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New Analysis: Fossil Fuel Industry Indirectly and Directly Driving Anti-ESG Political Movement

New think tank report details evidence of the sector's early involvement in bill writing and distribution

New York, NY – A new analysis from InfluenceMap released today found that fossil fuel industry players are directly and indirectly driving the anti-ESG political movement and are writing, distributing, and supporting anti-ESG legislation at the state level.

Researchers from the independent think tank, InfluenceMap, which generates data-driven analysis on how business and finance are impacting the climate crisis, reviewed public documents as well as previously unseen results of Freedom of Information Act requests to determine the origins of anti-ESG legislation proposed across the United States.

“While the anti-ESG political movement is now being propagated by elected officials, pundits, and think tanks, the fossil fuel industry was instrumental in triggering this concept into the mainstream,” said Cleo Rank, a senior analyst for InfluenceMap and the lead author of the analysis. “Our research finds that this political movement was likely sparked by the fossil fuel industry, and that support for this political movement continues to be a major industry focus.”

The think tank found incontrovertible evidence of the sector's early involvement in bill writing and distribution, as well as the industry's continued support for state-level bills and model policy. Examples include:

- Emails from February 2021 obtained from a Freedom of Information request show that the West Virginia Coal Association sent a draft of an anti-ESG bill, which appeared to be drafted by Alliance Resource Partners (the second largest coal producer in the eastern US), to West Virginia Delegate Zack Maynard, who subsequently introduced the legislation, HB 3084. Lobbyists representing American Consolidated Natural Resources (formerly Murray Energy) and Arch Resources (formerly Arch Coal) were also on the email thread.
- North Dakota SB 2291 was written by Senator Jessica Unruh-Bell, who worked for the North American Coal Corporation while she was in the Senate.

“The evidence shows that, rather than emerging organically, the anti-ESG political movement was in fact part of a calculated and coordinated plan by major fossil fuel industry actors,” said

Rank.

The analysis details major corporate actors and their respective roles to date in supporting the anti-ESG political movement and legislation across the country.

For more information and to read the full analysis, *Anti-ESG and the Fossil Fuel Sector*, [click here](#).

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About InfluenceMap

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