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February 1, 2010

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Nuclear Industry Spent Hundreds of Millions of Dollars Over the Last Decade to Sell Public, Congress on New Reactors, New Investigation Finds

The nuclear industry claims that there is increased public support for nuclear power as a solution to climate change, and some members of Congress are arguing that massive incentives for new nuclear reactors are critical to passing a climate and energy bill. Today, the Obama administration is expected to propose tripling the amount of loan guarantees to the industry to \$54 billion and there are proposals in Congress to add billions more through a new "clean" energy fund and other incentives to support nuclear power expansion.

Where did all this support for new nuclear reactors come from? Let's follow the money.

Growing support for new nuclear power comes after an extensive decade-long campaign in which companies and unions related to the industry have spent more than \$650 million on lobbying and campaign contributions from 1999 through 2008, according to a new [analysis](#) by former Los Angeles Times reporter Judy Pasternak, now with the Investigative Reporting Workshop at American University. In the first three quarters of 2009 alone, the nuclear energy industry spent \$84 million lobbying Congress.

"In many ways, the nuclear power industry's efforts to win support are a textbook case of how the influence game is played in Washington," Pasternak reports. "Besides the money spent on lobbying and campaign contributions, the industry, led by the NEI [Nuclear Energy Institute], has created a network of allies who give speeches, quote one another approvingly and showcase one another on their Web sites. The effect is an echo chamber of support for nuclear power."

Two of the industry's celebrity spokespeople, former EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman and former Greenpeace activist Patrick Moore, have been stumping around the country, writing op-eds, and appearing on TV to extoll the virtues of nuclear power as the co-directors of the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition, but they rarely, if ever, mention that the NEI created the coalition and is its sole funder.

The Union of Concerned Scientists is the leading U.S. science-based nonprofit organization working for a healthy environment and a safer world. Founded in 1969, UCS is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and also has offices in Berkeley, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

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Union of Concerned Scientists

National Headquarters

2 Brattle Square, Cambridge, MA 02238-9105

