

CIVIL SOCIETY: “OIL COMPANIES SHOULD NOT AUTHOR IPCC REPORT”

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108 organizations urged Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to review flagrant conflict of interest of allowing two oil company employees to co-author a crucial report on global warming

Cross-posted from ETC Group.

On 27 April 2017, 108 civil society organizations signed a letter requesting the IPCC to reconsider its list of authors for the upcoming Special Report on keeping global warming below 1.5°C. Two senior employees from major oil companies were selected among the authors for the Report, which the letter considers a major hurdle to make a fair report, and a violation of the IPCC’s conflict of interest policy.

Organizational signatories were from six continents, and included global international organizations such as 350.org, ActionAid, Friends of the Earth International and Greenpeace International, along with many other national and regional organizations from around the world.

The two authors in question work with ExxonMobil and Saudi Aramco, the second- and third-largest corporate emitters of greenhouse gases worldwide respectively. These two companies bear a large part of the responsibility for causing climate change, along with 88 other corporate emitters who together are responsible for 2/3 of cumulative historical carbon dioxide and methane emissions since 1854, according to a study by Richard Heede.

The letter states that “it is difficult to understand that the IPCC could include authors from the industries that have caused the most damage, and for whom private profits would be affected if the necessary reductions are carried out.”

The two authors have vested interest in continued use of fossil fuels, which is directly incompatible with reaching the 1.5°C goal. Furthermore, one of them, Dr. Haroon S. Kheshgi has for long time argued for the use of geoengineering techniques, risky technologies to counteract some of the symptoms of climate change, which would allow oil companies to continue exploiting their reserves.

Therefore, the signatories argue that **“it is worrying that the industry representatives are precisely those with interests in promoting unacceptable pathways and high-risk technologies, such as climate geoengineering, which distract from the real emissions reductions that are required to avoid catastrophic warming.”**

While two oil industry employees are included on the list of authors along with other representatives of industry-sponsored associations, none of researchers nominated by independent civil society organizations were accepted.

Signatories “request the IPCC to reconsider the selection of authors, both for this and all upcoming reports, to ensure that no conflict of interest exists, and that multiple disciplines, regions and viewpoints are included.”

The IPCC has responded for now that civil society concerns “have been noted and been brought to the attention of the body responsible for these matters,” and that “the appropriate action will be taken accordingly.”

Civil society expects the IPCC to answer before the next meeting of authors to this Special Report, scheduled June 5-11, and will continue watching the process.

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Read the letter from civil society and the list of signatories here.

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