

# CASE STUDY: Dr. Willie Soon, a Career Fueled by Big Oil and Coal

On this page

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/campaigns/global-warming-and-energy/polluterwatch/koch-industries/CASE-STUDY-Dr-Willie-Soon-a-Career-Fueled-by-Big-Oil-and-Coal/>

- [UPDATE Feb. 2015: Newly released documents reveal Willie Soon's contracts with Southern Company, the Koch Brothers, Exxon Mobile, and DonorsTrust.](#)
- [UPDATE Feb. 2013: New FOIA results show new funding to Willie Soon from secret DonorsTrust network, Koch brothers and Southern Company.](#)
- [Introduction:](#)
- [Key findings:](#)
- [Willie Soon's Backers: Big Coal and Big Oil](#)
- [Dr. Willie Soon's known corporate funding 1994-2012:](#)
- [The 1990's:](#)
- [Get funding from big coal, become expert in Mercury?](#)
- [Willie Soon plotted to take down the IPCC AR4 before it was even written.](#)
- [The Hockey Stick](#)
- [2003 testimony to Environment and Public Works Committee](#)
- [Fake science and polar bears](#)
- [Were the fossil fuel companies working together to fund Dr. Soon?](#)
- [Dr. Soon and the Free to Choose Network](#)
- [Dr. Soon's Work with Oil/Coal Funded Think Tanks](#)
- [The Heartland Institute](#)
- [The George C. Marshall Institute](#)
- [The World Climate Report](#)
- [The Fraser Institute](#)
- [Tech Central Station](#)
- [Frontiers of Freedom, The Center for Science and Public Policy and the Science and Public Policy Institute](#)
- [International connections](#)
- [SOURCE FOIA DOCUMENTS FOR WILLIE SOON GRANTS:](#)

Page - June 28, 2011

Of all the climate deniers, one scientist has been particularly closely involved in the campaign against the climate science consensus for the majority of his career: Dr. Willie Soon.

**UPDATE Feb. 2015: Newly released documents reveal Willie Soon's contracts with Southern Company, the Koch Brothers, Exxon Mobile, and DonorsTrust.**

[See the New York Times expose from February 2015](#)

**UPDATE Feb. 2013: New FOIA results show new funding to Willie Soon from secret DonorsTrust network, Koch brothers and Southern Company.**

[Click here to see the fossil fuel financiers of Willie Soon's career.](#)

**PolluterWatch.org has more on Dr. [Willie Soon](#).**

## **Introduction:**

This investigation shows that [Dr. Soon](#) has received substantial funding from the fossil fuel industry for most of his scientific career and heavy corporate funding in the last decade.

After graduating in science (Bachelor and Masters), [Dr. Soon](#) received his Ph.D in aerospace engineering from the University of Southern California (USC) in 1991.

His thesis focussed on "Collisional-radiative properties of high-temperature, partially ionized nitrogen, oxygen, helium and hydrogen plasmas at conditions relevant to the Earth's atmosphere." He has never had any formal training as a climatologist and stated, in a reply to Sen. Jeffords in 2003 after a Congressional testimony, that one of his main teachers in climate science was denier [David Legates](#).

After graduating, Dr. Soon began work at the Mt. Wilson Observatory. The chair of Mt Wilson's Board of Trustees was climate denier Robert Jastrow, who set up the George C Marshall Institute, the think tank that was arguably the first to engage in active climate denial, as documented by science historian Naomi Oreskes in the book "[Merchants of Doubt](#)".

Dr. Soon is now employed as astrophysicist with the Harvard-Smithsonian Astrophysics Observatory (SAO). He is most famous for his work with fellow astrophysicist Sallie Baliunas, writing the first paper that attempted to challenge the 'hockey stick' graph of temperature records published by Dr Michael Mann.

## **Key findings:**

- **\$1.3 Million in corporate funding:** The FOIA response from the Smithsonian reveals that more than half (over \$1.3 million) of [Willie Soon's](#) total funding since 2001 has come from the oil and electric utility industry (coal). **Since 2002, every new grant he has received has been from either oil & coal interests or Donors Trust.**
- **UPDATE FEB. 2013: Willie Soon now gets funding funneled through Donors Trust, the secretive "Dark Money ATM" used by the Kochs and other wealthy elites to obscure their contributions to controversial sources--see [the Guardian](#) and [Mother Jones](#). Since 2002, [Donors Trust](#) and [Donors Capital Fund](#) have sent \$146 million to 102 groups that deny climate science and obstruct policy solutions to global warming.**
- **Polar bear junk science funding revealed:** While Dr. Soon revealed in a 2007 non-peer reviewed Ecological Complexity article on polar bears and Arctic ice that his research was funded by ExxonMobil, the American Petroleum Institute and the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, neither the corporate funders or Dr. Soon have ever acknowledged the extent, dollar figures or timing of those grants.
- **More Koch Funding:** The FOIA response from Smithsonian uncovered an additional grant in 2010 from the Charles G. Koch Foundation of \$65,000. **UPDATE FEB. 2013:** New FOIA results show an additional \$55,000 from the Kochs for [Willie Soon's work](#) from 2010-2012.

- **Southern Company dirty coal funding:** The Smithsonian documents also revealed two previously unknown grants totaling \$230,000 from the Southern Company, one of the largest coal burning electric utilities in the United States and in world. **FEB. 2013 UPDATE:** New FOIA results show an additional \$120,000 from Southern Company for Willie Soon's work from 2011-2012.
- **Additional corporate funders:** Other papers written by Dr. Soon and reviewed by Greenpeace researchers show that the **American Petroleum Institute** has been funding Dr. Soon since the mid-1990s, a period when he also acknowledged funding from **Mobil, Texaco** and the **Electric Power Research Institute** (EPRI) a research and lobby shop funded by the electric utilities.
- **Attack on IPCC report:** Correspondence uncovered in our investigation reveals Dr. Soon coordinating a plan in 2003 to undermine the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Assessment Report (AR4) Working Group 1 report—years before the report was released in 2007.

## **Willie Soon's Backers: Big Coal and Big Oil**

Since 2001, Willie Soon has received direct funding for his research of \$1.033 million from Big Coal and Big Oil interests. In contrast, he received \$842,079 from conventional government or university funders in the same period. The last grant he received from a funder with no ties to dirty energy interests was in 2002 (a grant that carried through to 2006). Since then, he has been entirely funded by the fossil fuel industry.

The *Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation* gave two grants to Dr. Soon totaling \$175,000. The 2005-6 grant for \$110,000 from the "Koch Foundation" is titled "Koch/Mobile [sic] Charitable foundation." This two year grant came from the Charles G. Koch Foundation according to [Media Matters Transparency](#).

The 2010 grant for \$65,000 is titled "Understanding solar variability and climate change." Dr. Soon's acknowledgement in the 2007 polar bear paper published in the *Journal of Ecological Complexity* says he received funding from the Charles G. Koch Foundation.

*American Petroleum Institute* (API) gave Dr. Soon multiple grants from 2001 to 2007 totalling nearly \$274,000 for research apparently of interest to the oil industry, such as the "Sun's impact on climate over the last 1000 years." Additional grants of unknown amounts were given to Dr. Soon from 1994-1997.

*ExxonMobil Foundation* has heavily funded Dr. Soon in at least four grants between 2005 and 2010 totaling \$335,000. The titles for these grants range from "project support" to "Exxon-Arctic climate change." It is not known whether ExxonMobil is still funding Dr. Soon, but Exxon did note in its 2007 Corporate Citizenship Report, "...we will discontinue contributions to several public policy groups whose position on climate change could divert attention from the important discussion on how the world will secure energy required for economic growth in a responsible manner."

*Southern Company* is new to the list of known funders of Willie Soon. Our FOIA request to Smithsonian revealed that Southern Company, the giant coal burning utility, gave Dr. Soon two

grants: \$110,000 in 2005-06 for "Understanding Arctic Climate Change" and \$120,000 in 2008-09 for "Solar variability and climate change signals from temperature," areas of research that Southern Company appears to have a keen interest in. This funding and relationship with Southern and EPRI might explain Dr. Soon's "expertise" in mercury (see below), as the EPA finalizes overdue rules on mercury emissions from coal-fired power stations. Oil burning does not result in mercury emissions, but coal burning does.

Willie Soon regularly teamed with the SAO's other astrophysicist, [Sallie Baliunas](#), to defend fossil fuels and attack climate science. Some grants were split between them. This denier duo has received \$1.153 million from dirty energy interests since 2001.

## Dr. Willie Soon's known corporate funding 1994-2012:

*(source documents available below)*

Funder	Grant Description from source	Grant Year(s)	Grant Amount	Source
<b>Electric Power Research Institute</b>		1994-1999	??	Soon published papers
<b>American Petroleum Institute</b>		1994-1997	??	Soon published papers
<b>Mobil Foundation</b>		1995-1997	??	Soon published papers
<b>Texaco Foundation</b>		1996	??	Soon published papers
<b>American Petroleum Institute</b>	Sun's impact on climate over the last 1000 years	2001, 2002	<b>\$58,380</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>American Petroleum Institute</b>	1000 years of solar variability	2003	<b>\$60,053</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>American Petroleum Institute</b>	The 11-22 year climate responses	2004, 2005	<b>\$50,178</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>ExxonMobil Foundation</b>	listed by Exxon as a grant to SAO	2005	<b>\$105,000</b>	ExxonMobil Worldwide Giving Report 2005
<b>Charles G. Koch Foundation</b>	Koch/Mobile Charitable foundation	2005, 2006	<b>\$110,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>American</b>	Understanding Arctic	2005, 2006	<b>\$50,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>

<b>Petroleum Institute</b>	Climate Change			
<b>ExxonMobil Foundation</b>	Listed by Exxon as "project support" to SAO.	2006	<b>\$105,000</b>	<a href="#">ExxonMobil Worldwide Giving Report 2006</a>
<b>Southern Company</b>	Understanding Arctic Climate Change	2006, 2007	<b>\$110,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>American Petroleum Institute</b>	The solar influence of arctic climate change	2006, 2007	<b>\$55,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>ExxonMobil Foundation</b>	Exxon-Arctic climate change	2007, 2008	<b>\$55,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA/Exxon Giving Report</a>
<b>ExxonMobil Foundation</b>	Exxon-soon solar variability	2008-2010	<b>\$70,106</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA/Exxon Giving Report</a>
<b>Free to Choose</b>	The sun's influence on climate change	2008	<b>\$19,383</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>Southern Company</b>	Solar variability and Climate Change signals from temperature	2008, 2009	<b>\$120,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>Charles G. Koch Foundation</b>	Understanding solar variability and climate change	2010	<b>\$65,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>Southern Company</b>	Understanding solar radiation and climate change	2011	<b>\$60,003</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>Charles G. Koch Foundation</b>	Understanding solar radiation and climate change	2010-2012	<b>\$55,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>Donors Trust</b>	Understanding solar radiation and climate change	2011	<b>\$50,000</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>Southern Company</b>	Understanding solar radiation and climate change	2011-2012	<b>\$59,942</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>Donors Trust</b>	Understanding solar radiation and climate change	2011-2012	<b>\$64,935</b>	<a href="#">Smithsonian FOIA</a>
<b>TOTAL</b>		2001-2012	<b>\$1,322,980</b>	

## The 1990's:

Dr. Soon's alliance with Big Oil began in the 1990s when oil companies began to see the threat of the growing climate science consensus and desperately sought counter information such as Dr. Soon and Dr. Baliunas' work on solar variability and its potential influence on the climate.

It would be very convenient for the oil industry if carbon dioxide were not to blame for climate change. The American Petroleum Institute (API) funded four of Dr. Soon's papers from 1994-1997. The Mobil Foundation (merged with Exxon Foundation in 1998) funded at least three of his papers in the same period, all along with the API. The Texaco Foundation also funded a paper by Dr. Soon. We do not know the size of these grants.

Another major funder in the 1990s was the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a research organization for the electricity industry. In 2009, 45 percent of US electricity was generated from coal. Coal and oil have the most at stake from strong scientific proof of global warming and carbon dioxide emissions impact on the planet. There is a long alliance between the interests of coal and oil attacking climate science and fighting climate policy dating back to the late 1980s as detailed in the Greenpeace report, [\*Dealing in Doubt\*](#).

## Get funding from big coal, become expert in Mercury?

In May 2011, an [op-ed](#) appeared in the Wall Street Journal (WSJ), co-authored by Willie Soon and the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow's Paul Driessen. Entitled "The Myth of Killer Mercury," the piece attacked the EPA's proposed rules for limiting mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Dr. Soon's WSJ byline stated: "Mr. Soon, a natural scientist at Harvard, is an expert on mercury and public health issues."

Greenpeace asked both Harvard University and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics (CfA) to verify this newfound area of expertise expressed by Dr. Soon. Dr. Charles Alcock, the Director of the CfA, stated in an email that Dr. Soon was employed an astrophysicist at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO), which is apparently housed within the CfA, along with the the Harvard College Observatory. Dr. Alcock said in a letter "I cannot comment on Dr. Soon's expertise regarding mercury and public health issues."

Nonetheless, **Willie Soon has no affiliation with Harvard University** except sharing a building with Harvard students and staff on Harvard's campus.

As the Wall St. Journal op-ed was re-posted across the web on right wing blogs and think tank websites, Dr. Soon's [byline](#) mysteriously started to morph, turning into: "Willie Soon is a natural scientist who has studied mercury and public health issues for eight years." Yet there is no record of any such public health studying or publishing in peer reviewed journals in his most recent bio and CV, written six years ago.

Dr. Soon also appeared as a quasi-expert on mercury in 2005 in another Wall Street Journal op-ed entitled "[Eat More Fish](#)," republished by the Heartland Institute.

## **Willie Soon plotted to take down the IPCC AR4 before it was even written.**

In 2003, as the IPCC was gearing up for the upcoming Fourth Assessment (AR4) due in 2007, Willie Soon began plotting with colleagues about how to undermine the work. As part of the FOIA documents received by Greenpeace, there was a link to Dr. Soon's documents. That link led to a directory of [Dr. Soon's files at Harvard](#). Dr. Soon has also referenced these online files in previous articles published by the Competitive Enterprise Institute. In a [letter](#) in these files (dated after 10 October) Dr. Soon wrote:

*"Clearly they [the AR4 chapters] may be too much for any one of us to tackle them all ... But, as A-team, we may for once give it our best shot to try to anticipate and counter some of the chapters, especially WG1---judging from our true expertise in the basic climate sciences ...*

*Even if we can tackle ONE single chapter down the road but forcefully and effectively ... we will really accomplish A LOT!*

*In all cases, I hope we can start discussing among ourselves to see what we can do to weaken the fourth assessment report or to re-direct attention back to science ..."*

Who was this "A Team"? The letter was addressed to "Bob, Randy, Walter, Sallie and Dave".

From other correspondence, it seems possible that "Bob" is Australian sceptic Bob Carter, as Dr. Soon worked with Carter. "Sallie" is clearly Dr. Sallie Baliunas, "Dave" is likely David Legates.

There is no prominent "A-team" type scientist or climate sceptic called Randy – except ExxonMobil's lobbyist [Randy Randol](#), who was heavily involved with the Exxon-funded deniers. Randol wrote the [famous memo](#) to the Bush administration recommending that the then head of the IPCC, Bob Watson, be replaced. (*Watson was indeed replaced - by the current chair Rajendra Pachauri. But Pachauri has continued the rigorous scientific work carried out by Watson and has since become the target of deniers.*)

Randol was involved in a number of other Exxon plans to undermine climate science, including a [plan cooked up in 1998](#) with other Exxon-funded think tanks to attack the Kyoto Protocol (*see his name, bottom of page 4*).

Equally, there is no "Walter" in the climate denial field – except Walt Buchholtz, ExxonMobil's Government Relations & Issues Advisor, the man responsible for doling out Exxon's funding grants to deniers and front groups. Buchholtz was listed as a "Government relations advisor" to the Heartland Institute in 2005 (*as listed in the Heartland Institute's 2005 990 IRS form*).

Regardless of who these "A Team" members truly were, Willie Soon clearly coordinated a plan to

undermine the science chapter of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment – before he even knew what science it contained. This is a clear example of the climate denier strategy of undermining climate science, and stands in sharp contrast with accepted scientific methodology.

## **The Hockey Stick**

In 2003, Dr. Soon and his colleague at the SAO, Sallie Baliunas, published a now thoroughly [debunked study](#) in Climate Research' "Proxy climatic and environmental changes of the past 1000 years," in the first of a number of denier challenges to Michael Mann's 'hockey stick' study. This study was [republished \[pdf\]](#) by the (then ExxonMobil funded) George Marshall Institute in 2003

While Dr. Soon and Dr. Baliunas acknowledged the American Petroleum Institute's funding of the work in the paper, the dollar figure was not known. We now know from the newly acquired FOIA Smithsonian documents that the API gave them a total of \$118,443 for this work, over 2002 and 2003, in grants entitled: "Sun's impact on climate over the last 1000 years" and "1000 years of solar variability."

The Soon-Baliunas article claimed that the twentieth century was not the warmest century in the past 1,000 years and that the climate has not changed significantly during this time. This sham science kicked off a heavy focus by deniers on the "hockey stick" study first done by Michael Mann, later proven sound by numerous other studies, but viciously attacked by deniers regardless.

Mann himself, in an [interview](#), said of the Soon-Baliunas 2003 paper:

*"It really was one of the poorest pieces of scholarship that any of us in the climate research community had ever seen... it was clear that there was an effort by some on the editorial board to compromise the PR (peer review) process and allow through this deeply, deeply flawed paper in the professional literature where it was immediately held up by those in Washington opposed to taking action against climate change... as somehow being the dagger in the heart of the case for global warming, when in fact it was just an extremely bad study that never should have published..."*

After the Soon-Baliunas article was published, three of the editors of Climate Research [resigned in protest](#), including incoming editor-in-chief Hans von Storch. Von Storch declared the article seriously flawed because "the conclusions [were] not supported by the evidence presented in the paper." In addition to the resignations, thirteen of the scientists cited in the paper published rebuttals stating that Dr. Soon and Dr. Baliunas had misinterpreted their work.

## **2003 testimony to Environment and Public Works Committee**

In 2003, after publishing his 'hockey stick' paper, Dr. Soon was invited to give evidence on global warming to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, chaired by [Senator James Inhofe](#) (R-OK). During the hearing, Dr. Soon was asked by Senator Jim Jeffords (I-VT):



*"Have you been hired by or employed by or received grants from organizations that have taken advocacy positions with respect to the Kyoto Protocol, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or legislation before the United States Congress that would affect greenhouse gas emissions? If so, please identify those organizations."*

Willie Soon [responded](#): ***"I have not knowingly been hired by, nor employed by, nor received grants from any such organizations described in this question."***

It is difficult to accept that Dr. Soon didn't know that the American Petroleum Institute, one of his funders at the time, had been at the centre of lobbying against action on climate change for over a decade. Nor is it plausible that there were no discussions about Dr. Soon's research.

## **Fake science and polar bears**

The majority of Dr. Soon's grants from the fossil fuel industry focus on work relating to the sun and Arctic climate change.

Willie Soon's recently published articles relating to climate change focus on solar variability and the Arctic (in 2005 and 2009), attempting to prove that it is the sun's variability that is responsible for Arctic warming in recent years.

In March 2007, Willie Soon co-authored a 'viewpoint', published in the journal *Ecological Complexity* (Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp. 73-84) that announced that polar bears were not under threat from global warming and that Arctic sea ice decline was less severe than stated in recent peer-reviewed literature. *Ecological Complexity* publishes peer-reviewed research, but "Viewpoints" aren't subject to such scholarly review. Dr. Soon was one of the authors of the 'viewpoint', joined by well-known deniers Sallie Baliunas, David Legates and Tim Ball.

The paper was rejected some four years earlier by a peer-reviewed journal. But because the peer-reviewed and non peer-reviewed reports look almost identical, it would be almost impossible for a casual reader to tell the difference. Also contained in Willie Soon's Harvard files online was a [rejection letter](#) from the Editor of "Ecography" magazine, Linus Svensson, dated June 5, 2003, containing peer review comments supporting the magazine's rejection of the submission.

The whole affair has been documented in a [previous case study](#) in the 2010 Greenpeace report on the Koch Brothers.

Willie Soon acknowledges that the article was partly sponsored "(for Willie Soon's work) by ExxonMobil, the American Petroleum Institute (API) and the Charles G Koch Charitable Foundation. "

The new FOIA documents from the SAO show the funding in this period, presumably for this study, was as follows:

- API: \$50,000, "understanding Arctic climate change"

- Koch: \$110,000, "Koch/Mobile (sic) charitable foundation"
- ExxonMobil: \$55,000, "Arctic climate change"

The new funder to all of this work, not acknowledged in the 2007 *Ecological Complexity* paper, was the coal utility Southern Company, which appears also to have contributed to this study: \$110,000 in 2006 for "understanding Arctic climate change."

## **Were the fossil fuel companies working together to fund Dr. Soon?**

As Dr. Soon's work developed, he began focussing on the influence of the sun on the earth's climate. Given that the papers he wrote questioning the science of climate change – from the 'hockey stick' to the polar bears were all funded by the oil industry, the question must be raised: **did the companies work together to fund Dr. Soon's work?**

The long collaboration of Big Oil and Big Coal to slow the uptake of climate science is well documented. The close collaboration of the laggards Southern Company, ExxonMobil and the American Petroleum Institute is also known.

In 1998, Robert Gehri from Southern Company, Joseph Walker from American Petroleum Institute and Randy Randol from ExxonMobil met with think tanks and oil companies to come up with the "Global Science Communications Plan." This [document declared](#) that "victory" would be achieved when average citizens "recognize uncertainties in climate science."

This 'secret plan' was revealed on the front page of the New York Times, but many assume the collaboration continued unabated.

Was their joint funding of Dr. Soon's work to challenge the science on Arctic warming a continuation of that plan?

## **Dr. Soon and the Free to Choose Network**

The [Free to Choose Network](#) was founded by the late neo-liberal economist Milton Friedman, who was closely associated with Big Tobacco. Friedman was also a fellow at the Hoover Institution that has received grants from ExxonMobil, Koch Foundations and other right wing foundations such as the Sarah Scaife Foundation.

In 2008, the Free to Choose network paid the denier duo of Doctors Soon and Baliunas \$19,383. The grant was entitled "the sun's influence on climate change". That year, Free to Choose [produced an "educational" video](#) contending that the sun has more to do with climate change than human interference.

*"Dr. Willie Soon of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and Dr. David Legates of the*

*University of Delaware provide an easy-to-follow review of current climate science, which suggests that the sun's irregular patterns and other natural forces are the major sources of climate change."*

## **Dr. Soon's Work with Oil/Coal Funded Think Tanks**

### **The Heartland Institute**

The Heartland Institute lists Willie Soon as a writer/contributor on its website. This is confirmed by Dr. Soon's own CV that lists him as writing for Heartland's "Environment and Climate News" from November 1997 to December 2000.

Heartland has received [\\$676,500](#) from ExxonMobil since 1998, in addition to [\\$325,000](#) from the Scaife foundations and [\\$75,000](#) from the Koch foundations according to [Media Matters Transparency](#) project and Greenpeace research.

The Koch foundations stopped funding Heartland Institute in 2000 and ExxonMobil Foundation dropped Heartland in 2007.

Willie Soon was a speaker and panelist at the Heartland Institute International Conference on Climate Change in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. The [sponsors](#) of this conference are heavily funded by ExxonMobil, Scaife, and Koch.

### **The George C. Marshall Institute**

Dr. Soon was a [senior scientist](#) at the George C. Marshall Institute, writing papers for it along with Sallie Baliunas, from 1997 to 2004. Sallie Baliunas sat on the board of the George C. Marshall Institute. The Marshall Institute (and its associated foundations) have received [\\$840,000](#) in funding from ExxonMobil since 1998. Since 1985, the institute has also received [\\$3,370,000](#) from the Scaife Foundations and [\\$310,000](#) from the Koch Foundations since 1985. Exxon dropped funding to the Marshall Institute in 2008. The Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundation, run by the Kochs, still funds the Marshall Institute, according to the most recent information available, a 2009 grant of \$70,000.

### **The World Climate Report**

In Dr. Soon's Curriculum Vitae in 2005 he lists himself as a "contributing editor" to the World Climate Report, a blog run by prominent climate change skeptic [Patrick Michaels](#), published by his company, [New Hope Environmental Services](#). New Hope has been described as a PR company and, while secretive about its funding sources, it received support from the "non-profit fuel supply co-operative" Western Fuels Association which supports coal mining in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and the railroads that transport that coal to the powerplants built to burn it. Between 1997 and 2000, Dr. Soon wrote 21 articles for the website, mostly co-written with Sallie Baliunas.

Western Fuels itself funded and controlled another similar group called the "Greening Earth Society" which ran a newsletter called "World Climate Alert." According to his CV, Dr. Soon wrote at least three articles for World Climate Alert.

## **The Fraser Institute**

Willie Soon has written for the [Fraser Institute](#) and is listed on its website as an author. His CV describes his involvement as being a member of the Fraser institute's "CANSTAT" advisory board from 2002 to at least 2005, although in 2001 he wrote a "Guide to Global Warming" for the Fraser Institute.

The Fraser Institute has received \$120,000 from ExxonMobil in two \$60,000 grants for "climate change" in 2003 and 2004. According to Media Transparency, more than 75 percent of the \$403,301 received by the Fraser Institute since 1985 has come from the oil-rich Scaife Foundations (\$275,000) and the Koch Foundations (\$198,221).

## **Tech Central Station**

Willie Soon was an author for Tech Central Station (TCS), a web-based journalism site established by Washington DC lobbyists, DCI Group, for unknown clients. Over the four years that he wrote for Tech Central, Dr. Soon wrote on a wide range of [issues entirely unrelated to astrophysics](#) - his area of expertise - such as the impact of wind farms on agriculture, regulations on mercury and attacks on various US states for their efforts to curb carbon dioxide emissions. According to his 2005 CV, Dr. Soon wrote 43 articles for TCS between 2001 and 2004.

ExxonMobil gave TCS [\\$95,000](#) in 2003. Up until 2006, TCS's information was published by the public relations firm [DCI Group](#), a [registered lobbying firm for ExxonMobil](#). In 2010 TCS was closed down. TCSdaily.com now jumps to "ideas in action tv" where much of the archive is preserved. Ideasinactiontv.com is now funded by Investors Business Daily. Copyright is co-owned by the George W Bush Institute.

## **Frontiers of Freedom, The Center for Science and Public Policy and the Science and Public Policy Institute**

Willie Soon lists himself as being on the advisory board of the National Center for Public Policy Research, an affiliate of Frontiers of Freedom, from April 2003. Although Dr. Soon was not listed on the centre's website, in the Wall Street Journal article "Eat More Fish," which he co-authored with Robert Ferguson of the Frontiers of Freedom Center for Science and Public Policy, he is listed as the center's "Chief Science Researcher."

ExxonMobil gave Frontiers of Freedom a total of \$1.272 million in funding since 1998 according to [Greenpeace research](#). In 2003, ExxonMobil gave Frontiers of Freedom a grant of \$232,000 to launch a new branch of the organization called the Center for Science and Public Policy. The mission of this new branch deals exclusively with the issue of climate change. The Scaife Family Foundations have donated [\\$135,000](#) to Frontiers of Freedom, and the Koch Family Foundations have donated [\\$575,000](#).

The [Science & Public Policy Institute](#) (SPPI) lists Dr. Soon as Chief Science Adviser until [at least 2007](#). The SPPI describes itself as a non-profit research and education organization which is committed to the advancement of sound, sensible energy and environmental public policies based on rational science and economics. In its mission statement the SPPI [asserts](#) that it is "free from affiliation to any corporation or political party."

The president of the Science & Public Policy Institute, [Robert Ferguson](#), is also the [executive director](#) of the Center for Science and Public Policy. The link between the two organizations runs even deeper, apparently operating out of the same office. Both the [SPPI](#) and the [Center for Science and Public Policy](#) are listed at the same address: 209 Pennsylvania Ave. SE Washington, DC 20003.

## International connections

Doctors Soon and Baliunas have turned up as founding members of denier groups as far away as Argentina where they are listed as members of the [Argentinian Foundation for a Scientific Ecology](#). Soon's 2005 CV shows he had papers published in both Russian and Spanish and he appeared at climate denier conferences across Europe.

# SOURCE FOIA DOCUMENTS FOR WILLIE SOON GRANTS:



### Alcock-Harvard attachments



### Astronomy & Astrophysics Forveille



### Astronomy Astrophysics Cc Alves



Bishop-House Science



Boxer-House Science



Boxer-Irs/Koch



Correspondence With Astronomy and Astrophysics



Correspondence With Ecological Complexity



Correspondence With Ecology Law Quarterly



Correspondence With Interfaces



Correspondence With International Journal of Forecasting



Correspondence With Journal of Atmospheric and Solar Terrestrial Physics

← Page  1 of 4 →  
1 - 12 of 47 documents

[Willie Soon Grants, 2000-2010](#) (Smithsonian Institution FOIA, SI-000030, 1/28/2011)

[Willie Soon Grants, 2010-2012](#) (with letter from Smithsonian, 8/8/2012)

[Willie Soon Grants, 2012-2013](#) (and [letter from Smithsonian, 2/26/2013](#))

See also PolluterWatch profiles of [Willie Soon](#), [Koch Industries](#), [Charles Koch](#) and [David Koch](#).

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