

council fed Trump a steady diet of talking points about slashing regulations and achieving “complete American energy independence.”

These fossil fuel industry talking points became the Executive order I mentioned earlier, an order to kill any environmental protection that “unduly burdens the development of domestic energy resources.” Do you want to know who the winners were from that Executive order? Check the list of attendees at the signing ceremony: fossil fuel executives and fossil fuel industry trade association executives, come to celebrate the freedom to pollute that their influence and money had bought them.

Chevron has recently been identified as one of the companies that has done the most to damage our oceans. They are one of the top ocean-wrecking companies on the planet. In February of 2017, Chevron wrote to the corrupt Pruitt with a list of deregulatory proposals the company wanted to see implemented at the EPA. Included was a request to “refocus methane regulations, particularly those that impact existing sources, to encourage voluntary approaches.” For sure, you can trust one of the world’s worst ocean polluters with voluntary approaches.

The corrupt Trump EPA was stocked with fossil fuel industry cronies ready to implement whatever the industry wanted. Pruitt rose to political power on a wave of fossil fuel money and demonstrated a willingness to sell his office by putting fossil fuel industry asks verbatim onto his official letterhead.

Andrew Wheeler, Pruitt’s successor as Administrator, had been a leading lobbyist for the coal industry. The head of the EPA Air Office, Bill Wehrum, rose to prominence by helping build and run an array of trade associations and front groups for—guess what—the fossil fuel industry.

Beyond Pruitt and Wheeler and Wehrum, the EPA’s political leadership crawled with fossil fuel flunkies, like

the one who left to set up the fossil-fuel dark energy group Energy 45 to help promote fossil fuel energy policies; or the lawyer-lobbyist for energy interests Dominion Energy, Koch Industries, and TransCanada overseeing Air Office compliance, of all things. It has been an infestation.

It is easy for the fossil fuel industry to spend big money to corrupt the EPA because the corruption payoff is so big; the dirty methane work alone is estimated to save oil and gas companies hundreds of millions of dollars.

Meanwhile, the American Petroleum Institute, the largest trade association for the oil and gas industry, announced a new seven-figure ad campaign called “We’re on it.” “We’re on it.” These ads—on the Internet, TV, and billboards—they are all over the Washington, DC, airport. They are designed to fool the public and to fool policymakers that the oil industry is “on its” methane emissions problem. Of course, they are not. Of course, they are lying. It is what they do.

Science tells us that methane emissions are far higher than the estimates out of the corrupt Trump EPA. The investigative journalism group Unearthed found that leading oil companies are emitting unprecedented methane pollution. In just three producing basins, in just 1 year, oil companies emitted methane equivalent to the annual emissions of 10 coal-fired power plants or 8 million cars.

There is a recent New York Times article that you can link to showing infrared imagery—it is really impressive to see, actually, if you click through to it—infrared imagery of methane billowing out of what they call super-emitter fossil fuel facilities.

A recent article described one methane blowout in Ohio leaking as much “methane than the entire oil and gas industries of many nations do in a year.”

“We are on it.” Yeah, they are “on it.” What they are on is a binge of

lying about emissions, corrupting our politics, and blocking climate action. These massive polluting industries have a long track record of climate denial and deceit. It is how they roll.

A top climate obstructer, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, pays for a phony study, claiming the Paris agreement would cost jobs and economic growth, and Trump pulls out a pass. Oil companies lobby to gut auto fuel efficiency standards, and Pruitt and Wheeler gut the standards. The natural gas industry objects to rules limiting methane emission. The corrupt Trump EPA rolls them back.

Just now, on the Senate floor, we are looking at a tax extenders package that wipes out the tax extenders for solar going forward, wind going forward. They gave us 1 year looking backwards. Great, thanks a bunch. Electric vehicles, storage, and batteries, all of that had been in a tentative agreement. The fossil fuel industry and the Trump administration kiboshed all of it. “On it,” indeed.

Will Attorney General Barr look into any of this? Of course not. In the corrupt Trump administration, fossil fuel money and influence puts that industry above the law. They can pollute and corrupt more or less at will. We cannot afford this self-dealing from polluters any longer. This is flat-out wrong. Indeed, it is flat-out crooked. It is not only time to wake up, Madam President, it is time to clean up. This behavior is a disgrace.

I yield the floor.

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ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.  
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:59 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 18, 2019, at 9:30 a.m.