolla, California. Attendees and speakers included key figures in the climate activist community. At workshops and group discussions, they strategized ways to impose “accountability for climate change damages” on the fossil fuel industry. They focused particularly on the legal system: how those in attendance could support efforts to sue American energy companies into compliance with their radical anti-energy policy program. Their model: anti-tobacco litigation of the 1990s, which famously produced a multi-billion-dollar settlement and accompanied a sea change in U.S. policy and public opinion.

That conference, and complementary efforts by the individuals and organizations involved in staging it, formed the basis for today’s anti-energy legal strategies. It devised and honed the playbook for ongoing courtroom battles against the U.S. energy industry: activists, unable to enact policy change, are instead suing to block the development of fossil energy by claiming its use amounts to a “tort,” or actionable civil wrongdoing for which American energy companies are liable for damages.

Though it was formed in 1969, one of the Union Concerned Scientists’ main contribution to contemporary climate activism is in its support for those litigation tactics. In 2020, it [created](#) a “Science Hub for Climate Litigation” to coordinate legal efforts across the several allied activist groups involved with the effort, as well as supportive academics who could be called on to provide court testimony or ostensibly neutral expert validation. A key component to the effort is

Union of
Concerned
Scientists



“attribution” science, a [pseudoscientific](#) field that claims to be able to attribute specific extreme weather events to particular greenhouse gas emitters. UCS also [works to advance](#) the scientifically dubious field of “indigenous knowledge,” which it claims “can be as valuable as Western science in providing evidence to decision-makers.”

“**At its core, UCS is an activist organization that uses environmentalism as a bludgeon against its opponents.**”



UCS uses its legal tactics to advance a variety of unpopular policy priorities in the name of regulating the global climate. One illustrative example is the group’s attacks on gas appliances used by millions of Americans, as UCS has [claimed](#) gas stoves “pose a threat to our health & the environment” and [accused](#) the gas utility industry of spreading disinformation. UCS is a longtime supporter of implementing costly [carbon tax](#) initiatives and [believes](#) the U.S. should remain in the Paris climate agreement, hurting the country’s global competitiveness. UCS also recently [filed](#) a lawsuit against the Trump administration surrounding its Climate Working Group.

UCS has remained true to its [original mission](#) of advocating for regulations on the use of nuclear technology. Despite its alleged support for “clean energy,” UCS is a prominent skeptic of nuclear power and has worked to spread doubts about the industry’s role in U.S. energy production. The organization recently [argued](#) that the nuclear energy industry purposely “[plays] down” the “massive health, environmental and economic impacts” of past nuclear disasters, saying nuclear power is “uniquely hazardous” and uses “long-lived radioactive materials” that are “highly carcinogenic.”

At its core, UCS is an activist organization that uses environmentalism as a bludgeon against its opponents. In 2024, UCS [accused](#) the Tennessee Valley Authority of “putting millions of families at risk” and fueling a “crisis” of hot weather by continuing to build gas plants. UCS further advertised a protest to “demand TVA to stop their gas buildout” and promoted a “future that is free from fossil

fuels.” UCS similarly [attacked](#) the Trump administration during recent flash floods in Texas, adding that the floods were “made worse” by climate change. UCS has even inserted itself into political discussions entirely unrelated to the environment, advancing left-wing talking points on [immigration](#), [racism](#), [gun violence](#), and more.

A concerning backdrop to UCS’ attacks on American energy is the group’s favorable commentary surrounding hostile foreign powers, such as Iran and China. UCS regularly undermines U.S. foreign policy toward Iran, heaping [praise](#) on the disastrous Iran nuclear deal as a “good” policy that kept Iran’s nuclear program “in compliance,” while [criticizing](#) President Trump’s military strikes against Iran in June 2025. UCS has also repeatedly praised communist China – the primary geopolitical adversary of the U.S. – by [downplaying](#) the country’s aggressive foreign policy, [praising](#) China’s “leadership” on climate change, and [calling](#) Chinese leaders “more flexible, optimistic and forward-looking than their US counterparts” in their view of US-China relations.

Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is one of the most influential activist groups working to hamstring the American energy industry, using its massive funding to push far-left environmental policies through protests and litigation.



The group is known to [utilize](#) “sue and settle” tactics that allow powerful interest groups to “use the courts system as a pawn in developing environmental law without Congress,” according to law professor Donald Kochan. Under this technique, an interest group sues a friendly administrative agency that then settles the meritless claim, allowing the agency to “avoid a court setting limits on doing what the plaintiffs request, to exceed its authority, and to impose new rules—without going through the normal order of deliberative processes.” The Sierra Club used “sue and settle” tactics in 2023, for example, to restrict ocean drilling leases.



Sierra Club activists are involved in a wide variety of protests targeting critical U.S. energy projects. The Sierra Club helped [lead protests](#) against the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2017, joining [indigenous](#) communities at a White House rally to oppose the pipeline’s environmental impact. And in 2025, the Sierra Club has [organized](#) opposition to the Line 5 oil pipeline in northern Wisconsin and Michigan. The Sierra Club has also targeted the financial industry: in 2017, for example, the group led a [protest](#) against banks’ investments in fossil fuels.

The Sierra Club envisions a future in which reliable oil and gas have no role in American society, putting U.S. energy security at risk. The organization [calls](#) the far-left Green New Deal – which would abolish oil and gas and radically transform the country – a “big, bold” proposal that would “help us transition from an economy built on exploitation and fossil fuels.” According to the Sierra Club, the

“**Opportunity to tackle the twin crises of inequity and climate change at the speed and scale that justice and science demand**”



Green New Deal is an “[opportunity](#) to tackle the twin crises of inequity and climate change at the speed and scale that justice and science demand.” On a smaller scale, the Sierra Club is joining in the chorus of left-wing [attacks](#) on gas stoves, amplifying claims that such stoves are “dangerous” and “dirty.” Despite its central position in the mainstream environmental movement, the Sierra Club also unabashedly supports radical policies unrelated to the energy industry, such as [defunding](#) the police, “[anti-racism](#),” and attacks on [Israel](#).

The Sierra Club is a key part of the left’s political apparatus, along with other environmental dark money groups. The organization operates a Super PAC, [Sierra Club Independent Action](#), which endorses aligned candidates across the country, runs independent expenditure campaigns, and organizes voter contact campaigns. In September 2024, the Super PAC [announced](#) a swing state voter mobilization program in support of Kamala Harris, pledging to “mobilize more than 20,000 volunteers across the country to send at least 500,000 letters to voters in key swing states Pennsylvania and Michigan.”

The Sierra Club also provides funding to an array of other left-leaning activist groups through grants. For example, in 2020, the Sierra Club made a \$1 million [grant](#) to the Center for American Progress Action Fund, the advocacy arm of a “leading liberal think tank with deep ties in establishment Democratic politics.”

While other organizations specialize in litigation and political maneuvering to advance their anti-energy policy goals, militant groups like Greenpeace aim to draw attention to the environmental cause through destructive publicity stunts.

In 2022, it was [revealed](#) that the FBI had actively investigated Greenpeace throughout the 80s, 90s, and 2000s over potential ecoterrorist activity, after [uncovering](#) a mock attack on a nuclear power plant planned by a Greenpeace chapter in 1982. As a result of their history of violence, Greenpeace has been [listed](#) alongside terrorist organizations on the UK's counter-terror list.

One of Greenpeace's primary tactics is to stage disruptive – and even violent – protests against the energy industry. In 2025, a jury originally ordered Greenpeace to pay more than **\$660 million** in damages for its role in protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, but a judge later slashed the award to approximately **\$345 million**.

Despite having been found responsible for harming Energy Transfer in U.S. courts, Greenpeace is now weaponizing the European Union (EU) legal systems to attack the same American business, even though Energy Transfer conducts no operations in the EU. This escalation underscores the group's willingness to misuse foreign venues to pursue ideological vendettas against U.S. energy companies.

Protesters infamously [sabotaged](#) construction of the pipeline, burned multiple pieces of heavy equipment, used oxyacetylene torches to cut into the pipeline, and more. Greenpeace has come under fire in recent years over further controversial actions such as [crashing](#) a drone into a French nuclear plant; [damaging](#) ancient sites in Peru during a publicity stunt; dangling from a bridge over the [Houston Ship Channel in 2019](#) and disrupting traffic to one of America's busiest ports; and being [arrested](#) at [protests](#) on Wall Street and outside the White House.

The group supports radical policies that would kill the U.S. energy industry, such as the implementation of a "[climate damages tax](#)" on the extraction of fossil fuels and complete [opposition](#) to nuclear power, which it calls "dirty, dangerous and expensive." Greenpeace will

“**The group supports radical policies that would kill the U.S. energy industry**

not be satisfied with the mere destruction of the energy industry, however, as its goals are even larger. Greenpeace endorses a wholesale [destruction](#) of the "Western capitalist model," which it claims would be replaced with "visions that promote human and environmental wellbeing and redistribute power from corporations to people."

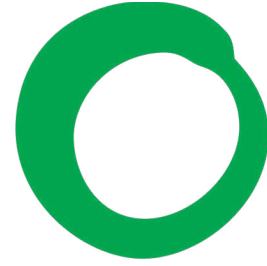


Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Earth (FOTE) is another key organization seeking to gut the U.S. energy industry and imperil the country's energy security. The group uses "policy analysis and advocacy campaigns" to push its far-left political goals – what it [describes](#) as "transformational reforms that will put people and the planet over corporate profits."

FOTE has endorsed [abolishing](#) fossil fuels through the Green New Deal and called for a "new model of environmental, social, racial, economic and gender justice that upends traditional power structures," including "the ongoing [systems](#) of capitalist, racial, class, and colonial inequities." FOTE does not stop there: the organization believes the U.S. owes a "tremendous ecological debt to the Global South" for its supposed role in climate change and demands that the nation "provide finance for people in developing countries commensurate with what science and justice demand."

Through petitions, lobbying, protests, and legal [actions](#), FOTE aims to continue driving progress on its extreme and unpopular policy goals. The group has recently urged followers to [attend](#) several [protests](#) against Republicans and the Trump administration, such as a June 2025 rally on Capitol Hill against Trump's "hateful budget bill that helps billionaires." In April, FOTE posted a [petition](#) calling to reject investments from banks that "destroy the environment" for indigenous communities. FOTE has also been involved in several legal battles, including a 2016 [lawsuit](#) against the EPA for its "failure to set emission standards that curb greenhouse gas pollution from the nation's aircraft fleet," as well as a recent lawsuit that aimed to [interrupt](#) federal funding for a nuclear power plant in California.



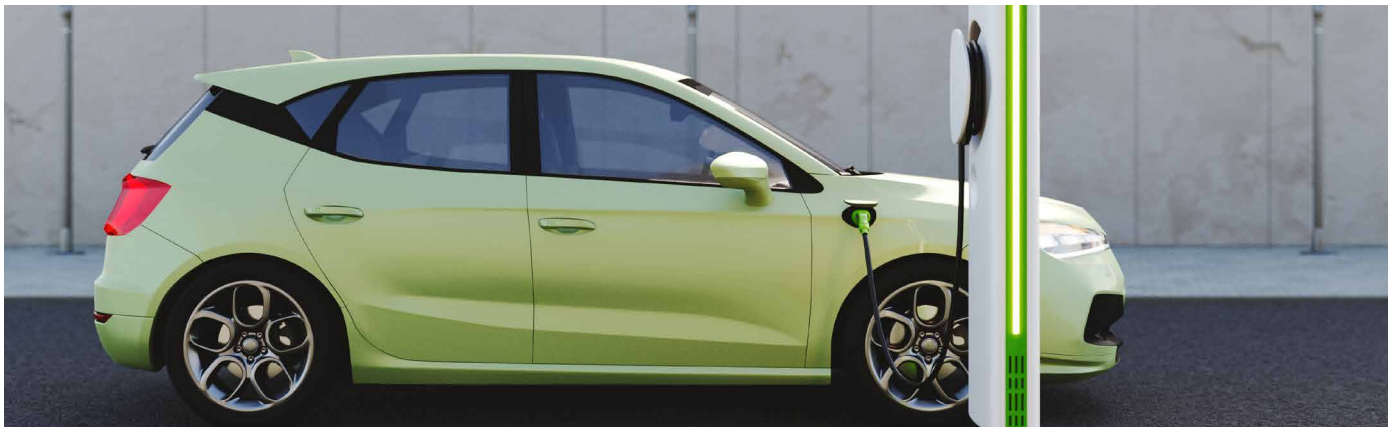
**Friends of
the Earth**



FOTE's current extremism traces its roots to the very founding of the organization. In 1989, FOTE founder David Brower – who also served as the first executive director of the Sierra Club – [organized](#) a conference with the Marxist leader of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega. Brower once [called](#) to “declare open season on developers. Not kill them, just tranquilize them,” and said he believed childbearing “should be a punishable crime against society.” Current FOTE president Erich Pica is similarly radical: in 2016, Pica called for Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson [to](#) be “strung up ... in the court of law for fraud.” Pica later [claimed](#) President Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement would put us on “a path beset with increased famine, poverty, disease and death for millions of people in the U.S. and across the globe,” and in 2019, Pica went so far as to [say](#) Joe Biden’s “climate moderation” was a “presidential disqualification.”

Energy Futures Initiative

Climate activist [Ernest Moniz](#), the U.S. Secretary of Energy under President Obama, is the founder and CEO of the Energy Futures Initiative (EFI) Foundation. EFI aims to “[decarbonize](#) the global energy economy” by helping [craft](#) federal green energy initiatives, publishing policy papers and opinion pieces, supplying congressional testimonies, convening workshops, and more.



In 2019, the organization [praised](#) the Green New Deal, saying it “jump-started a critical national conversation on the imperatives of addressing climate change risks to the economy, environment, and national security.” EFI also published its own “Green Real Deal” – a purportedly “pragmatic” green energy framework that would hurt American families and industries through destructive environmental policies such as carbon pricing. EFI notes that carbon pricing may not go far enough, however, [stating](#) that the policy may not provide “sufficient incentives” for transforming U.S. energy. EFI suggests implementing additional harmful regulations such as national “clean energy” and “clean fuels” standards, as well as “expanded energy efficiency standards.”

EFI's left-wing energy activism expands beyond its so-called Green Real Deal. The organization has advocated for [transitioning](#) to electric vehicles and [advancing](#) "climate justice" through "gender equity," while heaping [praise](#) on President Biden's so-called Inflation Reduction Act. EFI called the IRA the "most transformative climate bill in American history" and the "single

“EFI called the IRA the “most transformative climate bill in American history”

most significant step to date for building a resilient clean energy economy," claiming it would "positively impact a range of issues at the forefront of the national agenda: inflation, energy security, and climate change."

EFI's leader, Ernest Moniz – a major Democratic [donor](#) – has a checkered history on foreign affairs. Moniz proudly touts his record as a "key architect" of the Paris climate agreement, which would hamstring the U.S. energy industry and hurt

working families. Moniz notes that he negotiated the "historic" Iran nuclear agreement with then-Secretary of State John Kerry. Moniz has also maintained foreign ties, having briefly [served](#) on an advisory board for Saudi Arabia's planned megacity NEOM.

Nuclear Threat Initiative

Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) is an anti-nuclear organization that aims to "[reduce](#) reliance on nuclear weapons, prevent their spread and ultimately end them as a threat to the world."

Despite its supposed anti-nuclear stance, NTI has taken questionable positions on American foreign adversaries Iran and China. NTI was quick to [denounce](#) Israel after it [launched](#) strikes on Iran's nuclear and military structure in June 2025, killing top nuclear generals and scientists. NTI claimed the attack would "make it all the more difficult for Iran, the United States, and other parties to the ongoing negotiations to reach an agreement that would prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons." In May, NTI [advocated](#) for "intelligence-sharing between the United States and China" as a "vital step" toward reducing the risk of nuclear conflict in South Asia.

Similar to other anti-energy organizations, NTI has promoted the benefits of a carbon pricing scheme: a [report](#) co-authored



with Energy Futures Initiative noted that carbon pricing is “widely considered to be one of the most efficient and effective ways to reduce carbon emissions.”

Liberal billionaire [Ted Turner](#), who founded CNN, is the co-founder and co-chair of NTI. In an illustrative example of his ideological extremism, Turner came under fire in 2015 for [urging](#) the world to adopt China’s disastrous “one-child” policy as a way to limit carbon emissions, saying, “If we’re going to be here [as a species] 5,000 years from now, we’re not going to do it with seven billion people.” NTI is also [co-chaired](#) by Ernest Moniz – the founder of Energy Futures Initiative. NTI leaders [Joan Rohlfing](#) (president & COO), [Scott Roecker](#) (vice president), and [Nickolas Roth](#) (senior director), meanwhile, are donors to Democratic causes including the DNC, Joe Biden, and Kamala Harris.



MAJOR FUNDERS: WHO IS BANKROLLING THE ANTI-ENERGY AGENDA

A collection of well-funded left-wing organizations are funding the groups detailed in this report to the tune of tens of millions of dollars. Their attacks on American energy security are not spontaneous grassroots actions spurred by the popularity of their cause: rather, these are well-coordinated campaigns funded by donor networks with billions of dollars in resources.

Major funders of these green groups include the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Arabella Advisors network, the Rockefeller network, the Tides network, the Hewlett Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.



UCS has received financial support from left-wing donors like the [Resources Legacy Fund](#), [Tides](#), and the [Energy Foundation](#), among others. Resources Legacy Fund is one of the key organizations [backing](#) climate lawsuits nationwide. Tides is a left-wing dark money network that has drawn [criticism](#) for funding anti-Israel protests on college campuses and [supporting](#) a group with ties to Palestinian terrorists. Bankrolled by Democratic climate [activist](#) Tom Steyer, the Energy Foundation holds [significant ties](#) to China.

The Sierra Club is supported by an array of leftist advocacy groups like the [League of Conservation Voters](#), [Climate Imperative Foundation](#) – which infamously [pushed](#) the Biden administration’s move to ban gas stoves – the [Tides network](#), and [ClimateWorks](#). The Sierra Club also receives significant

support from George Soros' [Open Society Foundations](#), as well as groups [backed](#) by left-wing Swiss megadonor Hansjörg Wyss. The Sierra Club has also been [accused](#) of supporting policies that financially benefit major donors: its "Beyond Coal" campaign, for example, [reportedly](#) directly benefited eight of the Sierra Club Foundation's 18 board directors, who all have ties to renewable energy companies.

“**Their attacks on American energy security are well-coordinated campaigns funded by donor networks with billions of dollars in resources.**

Greenpeace is supported by labor [unions](#) and various other left-wing advocacy groups such as [New Venture Fund](#), an organization [controlled](#) by left-wing dark money behemoth Arabella Advisors. The [Silicon Valley Community Foundation](#), which [receives](#) funding from tech moguls Mark Zuckerberg, Reed Hastings, and Jack Dorsey, has also funneled millions to Greenpeace. FOTE has received millions of dollars from left-wing organizations including the [Packard Foundation](#), [Resources Legacy Fund](#), [Rockefeller Brothers Fund](#), [Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors](#), [Tides Foundation](#), the [Ford Foundation](#), and more.

Since 2015, EFI has [received](#) millions in collective funding from the [left-wing Hewlett Foundation](#), the [Packard Foundation](#), and environmental [advocacy](#) groups like the [ClimateWorks](#) Foundation.

NTI received [heavy support](#) from disgraced crypto billionaire Sam Bankman-Fried, who was [sentenced](#) to 25 years in prison for stealing \$8 billion from customers. NTI is also funded by donors including [Arabella Advisors' New Venture Fund](#), the [Rockefeller Foundation](#), the [Ford Foundation](#), and the [Hewlett Foundation](#).



CONCLUSION

These organizations form a united front with one goal: crippling the American energy industry. Despite the broad unpopularity of their agenda, the environmental groups in this report intend to leverage their aggressive activism, deep political ties, and opaque funding to drive political change in the U.S. – with potentially disastrous consequences. If they are allowed to succeed, the environmental alarmists' agenda will bring about the end of U.S. energy independence.

American companies, workers, and families cannot afford to bear the costs of this left-wing experiment. Radical plans such as the Green New Deal—and domestic actors that pledge alignment with the Paris Climate Accords—have no place in a prosperous American future. These commitments would abolish reliable energy, impose stifling regulations, and force a costly “transition” that would raise prices on consumers, kill American jobs, and destroy U.S. competitiveness across every industry. Policymakers must hold accountable those who advance agendas that weaken America's energy security and economic strength.

Energy production is not only a key economic issue, but also a national security concern. It would be a grave error for the country to relinquish its energy sovereignty in favor of an unreliable, unproven system that is more concerned with fulfilling ideological fantasies than facing pragmatic realities. Independence allows the U.S. to reliably operate free from unwanted influence, rather than leaving its energy needs at the whim of the rest of the world. Leaders in Iran, China, and Russia would surely like nothing more than for this country to willingly discard a system of reliable energy production. This issue is underscored further by the concerning ties to foreign adversaries among so many of the leaders within the environmental coalition.

America's energy future is too important to surrender to extremists. With the right policies and the courage to reject their failed agenda, the United States can remain the world's leader in affordable, reliable, and responsibly produced energy. The path to prosperity and security runs not through ideology, but through American innovation, ingenuity, and independence.