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## Big Tech quiet on climate policy

*Digital giants' limited lobbying outgunned by Big Oil's strategic opposition to meaningful action to support Paris-aligned policy globally*

The five Big Tech companies are deploying only a fraction of their lobbying effort to support global climate action despite their growing market power and top-line statements in support of urgent action to address the climate crisis, reveals a report from InfluenceMap released today.

The **Big Tech and Climate Policy** report shows that just 4% of the 2019-20 reported lobbying activities of Apple, Alphabet, Amazon, Facebook, and Microsoft were focused on climate-related policy at a US federal level. In Europe, where Big Tech is growing its lobbying capacity, it is largely silent on the EU's ambitious climate policy agenda. This is based on publicly available evidence.

The five companies all have ambitious net-zero emissions plans but their limited policy lobbying is "outgunned" by Big Oil's strategic opposition to meaningful climate policy: in 2019-20 ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, Shell, and ConocoPhillips focused 38% of their reported federal lobbying in the US on climate.

Big Tech companies' support for climate action is further undermined by their membership of powerful cross-sector industry groups which continue to lobby against binding measures necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, including the US Chamber of Commerce, BusinessEurope and the Japan Business Federation (Keidanren).

**Sheldon Whitehouse, United States Senator for Rhode Island, said:** "Big Tech companies are some of the most powerful businesses in the world. They make things happen – when they want things to happen. This report shows how Big Tech has refused to lift a finger to push comprehensive climate action in Congress. That may soon change, and the best place to start is ensuring that Big Tech's trade associations are powerful advocates for ambitious climate action."

**Bill Weihl, ClimateVoice Founder; former Director of Sustainability, Facebook, and former Green Energy Czar, Google, said:** "This report provides clear, convincing proof points that despite their pro-climate philosophy, Big Tech is not advocating for the bold climate policy we need. We are calling on the Big Five to step up their lobbying, and use their enormous influence, to meet this moment. Because right now they are missing it."

Big Tech now represents roughly 25% of the value of the S&P500 (and 20% of its latest aggregate profits), while the entire energy sector including oil and gas companies represents just 2.3%. Amazon hired close to half a million workers during 2020. This economic clout gives the digital giants huge potential to influence government policy.

The five companies have extensive climate programs - in terms of minimizing the emissions of their operations, supply chains, and products - and they have made many top-line statements on climate, supporting net-zero targets and economy-wide action in line with the Paris Agreement.

But the report finds that this is not matched by strategic advocacy for climate policies, according to available lobbying disclosures. Their limited engagement tends to focus on technical rules to enable corporate renewable energy procurement that are directly associated with their operations/commitments, and overlooks issues such as renewable targets, emissions trading, and regulation to promote other low-carbon technologies and phase down high-carbon activities.

This contrasts with the strategic engagement of climate leaders like Unilever, which advocates on a range of policies globally with a clear goal of shifting governments to act more ambitiously towards the Paris goal of 1.5°C. IKEA, Iberdrola and ENEL are other climate policy leaders.

"This report shows that despite robust top-line climate commitments from Big Tech and the sector's huge economic footprint, these companies appear not to be strategically deploying their significant influence over government policy in support of much needed climate policy," **Dylan Tanner, Executive Director, InfluenceMap said.** "This represents a lost opportunity for corporate leadership on climate policy."

"Stronger engagement on climate policy from Big Tech and other large corporations could help clear the pathway for policy makers to take stronger action on the climate crisis."

InfluenceMap's research shows:

- The five Big Tech companies devoted an average of 4% of their reported legislative lobbying efforts to climate-related policy at the US federal level in 2019-20. Within this group, **Facebook** deployed 6%, **Microsoft** 5%, **Amazon** 5%, **Alphabet** 3%, and **Apple** 2%. This contrasts with Big Oil which focused more than one-third (38%) of its lobbying activities on climate-related policies, based on public data.
- In California, where **Apple, Alphabet, Facebook**, and oil giant **Chevron** are headquartered, the three tech companies dedicated an average of 4% of their reported lobbying to climate issues, compared with 51% for Chevron.
- Big Tech's headquarter buildings, data centers, and regional offices are spread across a total of 22 states, yet **the companies engaged with climate policy in fewer than half of those 22 states.** That engagement largely focused on electric grid rules such as regulations to facilitate corporate power purchase agreements.
- **In Europe, evidence of lobbying by Big Tech appears similarly scant.** Beyond high-level support for the EU Green Deal, InfluenceMap's global climate lobbying tracking system has not detected significant direct, deep climate policy engagement in the EU by Big Tech.

*Full report, graphics, and quotes at this landing page.*

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### About our methodology

InfluenceMap's methodology on assessing corporate lobbying necessarily relies on publicly disclosed information from a range of sources such as regulatory consultation comments. The system records, for oil majors and other companies lobbying intensively on climate, many hundreds of public data points with recent evidence more heavily weighted. We recognize that many aspects of the lobbying process may not be documented. However, we believe our scores - which are based on public data sources - are representative of corporate positions and allow comparisons across the corporate sector.

### About InfluenceMap

InfluenceMap is a London, U.K.-based think tank providing data driven analysis to investors, corporations and the media on issues related to energy and climate change. Our metrics for measuring corporate influence over climate policy are in use by investors globally, including the global Climate Action 100+ investor engagement process. Our content has been covered widely in global media and is used by many campaign groups.

#### Appendix Graphic:

The relative positions of the positively lobbying corporations (climate policy leaders - upper right), the negatively lobbying corporations and cross sector industry groups, (climate policy laggards - upper left) and Big Tech are summarized in the chart below.

