

## Senate Dems question Exxon's climate cred

Gayathri Vaidyanathan, E&E, August 10, 2016

Senate Democrats are not convinced by Exxon Mobil Corp.'s protestations that it supports climate action, including a revenue-neutral carbon fee.

In a letter to the company yesterday, Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) and Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) wrote that they have not yet seen evidence of Exxon Mobil's actions. The senators have introduced the "American Opportunity Carbon Fee Act," which would place a fee on carbon emissions, and argued Exxon Mobil has not endorsed the bill or lobbied on its behalf.

"Regarding ExxonMobil's alleged seven years of support for a carbon fee, we've seen no meaningful evidence of that," the lawmakers wrote. "None of the top executives that make up ExxonMobil's management team has expressed interest in meeting with any of us to discuss the Whitehouse-Schatz proposal or any carbon fee legislation."

They also pointed to opposition to the legislation by the main lobbying groups Exxon is a member of, such as the American Petroleum Institute and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"The net lobbying position of ExxonMobil is vehemently against the carbon fee you claim to support," they wrote.

They were responding to a [letter](#) that Exxon Mobil sent last month after the senators and 16 colleagues accused the company of spreading climate misinformation in televised speeches on the Senate floor ([E&E Daily](#), July 12).

In the letter to Whitehouse, Exxon Mobil wrote that it rejects the accusations. It has a long history of developing carbon capture and sequestration technologies and supports a revenue-neutral carbon fee, wrote the company's vice president in Washington, D.C., Theresa Fariello.

Exxon Mobil has lately become more vocal in support for tackling climate change ([ClimateWire](#), July 12).

"We reject long discredited efforts to portray legitimate scientific inquiry and dialogue and differences on policy approaches as 'climate denial.' We rejected them when they were made a decade ago and we reject them today," Fariello wrote.

Whitehouse and Schatz questioned the company's climate credentials in the letter. Exxon contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars — over 20 percent of its total charitable contributions in the policy realm — to companies that oppose a carbon tax or climate policy.

The senators pointed out these contributions: \$61,500 to the American Legislative Exchange Council; \$325,000 to the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research; \$15,000 to the Hoover Institution; \$15,000 to the Hudson Institute; \$200,000 to the Manhattan Institute; \$25,000 to the Mercatus Center; and \$1 million to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

“Ms. Fariello’s letter attempts to assure us that ExxonMobil now believes climate change is real, that it’s stopped funding climate deniers, and that it has long supported a revenue-neutral carbon fee,” the senators wrote. “That does not conform with our information and experience.”

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