

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4305

October 8, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Administrator Wheeler,

I respectfully request that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conduct a swift and thorough investigation into foreign influence, financial involvement, and election interference by a number of environmental groups in the United States, including the Sea Change Foundation, the Sierra Club, and the Sunrise Movement. Based on information recently brought to my attention, I believe there is considerable evidence of foreign interference in our government, perpetrated through environmental groups like these taking shelter behind the non-profit status of donor anonymity.

Both members of Congress and the media have long noted that many environmental groups receive large sums of money from an organization called 'Sea Change Foundation', a proven front group for foreign financing, funded by off-shore hedge funds in Bermuda. In fact, in 2017, the House Committee on Science identified Russian-funded social media advertisements actively targeting the U.S. energy sector, particularly fracking, leading up to the 2016 U.S. election.

Many 501(c)(4)s receive foreign funding for research or programming, but the environmental groups in question are not acting as mere think tanks or research organizations. These groups actively lobby Congress for legislative action, support political affiliations, and promote policy. They have also been known to organize and pay operatives to disrupt American energy operations and election processes.

While it is not illegal for tax-exempt 501(c)(4)s to receive funding from foreign countries, the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) stipulates that any foreign-funded organization engaged in political activity must register as a foreign agent. Environmental groups that receive money from Sea Change or other foreign-funded organizations, who then use those funds to target American energy interests, should disclose the source of their funding and potentially register as foreign agents. These groups are clearly engaging in politics at best, and operating at the behest of foreign actors at worst.

China has a long history of successfully destroying American industries for their own benefit. We cannot allow China to undermine and threaten our energy industry the way they destroyed our manufacturing industry. The future and national security of America are at stake – we must protect our resources. Foreign countries, particularly China and Russia, aim to diminish American energy independence. It behooves them to fund organizations who work to stifle domestic energy progress. For instance, Russia has an interest in ending oil and gas production in America because their entire economy is dependent on Russian dominance in the oil market.

While China is newer to the energy game, they are quickly becoming a powerhouse. “Climate Change” campaigns have been very profitable for China as they hold monopolies on many of the critical minerals used in the “renewable energy” space. When the United States pulled out of the job-killing Paris Climate Accord, environmental activists bashed President Trump’s decision. These same actors remain silent on China’s egregious environmental practices, including horrible air quality and a hefty carbon footprint. Despite China being a leading polluter, they rarely face condemnation from “green” groups.

Attorney General Bill Barr recently stated “the greatest threat to the 2020 election is China.” We have strong reason to believe that one of the many tactics they are using to influence our elections is through eco-left “green” groups. The CCP cannot be trusted and we must hold them and any bad actors accountable for funding political activity and election meddling in the United States.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lance Gooden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lance Gooden

CC:

The Honorable William P. Barr
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