

The violence and settler attacks on the West Bank also represent an ominous threat to the cease-fire and a threat to fulfilling a true vision of peace. Gaza and the West Bank are part of what will be a separate Palestinian State. That violence occurring at the hands of settlers has to be stopped by the Netanyahu government.

Just this week in the West Bank, we saw violent attacks by mass club-wielding settlers on Palestinian villagers and harvesters. They even attacked the very same village that our Ambassador, Mike Huckabee, had visited and promised to protect only a few months before.

This photograph, taken only a few days ago, is the result of an illegal Israeli settler beating a 55-year-old woman who was harvesting olives on her family's ancestral lands, beating her with that club without mercy, without restraint. Her name is Afaf Abu Alia. She is a mother, and she is a victim of violence. This just happened days ago.

By the way, October marks the start of the olive harvest season across the West Bank. Since the start of the harvest, where folks have to go from their homes to the fields, illegal Israeli settlers have reportedly staged 158 assaults against Palestinian farmers, and they destroyed nearly 800 trees. These trees, as you know, are nurtured over generations, just like the ones on the Mount of Olives. Many Palestinian families depend on them as their only source of income.

The violence, by the way, also impacts Americans. If Mr. Netanyahu is serious about working with the President in supporting the cease-fire that he did agree to, he will take action to hold accountable those responsible for the Americans killed by Israeli forces and illegal settlers; Americans like Saif Musallet, a Florida teenager who was on vacation visiting family when he was attacked, and he was killed by illegal settlers.

Mr. Netanyahu must also finally help the United States investigate the killing of the American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot by an Israeli sniper from a couple of hundred yards away, nowhere near any Israeli troops.

The Palestinian State envisioned by the cease-fire requires that Mr. Netanyahu also end the constant expansion of settlements into the West Bank. The Israeli Government must stop demolishing Palestinian homes, sometimes using bulldozers paid for by American taxpayers. Yet the Netanyahu government is going full steam ahead. This is an immense impediment to peace.

And to be certain, Hamas, too, must lay down its arms. It must refrain from violence. That is an incredible threat to the cease-fire. Ultimately, Hamas has got to go. Hamas violence is that threat to peace. It is a threat to the Palestinians living in Gaza who yearn for peace and yearn for an opportunity to rebuild where they live and have

their kids be back in school and to be safe.

The cease-fire acknowledges that there must be a force that has sufficient authority to quell Hamas violence. This is the peacekeeping force that was in the 20-point Presidential plan. If we are going to be successful, we have to redouble our efforts to stand that force up and make certain that all the signatories to that peace plan do their part to make certain that can happen.

President Trump's leadership to help achieve a cease-fire—that leadership must be redoubled to achieve a durable peace and a lasting peace for the Israelis and the Palestinians. To have this stop on the day the agreement was signed without then redoubling efforts to face the difficult challenges that await resolution after the cease-fire will result in failure. So I call on the President and I urge all of us to do every single thing we can to stay focused on the implementation of the peace plan and not turn away as though this is yesterday's problem because if we don't do that, it will be tomorrow's problem once again.

I urge all of us to accept the burden of leadership that is absolutely required for the well-being of the entire region but for the promise of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and for the promise of the Palestinian people living alongside in peace with Israeli neighbors.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise here for the 302nd time to urge this somnolent, compromised body to wake up to the dangers of climate change—again, with my trusted and increasingly battered chart. This time, my focus is on the fossil fuels industry's corrupting influence over the Trump administration and what that means for Americans.

When I stood before you for the 296th time back in January, I predicted that the fossil fuel looters and polluters would take over the Federal Government. I am saddened but not surprised that my grim forecast has already come true. It is only October, and already it is clear that the fossil fuel industry bought, paid for, and now straight up owns the Trump administration, and it is only going to get worse.

For years, I warned that if we let fossil fuel money pour into our politics unchecked, that if we let dark money run rampant, and that if we let polluters sabotage science, then one day the government would cease to belong to "we the people" and instead belong to them, the polluters. Well, that day has arrived.

Last month, I set out the fossil fuel industry's four phases of climate denial:

Phase 1: Bury the evidence. Refuse to disclose what they knew, what their own scientists were telling them.

Phase 2: Actively mislead the public when the evidence they had buried ultimately comes out.

Phase 3: Flood the political zone with dark money to buttress the climate denial fraud, using unlimited funding—unleashed by Citizens United.

Now we are in phase 4, where an increasingly desperate fossil fuel operation switches from defense and blockade to attack.

Today, I will do a deep dive on phase 4—the corruption and weaponization of government phase—and how it is playing out across the corrupt Trump administration.

Phase 4 is different. They are not just hiding or misleading or politically obstructing any longer. In phase 4, the fossil fuel industry fully corrupts the entire executive branch and uses the power of government to go after and crush its clean energy competition. Behind this plot are the creepy billionaires who run the industry, who are out to get even richer at the expense of the American people.

Let me be blunt. The Trump administration does not work for you, the American people; it works for fossil fuel billionaires and their sprawling, dark money corruption machine, which—no coincidence—helped put Trump in office for a second time.

Don't take my word about whom they work for. An official from the White House's own, new, so-called National Energy Dominance Council offered "concierge, white glove service" to help keep polluting coal plants open and mines in operation. That official, by the way, previously worked for Shell Oil and Valero Energy.

Every Agency, every decision, every policy of this corrupt administration is in the service of its fossil fuel donors and patrons. Fossil fuel's looters and polluters are running the U.S. Government for their own benefit, from the inside. President Trump, EPA Administrator Zeldin, Energy Secretary Wright, Interior Secretary Burgum—the whole lot of them are bought and paid for. So settle in, and I will walk you through it from the offer and acceptance, to the return on fossil fuel's political investment, to the costs to the American people.

Let's start with the moment of sale.

It was April 2024, early April. Candidate Trump was desperate. His criminal trial would begin in 4 days, and his best shot at staying out of jail was winning the Presidency. But the unpopular politician's unpopular policies just weren't moving the needle.

There was one thing left to do. It was time to make a deal. Cornered and starved for cash, Trump invited the fossil fuel donor elite to Mar-a-Lago. Sensing an opportunity, into those faux-gilt halls strolled the oil barons, the gas tycoons, the petrochemical magnates, the pipeline moguls. If you have struck oil or gas in America, you likely received an invitation.

By the way, they were a little desperate themselves because their business model was failing against the relentless pressure of cheaper, cleaner, more popular renewable energy.

There at his club, Candidate Trump delivered his offer. It was not subtle—no think tank jargon or super PAC euphemisms, no speaking in code. He looked out at those assembled fossil fuel billionaires and made a simple pitch: Give me \$1 billion, and I will do anything and everything you want.

The fossil fuel billionaires were only too happy to take that deal. Harold Hamm, the fracking kingpin, opened his checkbook. Jeffery Hildebrand, the Texas oilman, poured in millions. Kelcy Warren, a pipeline magnate, joined. Other familiar players, like George Bishop, Tim Dunn, and the Wilks brothers—they all lined up.

The fossil fuel donor elite understood the corrupt bargain: Invest just \$1 billion and maybe not all of that \$1 billion. They are at hundreds of millions. We are not sure. But let's say it was \$1 billion that ended up coming through—\$1 billion to preserve the annual \$700-plus billion subsidy that fossil fuel's free-to-pollute business model relies on; \$1 billion once for \$700 billion a year. On top of that, they could reap untold added billions in new tax subsidies, pollution deregulation, protection from legal accountability for misdeeds, and even a government-backed war they could run against their feared clean energy competition.

This was not just a fundraiser. This was no boisterous campaign rally. This was a deal—a \$1 billion, quid pro quo deal.

This corrupt deal marked a turning point in American history. Before, fossil fuels influenced using political dark money and dark money threats and promises. They lied, using a decades-long campaign of denial, deception, and doublespeak to hide the harmful effects of their products.

Those two operations—the climate denial fraud operation and the dark money corruption operation—together had blocked any meaningful, bipartisan climate legislation. They killed that dead the instant Citizens United gave them that power.

The 2024 elections gave the fossil fuel barons full control. Under the Trump regime, the U.S. Government has acted exactly as you would expect a corrupted government to act—every Agency captured, climate and energy laws and regulations rewritten, all the inconvenient science ignored, silenced, or worse—erased completely. Say goodbye to government for “we the people” and hello to government for them, the polluters. The entire Trump administration works for its fossil fuel donors.

On January 20, 2025—day one in office—President Trump issued industry-drafted Executive orders designed to kneecap fossil fuel's clean energy competition and prop up fossil fuel. One Executive order even wrote wind energy and solar energy out of the defini-

tion of “energy.” These Executive orders are now implemented by Federal Agencies that are in the hands of the stooges of the big polluters.

Let's start with the Environmental Protection Agency. There is so much rot over there, it is hard to know where to begin, so I will start with personnel.

Atop the Agency is Lee Zeldin. You may know him as the erstwhile Congressman from New York or as the failed gubernatorial candidate, but did you know of his role as the errand boy for billionaire Trump donor and oil executive Tim Dunn? Until January, Zeldin had a cushy role at the America First Policy Institute—a pro-Trump, so-called think tank founded by oilman Dunn. AFPI is hell-bent on increasing fossil fuel production, reducing fossil fuel regulation, and protecting the free-to-pollute fossil fuel business model. Dunn was thrilled to have his boy Zeldin slide slimily into the EPA.

Then there is EPA Deputy Administrator David Fotouhi and head of the Office of Air and Radiation Aaron Szabo, who, before joining the EPA, spent years defending polluting industries in court or making polluters' pitches to us in Congress.

Steven Cook, Principal Deputy Assistant in the EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management, recently represented the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers in its legal challenge to an EPA cleanup rule. Now he is the regulator he just fought in court.

Nancy Beck, Trump's EPA chemical safety adviser, used to help run the chemical manufacturers' main trade association, the American Chemistry Council.

And Sean Donahue? Well, he is the EPA's top lawyer even though he has never taken a deposition, tried a case to verdict, argued a motion, or authored and signed a legal pleading. But his partner was Deputy Director of Personnel at the White House, and fossil fuel deregulation depends on usefully incompetent lawyers.

The foxes are literally guarding the EPA henhouse. Once the pride of American environmental stewardship, the EPA is now turned inside out. Instead of writing rules to protect the public from pollution, it is writing rules to protect polluters from public accountability.

The EPA's most striking betrayal to date was its move to repeal the endangerment finding—the scientific and legal cornerstone that acknowledged greenhouse gases are a threat to public health and welfare. Without that finding, EPA would have no authority or obligation to regulate climate pollution, which is precisely the whole point.

This is not about science; this is not about law; this is about doing the bidding of the polluting fossil fuel industry, which doesn't want to be regulated and which must pollute for free to survive—never mind the enormous cost and harm that dumps onto American families.

To justify its proposed repeal of the endangerment finding, EPA leaned on a junk Department of Energy so-called climate report—a cooked-up document so baseless that more than 85 real climate scientists issued a comprehensive rebuttal of it as “fundamentally flawed,” “biased, full of errors, and not fit to inform policymaking.” The American Meteorological Society condemned it as misleading and dangerous.

Of course, the so-called climate report was not science; it was propaganda, fossil fuel propaganda. With 99 percent consensus in peer-reviewed scientific literature that fossil fuel emissions are dangerously changing our climate, you would be hard-pressed to find five climate scientists who would downplay or deny climate change. Trump's corrupt Department of Energy found all five. They weren't hard to find, though, because they all worked for fossil fuel front groups. They were chosen precisely because they would deny established science.

Get a load of this crew: Dr. Roy Spencer, previously a visiting fellow at the climate denialist Heritage Foundation, funded—no surprise—by ExxonMobil, DonorsTrust, the Koch Foundation, and the Sarah Scaife Foundation—all fossil fuel companies or dark money outfits pushing fossil fuel's pollute-for-free agenda; Dr. John Christy, linked to conservative front group Competitive Enterprise Institute, funded with dark money from the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, the Charles Koch Institute, DonorsTrust, the Heritage Foundation, Marathon Petroleum, and Murray Energy; Dr. Judith Curry, who charges \$400 per hour for consulting services to petroleum companies, electric utilities, and natural gas energy traders—a frequent face also here in Congress spewing fossil fuel-funded propaganda in committee hearings; Dr. Steven Koonin, formerly at British Petroleum, now a fellow at the Hoover Institute—a conservative-leaning research organization funded by ExxonMobil, DonorsTrust, and the Sarah Scaife Foundation; finally, Dr. Ross McKittrick of the Cato Institute, funded by Charles Koch, DonorsTrust, ExxonMobil, Murray Energy, and the Scaife Family Foundations, and he is also a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute, funded by the Charles G. Koch Foundation, ExxonMobil, and the Sarah Scaife Foundation. If you are sensing a pattern, you should be.

Everyone knew the report was nonsense, but it gave the polluters a figleaf behind which EPA could try to deregulate fossil fuel pollution. No surprise, the group of climate deniers was disbanded before they had to answer to the public under the Administrative Procedure Act for their junk report.

Trump's corrupt EPA is also repealing methane standards, undoing auto emissions rules, abandoning air pollution safeguards, scrapping limits on toxic emissions, cutting protections

against pollution from coal plants like mercury and carbon dioxide, even clawing back billions in appropriated funding for clean energy. Hell, EPA literally provided polluters with a special email address to get exemptions from air toxics rules—concierge service indeed.

Trump's EPA had to really bend the rules to roll back State safeguards, like California's Clean Air Act waiver created a half century ago in recognition of California's then-immense air pollution challenges and its early leadership in improving air quality. Waivers allow California and other States, like Rhode Island, that follow California's lead to set tougher pollution standards for cars and trucks sold inside their borders. But tougher pollution standards mean selling less gasoline, and so they went at the California waiver.

There was a trick here. Trump's EPA submitted California's waivers to Congress as so-called final rules, which they weren't and which had never been done before. But it made them vulnerable to undoing by simple Senate majority here under the Congressional Review Act—a trick, by the way, suggested by fossil fuel industry lawyers in the Polluter Page of the Wall Street Journal.

GAO and the Senate Parliamentarian rejected the effort to falsely label the waivers as "rules," so our fossil fuel-funded Republican friends went nuclear, overruled the Senate Parliamentarian, and killed the State waivers—a sour joke from a party that in other circumstances claims to be all about States' rights, States' ability to self-govern, and cooperative federalism."

Thanks to the corrupt billion-dollar deal, the Environmental Protection Agency is now clearly the "Polluter Protection Agency," bought and paid for. Goodbye, again, to "we the people"; hello to them, the polluters.

Let's talk about the Trump Justice Department, perhaps better called "Oil, Gas, and Coal, LLP." You can't understand the corruption at EPA without understanding how Trump weaponized the Justice Department to become the fossil fuel industry's taxpayer-funded law firm.

One example: From the get-go, EPA Administrator Zeldin was hell-bent on clawing back more than \$20 billion in clean energy grants Congress had appropriated. But he had a problem: There was no legal basis to do so.

Enter Trump's corrupted DOJ, which tried to cook up a fake criminal investigation to provide a pretext to freeze the funds. Zeldin echoed the theme with multiple phony and likely defamatory allegations of criminal and fraudulent behavior by grant recipients, who, by the way, included among them nefarious organizations like Habitat for Humanity.

Next problem: The evidence was so weak that the Chief of the DC U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division resigned rather than authorize the fake

criminal investigation, and no other career attorney in the whole office would sign on. So Trump's since-fired interim U.S. attorney personally submitted a warrant application with no career cosigner. And guess what. He got shot down by the magistrate judge for lack of probable cause. Any Federal prosecutor can tell you how unusual and how embarrassing that is.

Desperate, Trump's DOJ tried to shop the same failed investigation to other U.S. Attorney's Offices, hoping somebody—anybody—would pursue the failed warrant. In case that wasn't enough, meanwhile, in another courtroom, back in the same DC courthouse, Department of Justice lawyers in a civil matter were denying that they alleged fraud in the use of those funds.

What a mess. Seeking warrants without proof, prompting career officials to resign, making fake public assertions of criminality, failing in court, making inconsistent legal arguments in the same courthouse—all of that to claw back money duly appropriated by Congress and properly obligated to grantees, all to help grow the clean energy sector and reduce air pollution? None of that is normal DOJ. This is weaponized DOJ.

Just last month, DOJ's fossil fuel's law firm went to Federal court in New York to strike down a State law requiring the largest fossil fuel polluters to pay into a fund to redress New York's climate damages for infrastructure, adaptation, for disaster recovery.

DOJ—the U.S. Department of Justice—went to court to argue the polluters' case, that the law was an unconstitutional overreach that Federal courts should rein in. The Justice Department of the United States, paid for by U.S. taxpayers, used its resources to give a taxpayer freebie to the likes of ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, Shell, and Koch Industries—companies with plentiful armies of lawyers of their own.

Trump's corrupted DOJ also sued Vermont to strike down a similar State law and even sued Hawaii and Michigan to stop those States from suing fossil fuel companies before the States' complaints had even hit the docket. This is not normal DOJ; this is weaponized DOJ.

Why is DOJ acting so strangely? As a former prosecutor, I am telling you, this makes no sense, unless you follow the money.

After the billion-dollar quid pro quo deal, DOJ has become the polluters' taxpayer-funded law firm. Goodbye to "we the people" as the DOJ client; hello to the new client, them the polluters.

Third, is Trump's Department of Energy. It is run by Chris Wright, the former CEO of an oil and gas services company, handpicked to lead DOE by—guess who—oil billionaire Harold Hamm, who organized the Mar-a-Lago billion-dollar-deal donor dinner.

DOE should be advancing clean energy, supporting energy innovation, and funding the energy technologies of

tomorrow, as Congress has authorized it to do. Instead, this Department of Energy has become a fossil fuel industry lackey.

You have got to recognize, in looking at what is going on over there, that Trump's Executive orders, supposedly to unleash American energy, are written in code. It is not a complicated code.

In the code, the word "energy" is code for "fossil fuel." Understand that, and the rest becomes obvious.

Look at the behavior. The Department of Energy cut clean energy grants for low-carbon technologies and for reducing emissions. Department of Energy slashed funding for solar energy by 87 percent and wind energy by 78 percent. The Department of Energy created a \$625 million bailout fund for expensive, polluting, coal-fired powerplants.

During the current shutdown, Trumpsters are piling on for fossil fuel polluters, so far scrapping \$7.56 billion in clean energy grants, all of them—I am sure, by coincidence—in 16 States where Kamala Harris won the Presidential election.

(Mr. HUSTED assumed the Chair.)

All of this will raise costs for people. DOE knows how grids work. They know that suppressing clean energy means that the grid has to call up expensive, polluting fossil fuel plants—plants that might otherwise be idle because they are too expensive to run. They know that this moves billions from utility customers' pockets to the pockets of the fossil fuel industry.

This is not a glitch. This is the goal. Oh, and don't forget that it was DOE that cooked up the junk science report and teed up EPA to ditch its duty to regulate fossil fuel emissions. Thanks to the billion-dollar deal, Trump's corrupted Department of Energy is, by its own coded definition, not the Department of Energy; it is the "Department of Fossil Fuel."

Again, good-bye to "we the people"; hello to "them the polluters."

Next is the Department of the Interior, once a steward of America's public lands and waters. The billion-dollar deal turned it into a leasing agent for fossil fuel. Trump's Interior Secretary, Doug Burgum, another Cabinet member selected by Big Oil's Harold Hamm, is busy as he tries to crush offshore wind, expanding offshore drilling, opening vast stretches of the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska's Cook Inlet to his oil and gas industry clientele.

Onshore, he is handing out leases across the West. Never mind the effects these projects will have on the climate, on water resources, or on nearby communities. Trump's Interior is even lowering royalty fees and environmental standards to make sure drillers get maximum profit at minimum responsibility. Lowering royalty fees, which are already lower than what most private landowners charge, obviously takes money directly from taxpayers and hands it to oil and gas barons—looting and polluting.

At the same time, Trump is out to assassinate clean, reliable wind energy. In New York, Interior halted work on a fully permitted, under-construction 810-megawatt offshore wind farm on justifications so dubious they are almost entirely redacted out of FOIA'd documents.

Off Rhode Island and Connecticut, someone at Moscow Central told Interior to slap a stop work order on Revolution Wind, when it was nearly finished.

Get this: Government lawyers had to go into court and make arguments exactly opposite to arguments they had made defending the same project, in the same courthouse, just weeks before.

No surprise: The fake stop work order cratered in court, but those corrupt shenanigans cost the project at least \$60 million.

Here, it is not just blue States. Out west in Idaho, Interior reversed approval of Lava Ridge, a 1,000-megawatt wind project that suddenly had "legal deficiencies."

Why would the Federal Government sabotage clean energy projects on their way to completion? Follow the money. It goes to fossil fuel donors. Every electron from clean energy that gets delayed is an electron that gas and coal barons get to burn fossil fuel to sell.

And since wind and solar energy are actually cheaper, your utility bills go up. It is the direct transfer of cash from American families to fossil fuel companies and their billionaire owners.

Interior has even started to auction off wildlife refuges, treasured places that should be sanctuaries for threatened species. Oil and gas companies are now invited to bid on land set aside for conservation. National parks face budget cuts, lost protections, and industrial projects right at their borders.

Trump's corrupt Interior is no longer about preserving these landscapes for future generations but about what can be extracted from them now by big donors. The public loses cherished lands and protections that took decades to establish, all for a short-term fossil fuel payday.

Interior ignores Tribal consultation, pressing forward with drilling projects on ancestral lands without meaningful dialogue or consent. Tribal governments and Native communities—just obstacles to be brushed aside, rather than sovereign partners with legal rights.

This behavior echoes a long, shameful history of disregard for indigenous voices when fossil fuel profits are at stake.

This is no all-of-the-above energy strategy, as the administration claims. It is a fossil-fuel-first strategy that kneecaps clean power while supercharging oil and gas.

The Interior Department is now basically the auctioneer for oil and gas leases. Public lands are no longer treasures for the people. They are commodities for the polluters.

So, again, good-bye government for "we the people"; hello government for "them, the polluters."

Last, we have the State Department. Under visionary leaders like John Kerry, the State Department once led America's global engagement on climate, helping secure the landmark Paris Agreement and accomplishing impressive and enormous international oceans protections from the climate threat.

Now, with Trump calling the shots and Marco Rubio dutifully implementing his whims, the United States has exited the Paris Agreement and impedes cooperation on climate action. Just last week, using unprecedented tactics, the Trump administration bullied the International Maritime Organization into delaying a carbon-based levy for shipping emissions.

Just so you can put this in context, shipping is responsible for more global carbon pollution than all but five countries and is completely unregulated. Shipping emissions degrade air quality around ports like Los Angeles, meaning millions of people breathe dirty air.

There are clean alternatives to maritime fossil fuels. The technologies are ready, and the shipping industry wanted to make this transition. Plus, there is almost no cost to consumers. There is almost no American ship involved. But the Trump administration wouldn't have it because every ship that runs on green ammonia or some other pollution-free fuel means one fewer ship that runs on bunker oil or LNG, and that means less money into the pockets of Trump's fossil fuel donors. Plus, it was a threat. It was a threat to the free-to-pollute business model that fossil fuel wrongfully depends on.

So we will find out more about this, but with truly unprecedented tactics, the corrupt Trumpsters went full Al Capone—or maybe it should be called "Oil Capone"—to crush it.

I should add that when I said, "Last, we have the State Department," that wasn't completely accurate because Trump has put the whole of government in the service of his fossil fuel donors, not just the Cabinet Agencies. I will just give one example: the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Army Corps has a long and proud history, with a primary role to build and maintain flood control and safety infrastructure—levees, seawalls, and the like. The Army Corps also has a role in permitting energy projects. Last month, it announced that it would prioritize projects that are "energy dense"—"energy dense"—in other words, those that generate a large amount of power on a relatively small footprint of land.

"Energy dense" is a made-up thing. It is a fake concept, reverse-engineered from the result that they want to achieve through it to favor supposedly energy-dense fossil fuel projects over wind and solar farms that are more spread out—except it is fake.

Energy density, if it were real, would count the spread of pollution from fossil fuel plants, like soot particulates that can travel hundreds of miles or greenhouse gases causing global harm. If it were real, it would count the huge supply footprint these fossil fuel plants require to run, the mining and drilling for coal and oil and gas and all the related environmental destruction—the trucks, railroads, and pipelines spewing and leaking that deliver the fuels.

In real life, the wind and sunshine that power renewable powerplants have no footprint at all.

The real-life footprint of fossil plants, it is far larger than renewable plants. Yet in fake, corrupted Trump world, fossil fuel plants will get their permits expedited, while the corrupt Trump administration stalls renewable facilities over made-up energy density.

Seriously, does "energy density" sound like a policy based in reason, or is it based on campaign cash?

So that is a quick tour of the fossil fuel industry's deep corruption of the Trump administration, of its oily tentacles sliding slimily into Federal Agencies that should be working for the American people.

But this is also a story about who picks up the bill, who pays when government is corrupted.

Spoiler alert: It is you, the regular, hard-working American public.

It is bad enough that the billion-dollar deal allowed our government to be bought and paid for by the fossil fuel industry. Add on that every favor and freebee given to the fossil fuel industry costs the American people.

Let's start with disaster costs. Extreme natural disasters cost Americans between \$99 billion and \$126 billion in the first half of this year alone. NOAA's database of billion-dollar disasters shows the line going up and up and up—storm after storm, flood after flood, fire after fire.

So the Trump administration wants to end that database, as if silencing the burglar alarm will make the burglary end.

Each disaster means billions in Federal aid, billions in rebuilding costs, billions in uncompensated harm to Americans, billions that taxpayers and homeowners have to pay or suffer because polluters pollute for free.

Increasing disaster costs bring something along with them: increasing homeowners insurance problems—problems both in affordability and availability. Premiums are soaring far faster than the rate of inflation.

In Florida, the average premium is \$14,000 per year and climbing; in Louisiana, already \$11,000 per year. Insurance companies are leaving or abandoning customers, with nonrenewals to homeowners doubling or worse in many States over the last 6 years.

If Americans can't get homeowners insurance, then their property can't get a mortgage, and that spells trouble for property values in climate-exposed communities across the country. About

6 months ago, Fed Chair Jay Powell testified in the Senate that within 10 to 15 years, there would be whole regions of the United States where mortgages were no longer available. That is not coming from a green group; that is coming from the Fed. And it hits home. Families dropped from coverage are left in uninsurable homes that they might have worked a lifetime to buy whose values plummet when mortgages can't be had.

This is all fine fun and games if you are a Palm Beach billionaire selling your mansion all cash to another billionaire, but in real life, it is devastating for hard-working people—say a tradesperson living near Orlando, trying to sell their family's biggest single investment. They bought that home with a mortgage. They need to sell it to someone who can get a mortgage. If they are going to get their price with no mortgage, the price crashes.

This is a cascade. It starts with fossil fuel emissions, which amp up climate risk, creating an insurance crisis, making properties unmortgageable, crashing homeowners' property values, and cascading into full-on economic rescission.

The warnings of this abound, and if fossil fuel weren't so powerful in this building, they would be listened to. Your premiums go up or your coverage disappears and your home value plummets. And what does the Trump administration have to say about this? Well, they are not listening to you. They are lying to you because they are so deep in the pockets of the polluters who caused it all.

Energy bills. Energy bills are getting out of hand. Several things drive this.

First, we subsidize fossil fuel, locking in fossil dependence, so consumers get roasted whenever the international oil cartel jacks up global commodity prices, which we see them do all the time.

Second, U.S. consumers pay more when the fossil fuel industry decides to export oil and gas for higher prices overseas. There is less domestic supply because it got exported, and when there is less domestic supply, that predictability raises prices.

The Trump administration forcing utilities to run aging and expensive coal and gas plants that were slated for retirement will likely add \$3 billion per year to your electricity bills—\$3 billion. But your added cost is fossil fuel's added revenue. You are the one getting cheated.

The biggest hit will come from Trump sabotaging clean energy technologies—technologies that already produce electricity at lower cost. Here is how it works: When less expensive clean energy can't get on the grid, expensive, polluting fossil fuel plants that would otherwise be idle as too expensive to run get called up instead. Those more expensive plants then set the price for the grid, and your costs go up.

The trick is that the fossil interests that own and fuel those cost-setting plants get an enormous payday. With clean energy on the grid, their revenue can drop to zero because that plant is too expensive to run. But you back out the cheaper clean energy or you don't let new clean energy on the grid, and suddenly, that plant roars back to polluting life, and the money flows to the plant owner, and the money flows to the fossil fuel dealers that bring the fuel to the plant.

It is a direct transfer from ratepayers' pockets to fossil fuel barons, and they are hoping you won't figure that out, that you will blame it on the electric utility and not notice how the grid is being gamed by fossil fuel. Working families and small businesses are getting stuck paying the bill for a system that has been rigged by the Trump administration for Big Oil's benefit.

Climate brings health dangers, and those health dangers are real. Fossil fuel production and combustion release toxins—benzene, hydrogen sulfide, particulate matter, to name just a few—and they have an effect. Children near fossil fuel-fired powerplants and oil and gas wells suffer higher rates of asthma. Nearby communities experience higher rates of cancer, heart disease, and neurological damage. Air pollution just from fossil fuel production and combustion costs the average American about \$2,500 in extra healthcare expenses.

Even if you don't suffer from heart or respiratory disease, you still pay more, as health insurance companies spread around their customer base those added costs. Nationwide, that added cost is around \$820 billion annually.

That is the cost of fossil fuel. It is a cost of fossil fuel that fossil fuel doesn't pay even though economics says externalities like this should be in the price of the product. But that is the pollute-for-free business model. The industry externalizes their pollution costs, even in the hundreds of billions of dollars, onto families, onto hospitals, onto taxpayers, onto you. You pay for the mess they won't clean up.

Of course, given the control of this building, fossil fuel companies benefit from enormous tax breaks and loopholes. This lost tax money means lost school funding, lost infrastructure funding, lost healthcare dollars. Real people lose real benefits.

Just for one example, the corporate welfare polluters get just from direct fossil fuel subsidies could provide 3 million families with SNAP benefits, food for their kids and families. The billion-dollar deal at Mar-a-Lago takes tax money straight from regular American taxpayers and hands it to billionaire oil barons.

Last, let's consider lost opportunity. Because of fossil fuel corruption here at home, the industries of the future are now developing more overseas, abroad. The jobs of the future are being

created abroad. The technologies of the future are being developed abroad.

Here in the United States, fossil fuel is diligently out to destroy these opportunities, and the jobs and the future that comes with them, to protect its dying business model that cheats in the market while making our air smoggy and our water dirtier—polluting for free.

China races ahead in renewable energy, electric vehicles, and clean technology as America is dragged further and further behind by fossil fuel political interference.

That dirty deal day at Mar-a-Lago was a turning point. Donald Trump put our government up for sale, and the looters and polluters wrote the checks. And now every Agency, every policy, every decision reflects their ownership. EPA is their protector. DOJ is their law firm. The Department of Energy is their henchman. Interior is their leasing agent. The State Department is their industry diplomat, their "Oil Capone."

The repeal of clean energy programs Trump got in his "Beautiful for Billionaires Bill" is expected to cost the U.S. economy \$1.1 trillion by 2035—in a decade, \$1.1 trillion lost to the U.S. economy. That is a loss to all of us.

Meanwhile, fossil fuel CEOs rake in as much as \$40 million a year. Their companies make \$30 billion a year, and the industry sponges up government subsidies of over \$700 billion a year. That \$700 billion is the bill the American people foot every year in more disasters, higher insurance premiums, higher electricity and fuel costs, worse family health, lost good jobs, and a dwindling economic future.

With less clean energy, there will be more emissions, and with more emissions, there will be more disasters, pushing us toward the great climate insurance collapse.

Everywhere are warnings from insurers, from economists, from bankers, from regulators, from "The Big Short" guy who predicted the great recession, from The Economist magazine, even from climate-shy Fed Chair Jay Powell. Warnings abound. Warnings are everywhere of climate economic disaster ahead.

Is it too late to wake up?

I hope not. Though, for sure, our pathway to climate safety is narrowing. If we are going to solve the climate danger, we are going to have to take on the democracy danger. We do not have to accept the United States of America turning into a petrostate. We can still act. We can pass the DISCLOSE Act to expose the dark money that enables fossil fuel corruption.

We can call out and spotlight the climate denial fraud operation that has for so long deceived the American people. We can and must end the fossil fuel industry's corrupt, pollute-for-free business model—a model that violates the laws of economics as well as morality and decency. Why should polluter costs fall on taxpayers? It is simple; they shouldn't.

Democracy also should not be for sale—not to fossil fuel billionaires, not to Exxon, not to Chevron, not to Koch Industries, not to the American Petroleum Institute, not to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, nor to the National Association of Manufacturers, for damn sure not to DonorsTrust or to Leonard Leo.

For a whole lot of reasons, with our climate safety right up at the top of the list, we have got to end the corruption. We have got to spotlight the dark money front groups and the armada of special interest organizations spreading fraud.

Democracy needs to belong to the people—not to the highest bidder. When people understand what was done to them by fraud and corruption and dark money, there will be a mighty reckoning, and it cannot come too soon.

So I conclude, once again, as I have in 301 of these speeches, now for the 302nd time: Time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,  
OCTOBER 27, 2025, AT 3 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:43 p.m., adjourned until Monday, October 27, 2025, at 3 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 302:

*To be admiral*

ADM. KEVIN E. LUNDAY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 305:

*To be vice admiral*

REAR ADM. JO-ANN F. BURDIAN  
REAR ADM. JOSEPH R. BUZZELLA, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 305:

*To be vice admiral*

VICE ADM. NATHAN A. MOORE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE COAST GUARD, A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 305:

*To be vice admiral*

REAR ADM. DOUGLAS M. SCHOFIELD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS VICE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 304:

*To be admiral*

VICE ADM. THOMAS G. ALLAN, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14 U.S.C., SECTION 212(D):

*To be rear admiral*

REAR ADM. (LH) MICHAEL E. CAMPBELL  
REAR ADM. (LH) RUSSELL E. DASH  
REAR ADM. (LH) AMY B. GRABLE  
REAR ADM. (LH) MATTHEW W. LAKE  
REAR ADM. (LH) RALPH R. LITTLE  
REAR ADM. (LH) JEFFREY K. RANDALL  
REAR ADM. (LH) WILBORNE E. WATSON

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate October 23, 2025:

THE JUDICIARY

STEPHEN CHAD MEREDITH, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY.