

Political Spending & The Impact on the
Environmental/Climate Movement in the Wake of
the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* Opinion
PIELC 2014



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By various measures, outside groups moved closer to becoming the dominant voices in the electoral process in 2012, the first full election cycle since the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. Outside groups enjoy a distinct advantage in fundraising because they are permitted to accept contributions of unlimited amount from individuals, corporations, and unions. They are less constrained in their messaging because they do not face the same level of accountability as candidates.

Outside spending in the 2012 election cycle was historic. At more than \$1 billion, outside groups' spending surpassed the total spent by such groups in the four previous election cycles combined. This cycle's spending came on the heels of near-record spending by outside groups in 2010, the year that the *Citizens United* decision and subsequent U.S. Appeals Court decision in *Speechnow.org v. Federal Election Commission* lifted restrictions on the contribution amounts that such groups could receive.¹ But in 2012, the top three outside spenders, alone, spent more than all outside groups combined in 2010.

Probably for the first time, 2012 saw outside spenders compete for supremacy with candidates in certain high-profile contests and with the national parties. Outside spending in the 10 most expensive Senate races of 2012 exceeded that of candidates in four races—something that had only occurred in one top 10 Senate contest in the previous three cycles.

Outside Spending Nearly Matches Political Party Spending

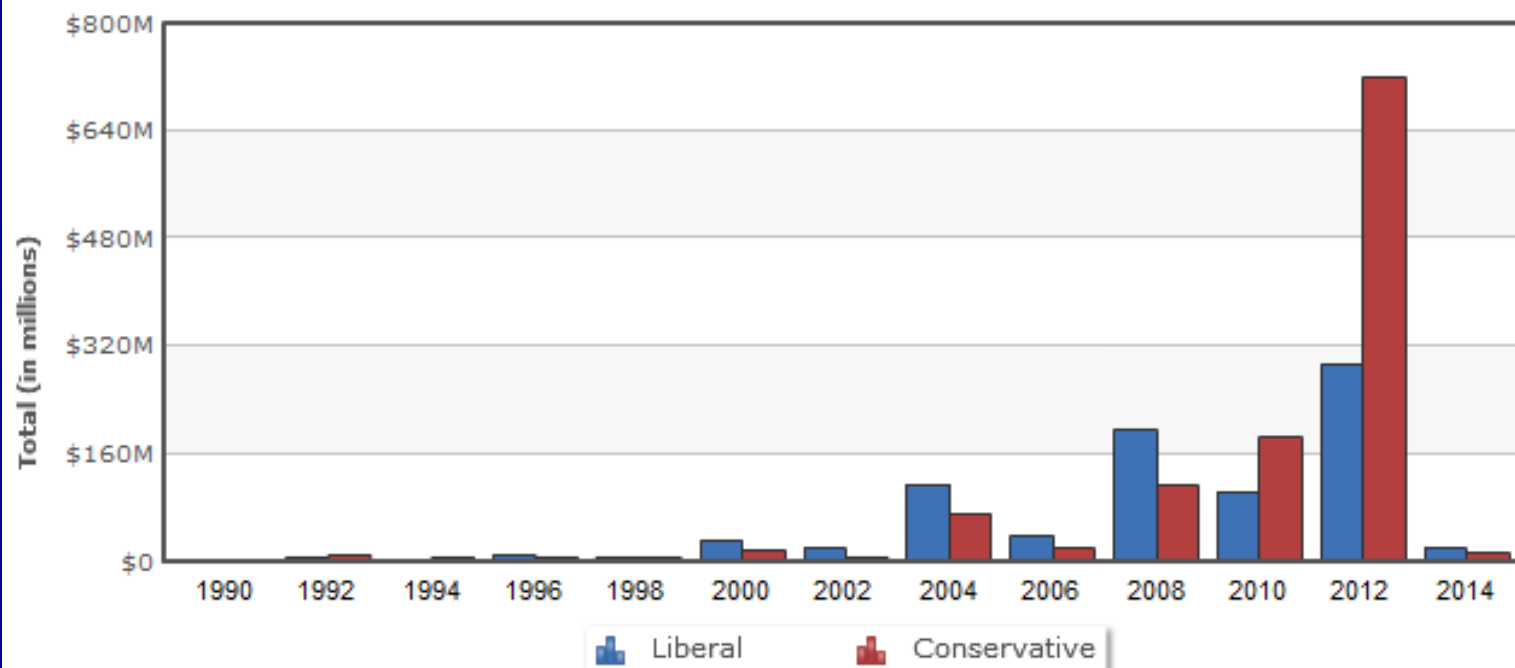
Table 2: Outside vs. Party Spending, 2004-2012

	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
National Party Committee Spending	\$1.23B	\$918.5M	\$1.15B	\$937.0M	\$1.31B
Outside Spending	\$200.1M	\$68.9M	\$301.7M	\$294.7M	\$1.06B
Percent Outside Spending	14.0%	7.0%	20.8%	23.9%	44.7%

Source: Public Citizen analysis of data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics (www.opensecrets.org).

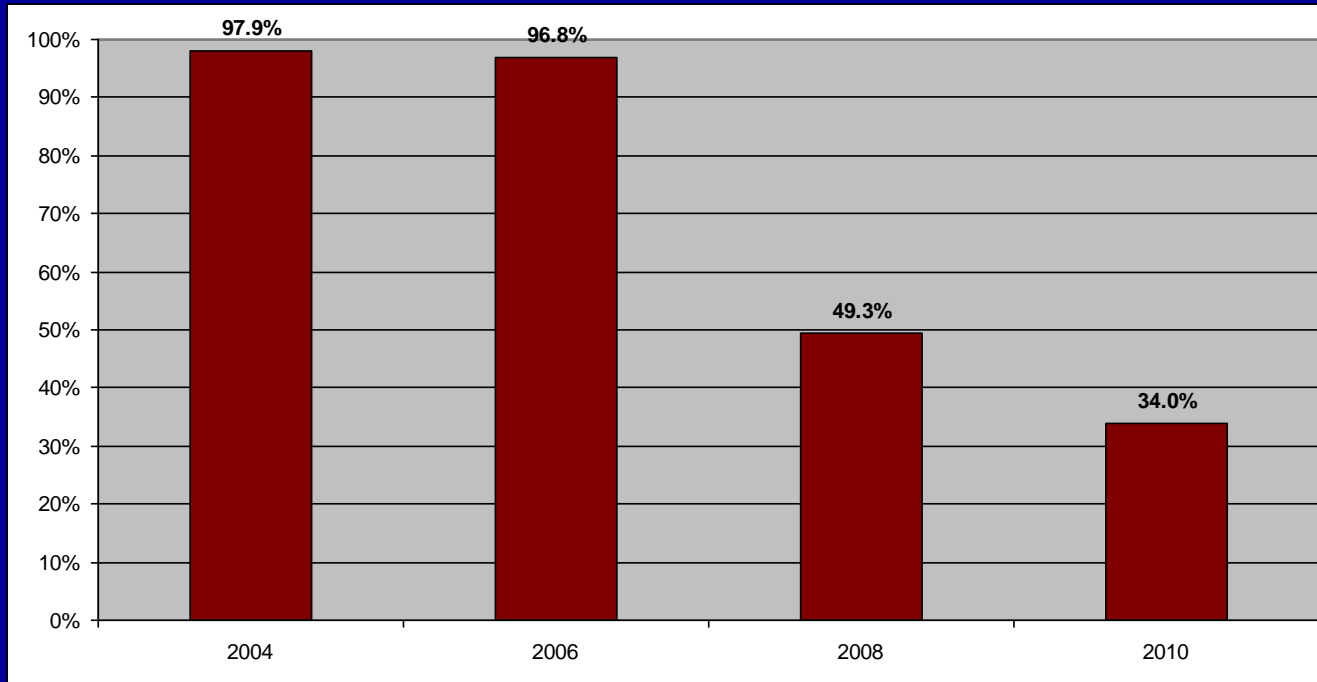
2012 Fed Outside Spending: \$719.4 Million Spent by Conservatives vs \$292.8 Million Spent by Liberals, 2012

Total Liberal vs. Conservative Outside Spending, Excluding Party Committees



Source: Center for Responsive Politics (www.opensecrets.org).

% Of Groups Disclosing Funders of “Issue Ads”



Sources: Public Citizen, “Fading Disclosure,” September 2010 (www.citizen.org/documents/Disclosure-report-final.pdf) and Public Citizen, “Disclosure Eclipse,” November 2010 (www.citizen.org/documents/Eclipsed-Disclosure11182010.pdf).

Tom Steyer's NextGen Climate Action Won't Be Enough

POLITICO

Tom Steyer planning \$100 million campaign push

By: [Andrew Restuccia](#)

February 18, 2014 09:36 AM EST

Liberal billionaire Tom Steyer is laying plans to go big in the 2014 election.

The former hedge fund manager is hoping to spend \$100 million — \$50 million from his personal fortune and \$50 million from other donors — to make climate change a top-tier issue in the election, [The New York Times is reporting](#).

A person close to Steyer confirmed the \$100 million figure to POLITICO but cautioned that it is not a ceiling.

Steyer and his group NextGen Climate Action have emerged over the last year as a [major player](#) in the growing world of money and politics, a realm in which court decisions such as the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* ruling have tossed out much of the old rulebook.

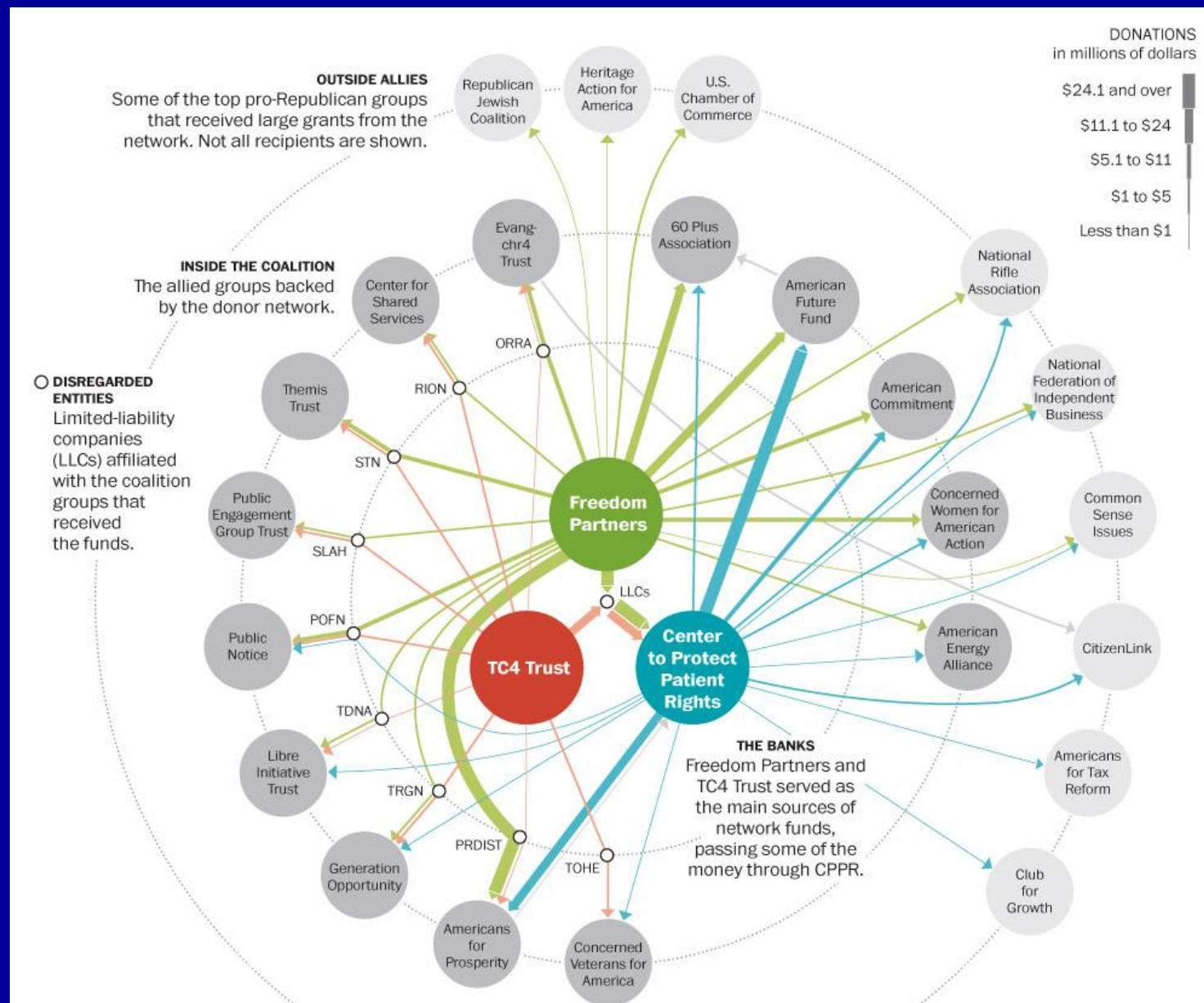
([PHOTOS: Climate skeptics in Congress](#))

He spent millions on the 2013 [Massachusetts Senate](#) and [Virginia governor's](#) races, helping Democrats Ed Markey and Terry McAuliffe prevail, and has become one of the most outspoken opponents of the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline. The group has also showed signs it's willing to [go after Democrats](#) who support Keystone, possibly including vulnerable Louisiana Sen. Mary Landrieu.

\$440 Million to \$14.5 Million

2012 Top Electioneering Groups Featuring Energy/Climate In Ads

Anti Enviro/Climate		Pro Enviro/Climate	
American Crossroads/GPS	\$ 176,429,025	League of Conservation Voters	\$ 10,978,702
Restore Our Future	\$ 142,097,336	Environment America Action Fund	\$ 1,303,396
Americans for Prosperity	\$ 36,352,928	Sierra Club Independent Action	\$ 1,194,073
US Chamber of Commerce	\$ 36,177,665	CREDO Mobile Super PAC	\$ 764,343
Freedomworks for America	\$ 19,636,548	Defenders of Wildlife Action Cmte	\$ 342,827
Americans for Job Security	\$ 15,872,866		
American Commitment	\$ 11,341,559		
American Energy Alliance	\$ 2,339,960		
Total	\$ 440,247,887	Total	\$ 14,583,341



Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce Spent \$250 Million in 2012

POLITICO

Exclusive: The Koch brothers' secret bank

By: [Mike Allen](#) and [Jim VandeHei](#)

September 11, 2013 09:00 PM EST

An Arlington, Va.-based conservative group, whose existence until now was unknown to almost everyone in politics, raised and spent \$250 million in 2012 to shape political and policy debate nationwide.

The group, Freedom Partners, and its president, Marc Short, serve as an outlet for the ideas and funds of the mysterious Koch brothers, cutting checks as large as \$63 million to groups promoting conservative causes, according to an IRS document to be filed shortly.

The 38-page IRS filing amounts to the Rosetta Stone of the vast web of conservative groups — some prominent, some obscure — that spend time, money and resources to influence public debate, especially over Obamacare.

[\(PHOTOS: 25 unforgettable Obamacare quotes\)](#)

The group has about 200 donors, each paying at least \$100,000 in annual dues. It raised \$256 million in the year after its creation in November 2011, the document shows. And it made grants of \$236 million — meaning a totally unknown group was the largest sugar daddy for conservative groups in the last election, second in total spending only to Karl Rove's American Crossroads and Crossroads GPS, which together spent about \$300 million.

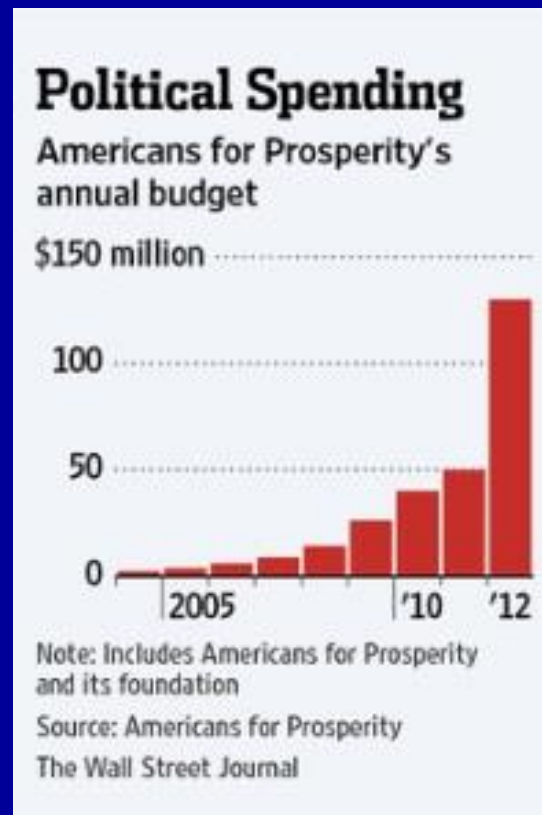
TC4 Trust Another Key Koch Vehicle in 2012, Spending \$28.4 Million

The players in the Koch-backed \$400 million political donor network

By Matea Gold, Published: January 5 [E-mail the writer](#) ↵

The Washington Post and the [Center for Responsive Politics](#) identified a coalition of allied conservative groups active in the 2012 elections that together raised at least \$407 million, backed by a donor network organized by the industrialists Charles and David Koch. Most of the funds originated with two groups, the Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce and TC4 Trust, both of which routed some of the money through a Phoenix-based nonprofit group called the Center to Protect Patient Rights (CPPR).

Americans for Prosperity Spent \$122 Million in '12 – More Than All Other Years Combined



Koch World 2014

By: [Kenneth P. Vogel](#)

January 24, 2014 05:07 AM EST

If the Koch brothers' political operation seemed ambitious in 2010 or 2012, wait for what's in store for 2014 and beyond.

The billionaire industrialists Charles and David Koch are convening some of the country's richest Republican donors on Sunday at a resort near Palm Springs, Calif., to raise millions of dollars for efforts to shape the political landscape for years to come.

It's the cash that can possibly kick Democrats out of the Senate majority this fall and shape the philosophy and agenda of the GOP conference – not to mention the 2016 presidential field.

The Koch political operation has become among the most dominant forces in American politics, rivaling even the official Republican Party in its ability to shape policy debates and elections. But it's mostly taken a piecemeal approach, sticking to its sweet spots, while leaving other tasks to outsiders, or ad hoc coalitions of allies.

(PHOTOS: [Senators up for election in 2014](#))

That's changing. This year, the Kochs' close allies are rolling out a new, more integrated approach to politics. That includes wading into Republican primaries for the first time to ensure their ideal candidates end up on the ticket, and also centralizing control of their network to limit headache-inducing freelancing by affiliated operatives.

The shift is best illustrated in the expansion of three pieces of the Koch political network expected to be showcased or represented at the three-day meeting in Palm Springs, whose evolving roles were described to POLITICO by several sources.

- **Center for Shared Services:** a nonprofit recruiter and administrative support team for other Koch-backed groups, which provides assistance with everything from scouting office space to accounting to furniture and security.
- **Freedom Partners:** a nonprofit hub that [doled out \\$236 million](#) in 2012 to an array of conservative nonprofits that is now expanding its own operation so that it can fulfill many of the functions of past grantees.
- **Aegis Strategic:** a political consulting firm started last year by Koch-allied operatives who will recruit, train and support candidates who espouse free-market philosophies like those beloved by the Kochs, and will also work with nonprofit groups in the Koch network, like Freedom Partners, with which it has a contract to provide policy analysis.

“Partnership for a Better Energy Future”

January 30, 2014, 11:51 am

Fearing they'll 'be next,' industries unite against Obama's climate change rules

By Ben Goad

A coalition of industry heavyweights on Thursday launched what its calling a do-or-die campaign to influence the regulation of U.S. energy production.

Seventy-six business groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the American Gas Association, have agreed to dedicate necessary resources to “vigorously participate” in every facet of President Obama’s effort to tackle climate change through regulation, said Karen Harbert, president of the Chamber’s Institute for 21st Century Energy.

“We plan to be present every step of the way,” Harbert said.

That includes everything from lobbying to litigation, as well a full-court press on agencies drafting new rules that business groups fear will stunt the nation’s domestic energy boom.

Confirmed contributors to the US Chamber of Commerce: Chevron, Dow Chemical, AEP, Exelon, Dominion Resources, Noble Energy, Alcoa, Entergy, Chesapeake Energy, ConocoPhillips, Occidental Petroleum, Southern Co, Xcel, Apache Corp

fixtheuschamber.org

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

\$136,300,000 Lobbying 2012

\$35,657,027 federal political spending

\$6,576,389 direct contributions to
candidates & parties

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U.S. CHAMBER *WATCH*

Chevron Contributes Directly To GOP SuperPAC



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March 5, 2013

Groups Urge FEC to Take Action Against Chevron for \$2.5 Million Super PAC Contribution

Money Given to Congressional Leadership Fund Violates Prohibition on Political Giving by Federal Contractors


WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Federal Election Commission (FEC) should take enforcement action against Chevron for its \$2.5 million contribution to a Republican-tied super PAC because it violated a prohibition against political donations by federal contractors, Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth U.S., Greenpeace and Oil Change International said in [a complaint sent today to the FEC](#).

The FEC also should find the super PAC, the Congressional Leadership Fund, in violation of the law for taking the money, because the people running the group should have known the contributions were illegal, the complaint said.

In October, Chevron gave \$2.5 million to the Congressional Leadership Fund, a super PAC reportedly tied to House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) and the congressional campaign committee of the Republican Party. Government contractors such as Chevron are strictly prohibited by federal law from making “any ... contribution to any political party, committee or candidate for public office or to any person for any political purpose or use.”

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American Petroleum Institute's Vote4Energy



I'm an energy voter.

I vote for more American jobs.

All across the country, you're hearing a lot about energy. Because America needs more energy from all sources to create jobs and get our economy moving.

That means developing our plentiful domestic energy – like oil and natural gas – for new opportunities, a new era of energy security and a brighter future for all.

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Chevron's "Human Energy" Campaign

SHALE GAS

NEEDS TO BE
GOOD

FOR EVERYONE.

Colorado Is Just One Flashpoint of Oil & Gas Money Flooding the Airwaves

Pro-fracking group books at least \$299K in TV ads before November election

Oil and gas interests are planning ahead, even though a ballot initiative isn't likely to be finalized until summer

Sandra Fish

February 25, 2014

Environment/Energy

No Comments



Solutions

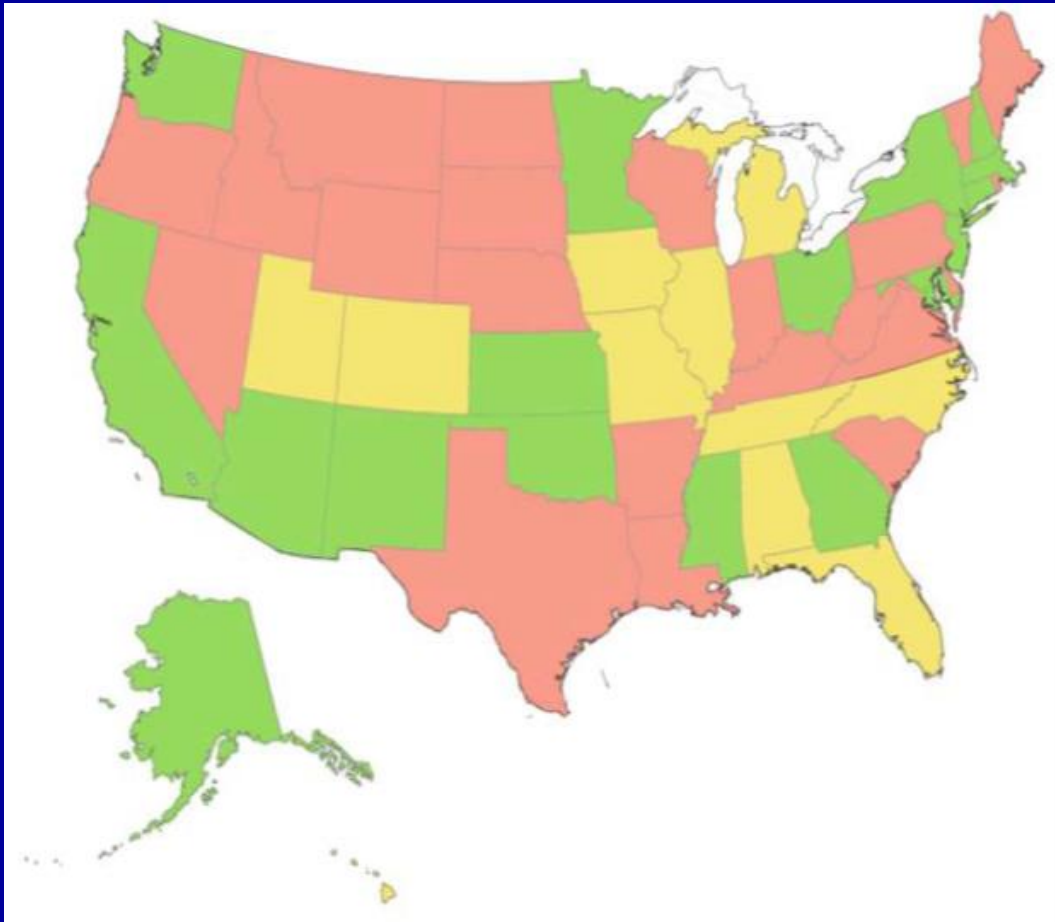
1. Pass a Constitutional Amendment ***democracyisforpeople.org***
2. Fair Elections Now Act – Caps Donations to \$100, With Rest Public Financing
www.citizen.org/fair-elections-now-act
3. DISCLOSE Act of 2013 (HR 148) – Requires Electioneering Funding Disclosure
State Initiatives Alaska – Ads must list top 3 donors
North Carolina – disclosure of electioneering comms
4. Tell SEC to Require Corporations to Disclose Political Spending (we already have 700,000+ signatures)
http://action.citizen.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=9213
5. Shareholder Protection Act (S825&HR1734) – Shareholder Approval of Political Spending
Iowa – Corporate Boards must approve political spending
Maryland – Shareholders must be informed of political spending

States Where Disclosure Could Be Imposed by Regulation

Green states: Most favorable

Yellow states: Some discretion

Red states: Least favorable



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It's Not Just Corporations: Co-ops Are Problem Too

August 12, 2013, 03:12 pm

Electric co-ops come out swinging against Obama greenhouse gas plan

By Julian Hattem

Possible Strategy: Pressure Ag Companies In Co-op Service Territories