

May 20, 2021

Attorney General William Tong
Office of the Attorney General
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Governor Ned Lamont
State Capitol
210 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Attorney General William Tong and Governor Ned Lamont,

As Connecticut scientists, researchers, medical professionals, economists, and experts in technical fields, we applaud Attorney General William Tong's leadership in holding ExxonMobil accountable for its role in our state's experiences in the global climate crisis. We see what ExxonMobil's decades of disinformation have cost Connecticut residents, and thank AG Tong for bringing the company to court over its efforts to deceive the state's consumers.

ExxonMobil has known since at least the 1960s that burning fossil fuels undeniably contributes to climate change.¹ Yet instead of acting to protect our health and safety, ExxonMobil executives chose to hide these findings from the public—including climate studies conducted by the company's own scientists—and to misrepresent climate science even while they continued to sell a product they knew could cause devastating damage.

Internal industry documents show just how long the fossil fuel industry has been deliberately sowing doubt about the risks of burning its products. Physicist Edward Teller warned the American Petroleum Institute (API) in 1959 about global warming caused by rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.² By 1965, API's president announced at an industry conference that "time was running out" to save us all from the consequences of fossil fuel pollution.³ In 1978, Exxon scientists warned of the possible need to begin shifting away from fossil fuels within 5 to 10 years.⁴ Nevertheless, ExxonMobil moved to employ deceptive

¹ Benjamin Franta, "Early Oil Industry Knowledge of CO2 and Global Warming," *Nature Climate Change*, November 19, 2018, pp. 1024-1025, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0349-9>

² Kelly, Sharon. 2018. "'Time Is Running Out,' American Petroleum Institute Chief Said in 1965 Speech on Climate Change," *DeSmog*. 20 November 2018. <https://www.desmogblog.com/2018/11/20/american-petroleum-institute-1965-speech-climate-change-oil-gas>

³ Kelly 2018.

⁴ Neela Banerjee, Lisa Song, and David Hasemyer, "Exxon's Own Research Confirmed Fossil Fuels' Role in Global Warming Decades Ago," *InsideClimate News*, July 26, 2017,

marketing—and does so even now—to keep us reliant on a product that is costing us our health, our homes, and our public lands.⁵

Due to climate change driven in very large measure by burning fossil fuels, Connecticut residents by 2050 could face an average of 30 more days each year with a heat index (or "feels-like" temperature) above 90 degrees.⁶ By 2045 Connecticut real estate currently valued at more than \$3.4 billion will be at risk from chronic tidal flooding,⁷ and storms are already becoming stronger and more frequent. Our low-income neighbors and communities of color are often hit first and worst by these and other impacts; they have to withstand the brunt of climate damages even though they have historically been denied the resources to cope with them adequately.

In short, Connecticut residents and businesses are paying for the impacts of climate change today, and we will pay more in the future. Peer-reviewed science now traces emissions from ExxonMobil products to the worsening warming we see in our cities and the sea level rise we see along our coasts.⁸ The company, however, continues to profit enormously from its more than half a century of spreading climate science disinformation and misleading advertising, expecting the people of Connecticut to pick up the tab for its climate destruction.

By holding ExxonMobil accountable, AG Tong is defending Connecticut communities that are already suffering the impacts and pressuring ExxonMobil to cease and desist its dishonest and dangerous practices.

Along with the strong majority of people in our state,⁹ we believe ExxonMobil needs to pay its fair share toward covering the damages currently being shouldered by Connecticut residents, as well as financing measures that will be necessary to help people and businesses adapt in anticipation of changes in climate whose pace will only accelerate as our future unfolds.

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/15092015/Exxons-own-research-confirmed-fossil-fuels-role-in-global-warming>

⁵ Shulman, Seth, Kate Abend, and Alden Meyer. "Smoke, Mirrors & Hot Air: How ExxonMobil Uses Big Tobacco's Tactics to 'Manufacture Uncertainty' on Climate Change." Union of Concerned Scientists, January 2007, <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/smoke-mirrors-hot-air#ucs-report-downloads>

⁶ Dahl, Kristina, Erika Spanger-Siegfried, Rachel Licker, Astrid Caldas, John Abatzoglou, Nicholas Mailloux, Rachel Cleetus, Shana Udvardy, Juan Deplet-Barreto, and Pamela Worth. "Killer Heat in the United States: Climate Choices and the Future of Dangerously Hot Days." Union of Concerned Scientists, July 2, 2019. <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/killer-heat-united-states-0>

⁷ \$3.4 billion at 2018 market value. Dahl, Kristina, Rachel Cleetus, Erika Spanger-Siegfried, Shana Udvardy, Astrid Caldas, and Pamela Worth. "Underwater: Rising Seas, Chronic Floods, and the Implications for US Coastal Real Estate." Union of Concerned Scientists, June 18, 2018. <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/underwater#ucs-report-downloads>

⁸ Ekwurzel, B., Boneham, J., Dalton, M.W. et al. "The rise in global atmospheric CO₂, surface temperature, and sea level from emissions traced to major carbon producers." *Climatic Change* 144 (2017): 579 -590, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-017-1978-0>

⁹ Leiserowitz, Anthony et al. "Support for Making Fossil Fuel Companies Pay for Climate Damages," Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. 18 June 2019. <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/fossilfuel-lawsuits/?est=damageresp&type=value&geo=county>

Having seen the impacts of fossil fuel pollution firsthand and highly confident in our understanding of the range of possible hazardous futures we might face, we commend AG Tong for being a leader and advocate for Connecticut communities and for joining with the more than two dozen other state and local officials across the country in calling for justice over Big Oil's long-standing deception.

Sincerely,

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