

Briefing on American Legislative Exchange Council's Energy Agenda - July 2014

The American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) new energy agenda continues to support the interests of its fossil fuel and utility members by attacking clean energy policies at the state level. ALEC is funded by some of the nation's largest energy corporations including Exxon Mobil, Koch Industries, and Peabody Energy.

ALEC's 2014 Annual Meeting Energy Agenda

ALEC's Energy Task Force Meeting in July 2014 includes discussions on limiting the implementation of the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan, and other ways to weaken and slow the growth of the cleantech industry for the remainder of the year and into 2015. The task force is also featuring a presentation on Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs, and a presentation from Nuclear Matters, which is a utility industry-backed advocacy organization.

PACE programs are an innovative way to finance clean energy and energy efficiency upgrades. PACE helps property owners overcome the barrier of up-front costs by spreading the cost of the system over a long time period, repaid through a property tax assessment of up to 20 years. Legislatures in 31 states and DC have authorized cities or counties to establish PACE financing programs and they are helping consumers save on utility bills and install renewable energy, which is exactly why utility and fossil fuel interests want to stop the programs from spreading, and are hosting a presentation at ALEC's energy task force meeting.

Nuclear Matters, a major lobbying effort funded by Exelon Corporation (at an expense of \$12-15 million per year), is working to boost utilities' struggling nuclear power plants. Nuclear Matters is supported by ALEC members like EEI, and in turn supported by EEI members: Duke Energy, Dominion, Southern Company, Arizona Public Service, and FirstEnergy. In Dallas, this utility front group will be presenting to state legislators, likely advocating for policies to prop up expensive nuclear power over affordable clean energy alternatives.

The Energy Task Force presentations at ALEC's 2014 Annual Meeting expand the fossil fuel front group's anti-clean energy agenda and serve as just another line of attack to benefit ALEC's fossil fuel members: Duke Energy, Peabody Coal, Koch Industries, and ExxonMobil.

Efforts to Weaken State Clean Energy Policy in 2013-2014

Over the past few years, ALEC and its corporate members have attempted to eliminate clean energy standards and weaken the distributed solar market through attacks on net metering policies. Our recent report entitled "Attacks on Renewable Energy Policy by Fossil Fuel Interests in 2013-2014" details this state-by-state effort in 18 states across

the country.

In 2013 and 2014, ALEC's energy interests sought to rollback state renewable energy standards in at least 16 states, but due to broad bipartisan support for these policies and clean energy, ALEC's fossil fuel members failed to eliminate these standards in every fight (except for one minor victory). In Ohio this year, the legislature and the governor struck an agreement to freeze the state's standard for two years, though most utilities will continue energy efficiency and clean energy programs despite the freeze.

Furthermore, ALEC's utility interests including the utility trade association, Edison Electric Institute (EEI), passed a model resolution in 2013 calling for the weakening of solar net metering policies that threaten the traditional utility industry business model. In 2014, we tracked attempts at the legislative and regulatory level in six states meant to cripple solar net metering.

ALEC is just one part of the fossil fuel-funded infrastructure used to attack clean energy policies. Front groups are used by special interests to exert influence on the policy-making process. Here's how it works: First, groups like the Beacon Hill Institute provide flawed reports or analysis claiming clean energy policies have negative economic impacts. Next, allied "think tanks" use the flawed data in testimony, opinion columns, and in the media. Then, groups like Americans for Prosperity, spread disinformation through their grassroots networks, in postcards mailed to the public, and in television ads attacking the clean energy policy. Finally, lobbyists from front groups, utilities, and other fossil fuel companies use their influence from campaign contributions and private meetings with decision makers to push for anti-clean energy efforts. ALEC's energy agenda has failed over the past 2 years, however we anticipate that these attacks are only going to escalate in the coming years as clean energy becomes a more serious threat to incumbent energy interests.

