

People of the State of California v. Big Oil

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Oil executives deceived the public for decades about how fossil fuels are hurting our health and destroying our planet, protecting their own profits while sticking taxpayers with the bill for the damages. California is suing these big polluters to hold them accountable for their decades of deception, cover-up, and billions of dollars in harm done to our state.

NEW YORK – Governor Gavin Newsom and Attorney General Rob Bonta announced today that California is suing Big Oil for more than 50 years of deception, cover-up, and damage that have cost California taxpayers billions of dollars in health and environmental impacts. The text of the lawsuit is [here](#).

[Watch the video here.](#)

The defendants:





- **Five of the world's largest oil companies and their subsidiaries:** Exxon, Shell, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, and BP
- **A trade group that promoted disinformation:** The American Petroleum Institute

Why we're suing them:

DECADES OF DECEPTION

- **Oil and gas executives have known for decades** about the dangers of the fossil fuels they produce.
- **Industry-funded reports directly linked** fossil fuel consumption to rising global temperatures and damage to our air, land, and water.
- **Oil companies intentionally suppressed** that information from the public and policymakers to protect their profits, and spent billions of dollars to spread disinformation on climate change and delay our transition away from fossil fuels.
- **Oil companies used this information for their own profits,** developing new technology to explore the Arctic for oil production because they knew Arctic sea ice was melting.
- **The deception continues today:** Oil companies promote fossil fuel products as “clean” or “green” or “low-emissions” that still produce carbon pollution, and they tout their renewable fuel products that actually make up a fraction of a percent of their earnings.

Oil and gas executives have known for decades about the dangers of the fossil fuels they produce.

The New York Times

Oil Executives Privately Contradicted Public Statements on Climate, Files Show

CNN

Big Oil has engaged in a long-running climate disinformation campaign while raking in record profits, lawmakers find

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Inside Exxon's Strategy to Downplay Climate Change

DAMAGING OUR STATE

- **Big Oil's lies and cover ups have caused ongoing climate disasters** that have imposed billions of dollars of costs on Californians. We should not have to foot the bill alone while oil companies profit.
- **The suit demands that oil companies pay** their fair share for:
 - Recovery efforts from climate change-induced superstorms and wildfires;
 - Protecting people from the health impacts of extreme heat;
 - Managing dwindling water supplies in extreme drought;
 - Fortifying infrastructure and homes against sea level rise and coastal and inland flooding.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



50 years of Big Oil's deception, cover-up, and damage have cost California taxpayers billions of dollars in health and environmental impacts.



What we're asking the court to do:

- **Order the oil companies to pay** for the costs of their impacts to the environment, human health, and Californians' livelihoods, and to help protect the state against the harms that climate change will cause in years to come;
- **Prohibit oil companies from engaging in further pollution** and destruction of California communities and natural resources;
- **Levy financial penalties on Big Oil for lying** to the public, and order the industry to immediately stop its ongoing efforts to deceive or misinform about their catastrophic impacts;
- **Award punitive damages to the state** to punish these companies for their misconduct.

What Governor Newsom said: “For more than 50 years, Big Oil has been lying to us – covering up the fact that they’ve long known how dangerous the fossil fuels they produce are for our planet. It has been decades of damage and deception. Wildfires wiping out entire communities, toxic smoke clogging our air, deadly heat waves, record-breaking droughts parching our wells. California taxpayers shouldn’t have to foot the bill. California is taking action to hold big polluters accountable.”

What Attorney General Bonta said: “Oil and gas companies have privately known the truth for decades — that the burning of fossil fuels leads to climate change — but have fed us lies and mistruths to further their record-breaking profits at the expense of our environment. Enough is enough,” said Attorney General Rob Bonta. “With our lawsuit, California becomes the largest geographic area and the largest economy to take these giant oil companies to court. From extreme heat to drought and water shortages, the climate crisis they have caused is undeniable. It is time they pay to abate the harm they have caused. We will meet the moment and fight tirelessly on behalf of all Californians, in particular those who live in environmental justice communities.”

Watch & Share

[Watch the video](#) about California’s lawsuit to hold Big Oil accountable for decades of deception and billions of dollars in damage done to our state.