



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on October 29, 2009

House Committee Refuses to Hear Inconvenient Truth

The House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming showed its bias against any criticism of the environmental movement at a hearing on October 29. While gladly investigating some apparently fraudulent letters sent to Congress opposing climate and energy (cap and trade) legislation, the Democratic majority on the committee objected to any testimony on how the green lobby is guilty of the same thing.



When a company, group, or person attempts to create the appearance of a grass-roots movement by orchestrating it artificially in some way, that is called astroturfing. The reference to artificial grass is meant to show that a particular “grass-roots” movement is actually fake and only exists because an outside force is manipulating and maintaining it.

In the case of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, they only wanted to hear testimony on how opponents of the Waxman-Markey climate and energy bill used astroturfing to influence voting on the bill. At the committee’s website, they [claim](#) they discovered that “more than a dozen fraudulent letters were sent to several members of Congress as part of a campaign run by the firm, Bonner & Associates, and contracted by the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity.”

If everything is as the committee says, then it is fair enough to investigate if proponents of the coal industry were astroturfing. But the committee showed a hypocritical streak when the Democratic majority refused to hear testimony from Christopher C. Horner of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Horner had evidence to support his assertion that “examples abound of ‘Astroturfing’ and other deceptive practices to push the global warming agenda.” This didn’t sit well with those on the committee who are, in fact, pushing the global warming agenda. A copy of the oral testimony that Horner would have given is [posted](#) at [biggovernment.com](#).

“Recently, the Environmental Defense Action Fund used Craigslist to recruit paid ‘activists’ to rally support for cap-and-trade in the guise of a grassroots movement,” Horner mentions. Exelon, one of the nation’s largest electric utilities, also indulged in a form of astroturfing.

Horner explains: “Exelon is of course again in the news of late for leading a campaign, sold by public affairs professionals as an exodus from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce based upon environmental principle but which, upon scrutiny, is a collection of largely ‘rent-seeking’ companies standing to make as much as one billion dollars per year on the backs of ratepayers from cap-and-trade according to media reports.”



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The written form of Horner's statement may be introduced into the record by Republicans on the committee, but since the minority basically "agreed to agree to the majority's wishes," Horner's inconvenient truth will be silenced for the moment. He guesses that there must be "something very, very dangerous" about his testimony, but says, "I cannot figure out what that might be given the umbrage being taken at AstroTurfing and the solemn vows to expose the wantonness, so I leave it to you."

As you peruse Horner's undelivered testimony, keep in mind his reference to a pithy remark: "The merits of these practices of course do not hinge on whether they agree with one's position. As AEI's Ken Green was quoted as saying, however, 'When someone else does it, it's astroturfing; when you do it, it's community organizing.' "



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