

June 14-15, 2012: Rockefeller-funded organizations hold conference in La Jolla, Calif., to brainstorm how they could use racketeering laws against ExxonMobil. The Union of Concerned Scientists and the Climate Accountability Institute organize [a conference](#) for activists such as Naomi Oreskes (author of Merchants of Doubt), Peter Frumhoff of the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Matt Pawa, who served on the board of the Climate Accountability Institute, to discuss [ways to link](#) Big Tobacco to ExxonMobil.

February 2015: Rockefellers meet with New York AG's office. Staffers with New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's office "were in correspondence with Lee Wasserman of the Rockefeller Family Fund," according to a report published later by the [New York Post](#). The Rockefellers have financially supported nearly every component of the #ExxonKnew campaign, including a series of hit pieces that would later be published in the Fall of 2015.

May 29, 2015: Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) publishes an op-ed in the Washington Post calling for federal government investigation of fossil fuel industry. Emails [later reveal](#) that Whitehouse was working behind the scenes to coordinate with activists to encourage an investigation under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act.

Summer 2015: Naomi Oreskes briefs New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. At [a forum](#) hosted June 22, 2016 by the Congressional Progressive Caucus, activist Naomi Oreskes admitted, "I was invited about a year or so ago to New York to speak to the staff of the New York Attorney Generals' office..." Oreskes was one of the key organizers of the 2012 La Jolla conference.

Summer 2015: Peter Frumhoff of the Union of Concerned Scientists starts working with Democratic AGs. Emails from Peter Frumhoff show that activists were already pursuing investigations behind the scenes via state attorneys general, long before the #ExxonKnew reports from InsideClimate News and the Columbia School of Journalism were published. As Frumhoff admitted in a July 21, 2015, [email](#), "we're also in the process of exploring other state-based approaches to holding fossil fuel companies legally accountable – **we think there'll likely be a strong basis for encouraging state (e.g. AG) action forward**, and in that context, opportunities for climate scientists to weigh in."

September 1, 2015: GMU professors send letter asking Department of Justice to harass climate skeptics under RICO laws. George Mason University professors Jagadish Shukla and Edward Maibach spearheaded a letter to the Department of Justice asking for climate skeptics to be prosecuted, supported by a group informally known as the RICO20. Shukla and Maibach later [reached out](#) to Michael Mann and the Rockefeller-funded PR firm, Climate Nexus, for help dealing with the backlash from their letter. Philip Newell of Climate Nexus assured them help is on the way in the form of InsideClimate News' upcoming series attacking ExxonMobil, calling it a "perfect news hook" to attack "deniers."

September/October 2015: InsideClimate News and Columbia School of Journalism publish #ExxonKnew series; Columbia fails to disclose Rockefeller funding. InsideClimate News publishes the [first article](#) in its #ExxonKnew series on September 16, 2015. A few weeks later, on October 9, 2015, the Columbia School of Journalism follows up with its [first Exxon article](#) in the Los Angeles Times, which tells largely the same story. The Times [initially refused to disclose](#) that the Columbia School of Journalism is funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF). Likewise, the website of the [Columbia Energy and Environment Reporting Fellowship](#) did not [originally disclose](#) its Rockefeller funding.

November 2015: Friends of the Earth President Erich Pica puts pressure on Maryland AG's office. Pica [emails](#) Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh's office, offering to brief the AG on "the potential consumer related complaints and other authorities re: ExxonMobil." A few months later, Frosh announces he is [considering](#) his own #ExxonKnew investigation, after a meeting with Pica. "We wanted to see if we can hold ExxonMobil accountable for what they've been doing in creating disinformation in the climate fight,"

Pica later told POLITICO.

November 4, 2015: *New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announces subpoena of ExxonMobil.* InsideClimate News [reports](#) that this announcement followed a “year-long probe” by the AG’s office.

January 8, 2016: *#ExxonKnew activists meet behind closed doors at the Rockefeller Family Fund.* A [leaked memo](#) reveals that a coalition of activists including Bill McKibben of 350.org and attorney Matt Pawa gathered for a [secret, closed-door meeting](#) at the Rockefeller Family Fund (RFF) offices in New York. According to the memo, the coalition’s goals were to establish “in the public’s mind that Exxon is a corrupt institution” and to identify strategies ideal for “creating scandal.”

March 10, 2016: *Schneiderman contacts Tom Steyer about Exxon investigation and funding for gubernatorial race.* As the New York Post [reported](#), “In March 2016, four months after announcing the Exxon probe, the Democratic AG tried to arrange a phone meeting with hedge-fund mogul Tom Steyer, an environmental activist and Exxon enemy. **‘Eric Schneiderman would like to have a call with Tom regarding support for his race for governor... regarding Exxon case’** reads the March 10 e-mail.”

March 15, 2016: *Virgin Islands Attorney General subpoenas ExxonMobil and the Competitive Enterprise Institute, uses law firm linked to #ExxonKnew activists.* The subpoenas served by Virgin Islands Attorney General Claude Walker were issued through a Washington, D.C. law firm, [Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld & Toll](#), where Matt Pawa, a key participant in the 2012 La Jolla conference, [used to work](#). Pawa previously [partnered](#) with several Democratic AGs on lawsuits against Exxon and other companies. The Cohen Milstein lawyer who actually signed the subpoenas, Linda Singer, received \$15 million in contingency fees when she [partnered](#) with Virgin Islands Attorney General Claude Walker in a separate lawsuit against Hess Oil Company.

March 24, 2016: *Rockefellers admit funding #ExxonKnew campaign.* Lee Wasserman of the Rockefeller Family Fund tells [Reuters](#) that funding the #ExxonKnew stories was designed to influence public policy, saying it is part of “our push to drive better public understanding and better climate policy.”

March 28, 2016: *AGs draft common interest agreement to avoid transparency with the public.* In [an email](#) to Lem Srolovic with the New York Attorney General’s office, Vermont Assistant Attorney General Scott Kline expresses concerns about sharing documents related to their work on climate, including #ExxonKnew, as they could be revealed to the public via a records request. Kline says [“our office is okay with refusing to disclose covered documents.”](#) The New York Attorney General’s office then requests a “Common Interest Agreement” be signed to avoid having the public find out about their meetings.

March 29, 2016: *#ExxonKnew activists brief AGs.* A report from [Reuters](#) discusses emails between the offices of the state AGs, which reveal that Peter Frumhoff of the Union of Concerned Scientists and Matt Pawa, then on the board of the Climate Accountability Institute, briefed the AGs ahead of a March 29 press conference with former Vice President Al Gore. Later, Frumhoff is forced to [admit](#) his attendance: “I was invited to brief the attorneys general that gathered on March 29 on my work, and that is what I did.”

March 29, 2016: *AGs United for Clean Power launches, Massachusetts AG joins #ExxonKnew.* Flanked by Al Gore, Schneiderman and several other state AGs hold a press conference announcing the formation of AGs United for Clean Power, an informal group designed to support climate policies at the state and federal level. Maura Healey, attorney general of Massachusetts, announces she is opening her own #ExxonKnew investigation.

March 30, 2016: *AG offices tell activist not to tell the press about their collusion.* On March 30, Matt Pawa sends [an email](#) to Srolovic with the New York Attorney General’s office, as well as Kline in the Vermont

Attorney General's office, explaining that "a WSJ reporter wants to talk to me. I may not even talk to her at all but if I do I obviously will have no comment on anything discussed at the meeting." Pawa then asks, "What should I say if she asks if I attended? No comment? Let me know." Srolovic responds that Pawa should effectively stonewall the WSJ reporter. "My ask is if you speak to the reporter," Srolovic writes, "to not confirm that you attended or otherwise discuss the event."

April 13, 2016: AGs sign Common Interest Agreement to avoid public records requests. Emails [confirm](#) that Gregory Schultz of the Rhode Island Attorney General's office signed on to the Common Interest Agreement that the New York Attorney General's office had recommended all the AGs' offices involved a few weeks earlier.

April 21, 2016: Delaware AG pulls out of agreement to keep public records secret. Emails obtained by Energy & Environmental Legal Institute (E&E Legal) show that a few weeks after Delaware Attorney General Matthew Denn (D) agreed to sign on to the Common Interest Agreement – which would keep their proceedings on the #ExxonKnew investigations secret – he suddenly pulled out, telling the other AGs that he would no longer be participating.

May 20, 2016: Virgin Islands Attorney General withdraws subpoena of the Competitive Enterprise Institute. The [withdrawal](#) comes after editorial boards across the country strongly push back on the #ExxonKnew campaign. For instance, the Financial Times [wrote](#), "the legal basis for these actions seems flimsy... Beyond that, the implications of the investigations for free speech on public policy issues are alarming."

May 26, 2016: Activists brag that California AG now involved in #ExxonKnew campaign. RL Miller of Climate Hawks Vote – who has [supported](#) climate investigations into oil and gas companies – [brags](#) that she is the reason California Attorney General Kamala Harris got involved the #ExxonKnew effort. As Miller says, "we endorsed Kamala Harris for US Senate after she responded to a Los Angeles County Democratic Party resolution – which I wrote – to investigate Exxon." The California AG's office never confirms the investigation.

June 15, 2016: Thirteen state AGs call Exxon investigation "a grave mistake." AGs of thirteen states send a letter to the attorneys general involved in #ExxonKnew, warning that their efforts raise "substantial First Amendment concerns." They ask the AGs to "stop policing viewpoints."

June 22, 2016: Congressional Progressive Caucus holds #ExxonKnew event, activists admit colluding with AGs. The Congressional Progressive Caucus holds [a forum](#), which includes key players from the Climate Accountability Institute and the Union of Concerned Scientists, as well as many other #ExxonKnew activists. At the forum, Naomi Oreskes [admits](#), "I was invited about a year or so ago to New York to speak to the staff of the New York Attorney Generals' office." Kathy Mulvey of the Union of Concerned Scientists [also admits](#), "Yes, UCS has also been involved in providing information to attorneys general who are moving into the issue on whether these companies violated any state laws in providing this information to shareholders and the public...our chief scientist Peter Frumhoff who's actually here with me as well and he has briefed a number of the AGs..."

June 22, 2016: Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healy puts subpoena of ExxonMobil on hold. According to [E&E News](#), "the Massachusetts subpoena is on hold, according to a joint document filed on June 22 and obtained by E&E Daily. In the filing, Healey agreed to not enforce the subpoena until the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas rules on Exxon's challenges to the subpoena and any related appeals. That process could take years."

June 29, 2016: Virgin Islands Attorney General withdraws subpoena of ExxonMobil. The [withdrawal](#) comes as legal experts across the country criticized the #ExxonKnew campaign for being legally unsound.

For instance, Harvey Silverglate of the Massachusetts ACLU [says](#) the Exxon investigation is “pure harassment.” Columbia Law Professor Merritt B. Fox [notes](#) that the investigations are “unlikely” to “be a winner.”

July 13, 2016: House Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith subpoenas New York and Massachusetts AGs and eight activist groups in relation to their work on the #ExxonKnew campaign. Chairman Smith explained in a [press release](#), “The Committee has a responsibility to protect First Amendment rights of companies, academic institutions, scientists, and nonprofit organizations. That is why the Committee is obligated to ask for information from the attorneys general and others.”

July 23, 2016: The Hill reports Linda Singer of Cohen Milstein law firm would get large retainer for working with U.S. Virgin Islands Attorney General's office on Exxon probe. As The Hill [explained](#), “Singer’s firm, an established outfit with a reputation as an aggressive plaintiffs’ advocate, stands to take in as much as 27 percent of any monetary damages, plus certain costs, [under a retainer agreement obtained by The Hill](#) through a public records request.”

August 4, 2016: Common Interest Agreement signed by 17 attorney generals' offices is made public. As Reuters [reported](#), the agreement, which was finalized in May 2016, “sought to keep prosecutors’ deliberations confidential and was broadly written so they could probe other fossil fuel companies.” E&E Legal, which obtained the document through public records requests, [explains](#) that Common Interest Agreements are required to be focused on specific legal actions, but this agreement is overly broad and “appears to be more of an effort to obtain a ‘Get Out of FOIA Free card,’ rather than a suit or any discrete or formal project.”

October 13, 2016: Federal judge issues discovery order to Massachusetts AG Maura Healey. Federal District Court Judge Ed Kinkeade issues a [discovery order](#) against Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey to determine whether “**bias or prejudgment**” influenced her decision to initiate a “**bad faith**” investigation into ExxonMobil. As the Washington Post [reported](#), this “new discovery order could open the door for an intrusive examination of Maura Healey’s internal phone records, other communications and depositions,” shedding light on the extent to which Healey, Schneiderman and others have conspired with outside activists, plaintiff attorneys and partisan political interests to carry out their failed #ExxonKnew campaign.

November 11, 2016: Federal judge rules Schneiderman can be added to discovery order. Judge Ed Kinkeade rules that a standing discovery order – which was issued to determine if Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey was engaging in a “bad faith” pursuit of ExxonMobil – [could be amended](#) to include New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who has been spearheading the entire #ExxonKnew effort.

December 2, 2016: Rockefellers admit funding #ExxonKnew campaign on national TV. The Rockefeller family appears on [CBS This Morning with Charlie Rose](#) to own up to the fact that they specifically paid the Columbia School of Journalism and InsideClimate News to write hit pieces on ExxonMobil.

December 22, 2016: Rockefellers admit they directly lobbied Schneiderman to launch Exxon investigation. In a [column](#) published by the New York Review of Books, David Kaiser and Lee Wasserman of the Rockefeller Family Fund (RFF) admit: “**the Rockefeller Family Fund (RFF) informed state attorneys general of our concern** that ExxonMobil seemed to have failed to disclose to investors the business risks of climate change. **We were particularly encouraged by Schneiderman’s interest** in this matter, because New York’s Martin Act is arguably the most powerful tool in the nation for investigating possible schemes to defraud.” (emphasis added)

February 13, 2017: News reports confirm Rockefellers and New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman were discussing #ExxonKnew before InsideClimate News (ICN) or Columbia School of Journalism pieces

were published. As the [New York Post](#) revealed, “Documents show Schneiderman’s top staffers were in correspondence with Lee Wasserman of the Rockefeller Family Fund going back to February 2015. Schneiderman launched his probe that November.”

April 29, 2017: Massachusetts AG Maura Healey marches with McKibben. At the DC climate march Healey tweets out photos of herself hobnobbing with the key players in the #ExxonKnew campaign. Healey [tweeted a picture](#) of her with 350.org co-founder and key #ExxonKnew activist Bill McKibben, as well as #ExxonKnew [activist Peter Frumhoff](#). She thanks McKibben and 350.org [“for all you do.”](#)

June, 2017: Court documents reveal Schneiderman used a private email address for official business while conducting #ExxonKnew investigation. Court [documents](#), submitted by lawyers for the Energy and Environment Legal Institute (E&E Legal), show that Schneiderman’s personal email address was used for official business because it is contained within a privilege log of correspondence that he provided to the court. A judge only recognized that the personal email was used after an in camera review of this log.

July 17, 2017: Marin and San Mateo Counties and the City of Imperial Beach file a lawsuit against major oil and gas producers, seeking to hold them accountable for the impacts of climate change. The municipalities [accuse](#) the companies of knowing about climate change but doing nothing to prevent it, and charge that the companies have created a public nuisance by emitting greenhouse gases. The communities are represented by Sher Edling, a plaintiffs’ firm that will later convince several other California municipalities to follow suit.

August 10, 2017: Judge orders Vermont Attorney General’s office to disclose all email communications with Schneiderman’s office – including Gmail. Superior Court Judge Mary Miles Teachout [orders](#) the release of records between the attorneys general of New York and Vermont, specifically any discussions of sharing documents with “outside advisors” pursuant to a secrecy pact. She also granted access to Vermont AG Bill Sorrell’s private emails, since both he and Schneiderman used private email accounts, specifically Gmail, in their [Exxon discussions](#).

August 23, 2017: Naomi Oreskes and Geoffrey Supran publish study conceding #ExxonKnew was about punishing Exxon for opposing certain climate policies. In the study, the authors [accuse](#) ExxonMobil of using advertorials to oppose policies like the Kyoto Protocol, linking such opposition to “climate denial,” even though – in the case of the Kyoto advocacy – the criticism was based on economic costs, not climate or environmental issues. It is later revealed that the authors [deliberately omitted evidence](#) that contradicted their conclusion. The New York Times has also [credited](#) Oreskes for spurring the #ExxonKnew campaign, based in part on her work at the 2012 La Jolla conference.

September 20, 2017: San Francisco and Oakland file climate liability lawsuits against the top five publicly-traded oil and gas companies. The two cities hired plaintiff’s firm Hagens Berman to represent them. The firm had helped negotiate a \$206 billion settlement with the tobacco industry and one of the firm’s partners told VICE News that he hoped to reach an [even larger settlement](#) with the oil and gas industry. [Matt Pawa](#), a lawyer with Hagens Berman and a leading #ExxonKnew activist who has aided the state attorneys general in their investigations of ExxonMobil, is leading the case. A [leaked memo](#) from Pawa to billionaire environmentalist Tom Steyer revealed that Pawa had pitched Steyer on the idea of bringing climate liability litigation in California in 2015. Steyer made a \$30,000 donation to the mayor of San Francisco shortly before the city hired Pawa to file its suit.

December 20, 2017: The County and City of Santa Cruz file identical climate liability lawsuits against 29 oil, gas, and coal companies. The [lawsuits](#) are being managed by Sher Edling, which is also managing the concurrent lawsuits filed by the City of Imperial Beach and Marin and San Mateo Counties.

January 8, 2018: ExxonMobil files a petition suggesting the California municipalities suing it may have committed securities fraud. The [petition seeks to depose](#) Matt Pawa, the #ExxonKnew activist managing several of the lawsuits, and the public officials representing the municipalities that have sued the company in an attempt to hold it responsible for sea-level rise and other climate risks. The petition suggests that the lawsuits are part of the La Jolla playbook and accuses the municipalities of either minimizing the risks of climate change in their bond offerings or exaggerating the risks in their lawsuits against the company.

January 10, 2018: New York City files its own climate liability lawsuit against oil and gas companies. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio [announced](#) the lawsuit alongside #ExxonKnew activists Bill McKibben and Naomi Ages, and hired #ExxonKnew activist Matt Pawa to represent the city. Mayor de Blasio later told U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders that the lawsuit [was intended](#) to “help bring the death knell to this industry.”

January 23, 2018: Richmond, Calif., announces a climate liability lawsuit against major oil and gas companies. The city is [also represented](#) by Sher Edling, the same firm representing several other California municipalities. The lawsuit was initially announced on Twitter by several #ExxonKnew activists, including Bill McKibben and Geoffrey Supran, even though no one had reported on the lawsuit at that time.