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Capital Research Center Senior Investigative Researcher  
Ken Braun's report reveals the political power  
and enormous budgets of Anti-Nuclear groups.

## The Multibillion-Dollar Racket That's Thwarting Safe, Affordable Nuclear Energy BY ROBERT BRYCE

Earlier this month, Ken Braun of the Capital Research Center, reported that the anti-nuclear industry in the U.S. is spending some \$2.3 billion per year. Braun identified more than 200 anti-nuclear NGOs.

The list includes anti-industry behemoths like the Sierra Club (\$151 million in revenue in 2021), the League of Conservation Voters (\$115 million), the Environmental Defense Fund (\$285 million), and the Natural Resources Defense Council (\$186 million) as well as smaller groups like Public Citizen (\$8 million). [emphasis, links added]

Braun explains that his \$2.3 billion figure is a “deliberately conservative estimate of the financial firepower of the American anti-nuclear movement. It includes only nonprofit groups with a known anti-nuclear position, and within that subset, only some of the anti-nuclear nonprofits. The real dollar figure is likely far higher.”

Braun's report exposes the political power and massive fundraising capacity of what I call the anti-industry industry, which consists of hundreds of NGOs, many of them funded by dark money, actively working to undermine the nuclear and hydrocarbon sectors in the United States.

As I wrote in these pages in “The Anti-Industry Industry”:

The size and funding of the anti-industry industry represents a threat to the long-term prosperity of the United States. Its policies are already imposing regressive energy taxes on the poor and the middle class. The anti-industry industry is yet another sign of America's decadence. It's an unaccountable parasitic force

that employs thousands of lawyers, strategists, pollsters, and fundraisers, many of whom will spend their careers treading the revolving door between academia, media, government, and the NGOs. It relies on technocrats who went to exclusive universities, live in heavily Democratic coastal cities, have never been to Branson, and don't give a fuck about the people who live in flyover country, wear name tags at work, or turn wrenches for a living.

To be clear, Braun's \$2.3 billion figure is not a precise one. The [precise] total of the anti-nuclear industry's annual revenues could be somewhat higher or lower than that.

For instance, his list, available here, does not include Climate Imperative, a secretive dark money group headed by two former Sierra Club officials — Bruce Nilles and Mary Anne Hitt—that I wrote about on March 19 in “The Dark Money Behind The Gas Bans.”

That group also employs Hal Harvey, a veteran of the NGO-industrial-corporate-climate complex. Climate Imperative, which is funded by Laurene Powell Jobs and John Doerr, has an annual budget of more than \$200 million.

Further, Braun noted that there may be as many as 1,000 groups in the U.S. “with an agenda that includes opposition” to nuclear energy.

To be clear, groups like Sierra Club and NRDC don't spend their entire budgets on anti-nuclear activities. They also work on other issues, including promoting renewables and fundraising. Nevertheless, Braun's \$2.3 billion estimate provides key context for the staggering scale of the money that is being spent by America's anti-nuclear groups.

Braun's report also proves that the myriad

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claims being made about the hydrocarbon sector's undue influence on American politics are nonsense on stilts.

His report shows that the traditional energy sector is being massively outspent by the anti-industry industry.

Indeed, the money, the media, and the momentum are not on the side of the coal, oil, natural gas, and nuclear sectors. Instead, it's on the side of the groups pushing the all-renewable-energy mirage.

No matter how you calculate it, the nuclear sector is outmanned and outgunned. Braun identified 200 anti-nuclear groups. By comparison, I was only able to identify about 15 pro-nuclear groups.

Of those, several, including Mothers For Nuclear, Campaign For A Green Nuclear Deal, Generation Atomic, and Stand Up For Nuclear are working on shoestring budgets.

As Madi Hilly of the Campaign For A Green Nuclear Deal told me yesterday, her group's revenues, which come mainly through Patreon donations, amount to "decimal dust" when compared to the massive budgets of the NRDC and Sierra Club.

The list of pro-nuclear groups above is not definitive. But it is the most complete one I was able to compile. The biggest group, of course, is the Nuclear Energy Institute.

The other groups, including NGOs like the Center for the American Experiment, ClearPath, and Breakthrough Institute, are pro-nuclear but do not focus solely on nuclear energy.

The sum of the 2021 revenues of those 10 groups is about \$162 million per year. The punchline here is obvious.

One of the main reasons the U.S. nuclear industry has failed to gain much traction over

the past couple of decades is that it is being outspent by roughly 14 to 1.

Furthermore, as you can see in the graphic, four of the anti-nuclear groups have annual budgets that exceed the combined revenues of the top 10 pro-nuclear groups.

These numbers are relevant right now. On August 11, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker vetoed a bill that would have lifted a moratorium on new nuclear reactors in his state.

Pritzker vetoed the measure even though the bill had broad support in both houses of the Illinois Legislature. Who cheered Pritzker's veto? The Sierra Club, of course.

So did the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC), which has a budget of about \$1.6 million per year. It must be noted that the IEC was not included in Braun's list of the 200 anti-nuclear groups in the U.S.

On its website, the IEC lists its "lead affiliates." That distinguished group includes — wait for it — Natural Resources Defense Council and Environmental Defense Fund.

A few days before Pritzker vetoed the bill, the Illinois Sierra Club and IEC sent the governor a letter urging him to spike the legislation.

After Pritzker did their bidding, Sierra Club Illinois Director Jack Darin issued a press release saying new nuclear power plants in the state "would have opened the door to increased risk, negative environmental impacts, and higher costs for consumers."

All of those claims, of course, are false.

But then, the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the rest of the anti-industry industry have been, let me use the correct word here — lying — about nuclear energy for decades. Given their massive budgets, there's little reason to expect them to stop now.