

A photograph of several offshore wind turbines in the ocean. The turbines are white with yellow bases. The sky is clear and blue, and the water is a deep blue. The perspective is from a low angle, looking up at the turbines, with one turbine in the foreground being particularly prominent.

AGAINST THE WIND

A Map of the Anti-Offshore
Wind Network in the Eastern
United States

**BROWN UNIVERSITY CLIMATE
AND DEVELOPMENT LAB**

DECEMBER 2023

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About the Climate and Development Lab: Brown University's Climate and Development Lab (CDL) is a student-faculty think tank based at the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society, and was founded in 2010 as an experiment in engaged learning and scholarship. The CDL seeks to produce timely, accessible, and impactful research that informs more just and effective climate change policies. We work with leading actors in government, civil society, and the media around the world in the attempt to bring about change by identifying and filling important research gaps and generating ideas for action on climate change. The CDL fosters transformational learning experiences by equipping Brown students with the tools to effectively shape policy and explore the intersections between climate change, public policy, and global governance.

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Disclaimer: This report represents an initial phase of research about the network of opposition to offshore wind development, produced by a team of undergraduate students in Brown University's Climate and Development Lab. The statements, views, opinions, and information contained in the report are personal to the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of Brown University.

Executive Summary

Offshore wind energy is vital for East Coast communities to meet their renewable energy goals and mitigate climate change. Yet a collection of new, community-based groups have resisted new offshore wind projects from Massachusetts to Virginia. They attack offshore wind projects at protests, town council meetings, and in the pages of local newspapers, often employing misinformation. This report reveals how these East Coast offshore wind opponents are not solely local – they are embedded in a network of seasoned fossil fuel interests and climate denial think tanks that have perfected obstruction tactics for decades.

These new grassroots-appearing groups and experienced obstructionist think tanks share legal support, public speakers, leadership, and information and tactical subsidies. Though they appear to operate organically, in many cases they are directly supported by well-funded, national organizations with ties to the fossil fuel industry and dark money. This creates a facade of local opposition that is actually part of a broader, sustained anti-renewable energy campaign.

Our map represents 18 local groups and businesses, 14 climate denial think tanks, 8 coalitions, 11 other established entities, and 16 key individuals. The network revolves around three key coalitions. The American Coalition for Ocean Protection (ACOP) – founded by a libertarian think tank – is at the center, connecting climate denial think tanks sponsored by the fossil fuel industry with several local anti-offshore wind (anti-OSW) organizations.

Three of the local groups in ACOP are also members of Save Right Whales, which is the primary coalition for the new wave of anti-OSW groups. Save Right Whales was created by Environmental Progress, which has ties to organizations that routinely obstruct climate policy. ACOP also co-founded the Save The Whale Coalition. The only two other members of Save The

Whale are climate denial think tanks that share nearly identical anti-OSW talking points. The five obstructionist think tanks in ACOP are also members of the State Policy Network, a key national player in right-wing politics and the climate change counter-movement.

Though donor-advised funds and disclosure issues make it impossible to reveal all direct funding sources, we identify a direction of influence extending from dark money donors and fossil fuel organizations to local grassroots-appearing groups. We identified six major fossil fuel and dark money donors – the Charles Koch Foundation, the Charles Koch Institute, DonorsTrust, the State Policy Network, and the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association – that fund 17 think tanks involved in the anti-OSW network. 14 of these have been identified as publishers of climate change denial. The think tanks, in turn, influence local anti-OSW groups by providing financial resources, legal support, and personnel. We identify a total of \$72,276,593 in contributions from the six major donors to groups in the network between 2017 and 2021. Of these donations, \$16,278,401 have gone to members of ACOP.

Organized and widespread obstruction to offshore wind energy risks catastrophic climate change impacts by hampering our ability to transition away from fossil fuels. Low-income communities and communities of color bear the brunt of health impacts of fossil fuel use. They will also be most impacted by climate change, in stark contrast to the fossil fuel interests and coastal property owners involved in the anti-OSW network.

Introduction

On a sweltering August day in 2021, Mary Chalke and David Stevenson announced an unprecedented new coalition to unite forces in their respective battles against offshore wind turbines. In a press conference outside the Massachusetts State House, they announced the formation of the American Coalition for Ocean Protection, or ACOP. Stevenson would be president, and Chalke's group, Nantucket Residents Against Turbines would be a founding member.¹

ACOP is an ambitious project. It joins five libertarian think tanks in five different states with five organizations fighting against specific offshore wind initiatives on the local level.² ACOP and Stevenson also direct the Ocean Environment Legal Defense Fund, which supports many of the lawsuits levied by community groups against offshore wind, such as the one challenging the Vineyard Wind project that Stevenson and Chalke announced at their press conference.^{3 4 5}

Their alliance seems unlikely. At the press conference, Chalke spoke the language of environmental conservation, worrying that Vineyard Wind would disturb the "pristine natural environment."⁶ Stevenson, meanwhile, is a former member of the Trump Administration's EPA transition team and a policy director for the Caesar Rodney Institute, a Delaware-based libertarian think tank.⁷

With increasing frequency and coordination, national-level fossil fuel interests have involved themselves with grassroots-appearing groups in a half dozen states along the Eastern Seaboard. Local groups such as Protect Our Coast NJ and Save Long Beach Island have entered partnerships with think tanks that receive money from the fossil fuel industry and its allies, and that have been identified in the literature as climate denialists.⁸

As offshore wind power has gained international prominence as a vital climate solution, and as a wave of offshore wind projects finally enter development in the United States, they have been

met with a remarkable, highly coordinated network of resistance. This map illustrates the deeply interwoven relationships between new grassroots-appearing anti-offshore wind (anti-OSW) groups and known fossil fuel-allied actors in the conservative movement. Though journalists have illustrated specific connections between local actors and national interests, no cohesive understanding of offshore wind opposition exists.⁹

^{10 11 12 13 14}

This map seeks to fill that gap. While much has yet to be revealed about the offshore wind opposition, this report seeks to begin the efforts to understand this complex, evolving network.

The Map

Key.

- **Groups** that operate primarily on the **local scale** are represented in blue. These are "grassroots" anti-OSW groups and some businesses.
- **Individuals** are represented in orange. These include group leaders, a politician, and other major players in the movement.
- **Coalitions** are represented in purple. Not all members of the Cooler Heads Coalition, State Policy Network, the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance, and North American Platform Against Windpower are represented due to space constraints. Not all individuals with membership in Save Right Whales are represented for the same reason. The membership of the Wildlife, Energy, and Community Coalition is not public.
- **Climate denial groups** are represented in red. Each of these groups published climate denial as demonstrated in "Obstructing action: foundation funding and US climate," published by Climate and Development Lab scholars in 2021.¹⁵

- **“Established entities”** are represented in gray. These entities predate the current iteration of the anti-OSW movement and do not fall into any of the categories above. This category includes several think tanks, two fishing boats, an online publication, and a county-level political party.
- A **black circle** outlines groups that have received at least \$20,000 from the Charles Koch Foundation (natural gas and pipelines), the Charles Koch Institute, DonorsTrust (known to be a Koch-favorite money channel), the State Policy Network, and the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association between 2017 and 2021.

Network Structure

The map centers three coalitions, demonstrated with dashed lines. These coalitions share goals and resources. They have formal, public membership. Without these coalitions, local actors’ efforts against the expansion of offshore wind would more closely resemble discrete battles against individual projects. These coalitions have varying degrees of history and staying power.

First, the Save Right Whales coalition emerged in 2021, and takes limited action as a group.¹⁶ Still, a close look at Save Right Whales reveals a small number of actors taking on an outsized role. Lisa Linowes, who co-founded the group, is also in leadership of three of the coalition’s eleven member organizations.^{17 18 19 20} Michael Shellenberger, independently a member of the Coalition, also leads the nonprofit that dedicates paid staff to maintaining the Coalition.^{21 22}

By contrast, the State Policy Network shuffles tens of millions of dollars each year between conservative megadonors, many allied with the fossil fuel industry, and state- and local-level political advocacy organizations.²³ The American Coalition for Ocean Protection is somewhere in the middle, in terms of action and physical location on the map.

There are two other informal but critical segments of the map. The top left corner represents many actors who have been fighting against wind power for over a decade. They offer public relations, strategy, and policy experience. This section of the map is explained in Origin of a Network below.

The top right quadrant holds key actors in the fishing industry. The Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA) ties this set of actors together. All six plaintiff organizations in the Texas Public Policy Foundation’s lawsuit against the Vineyard Wind project are RODA members, or they own fishing boats that are RODA members.^{24 25}

Three of the plaintiff organizations are run by Tom Williams, a Rhode Island-based fisherman.^{26 27 28 29} Bonnie Brady, a RODA board member, is the executive director of another plaintiff group, and her husband Dave Aripotch is president of a fifth.³⁰ Seafreeze Shoreside, Inc., the final plaintiff, is discussed in further detail below. Several of these groups are represented in court by Nancie and Robert Marzulla, high-powered lawyers who have been prominent in the conservative movement since efforts against the Clean Air Act in 1976.^{31 32 33 34}

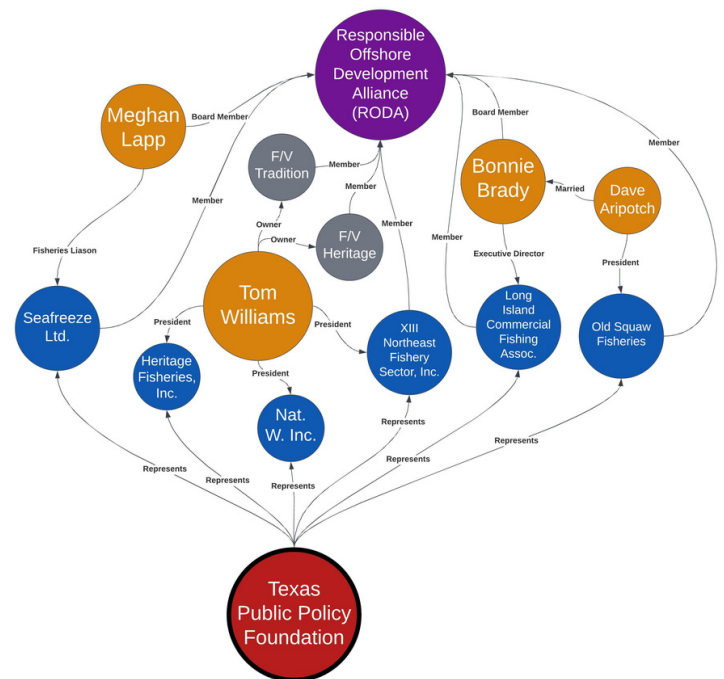


Figure 2: Between the Texas Public Policy Foundation and the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance.

Whale advocates and fishing groups constitute an unusual, contradictory alliance. Save Right Whales and RODA attack offshore wind farms together, though the fishing industry is one of the most significant threats to whales on the East Coast. According to NOAA, fishing gear entanglement has caused 65% of documented right whale deaths, injuries, and morbidities since 2017.³⁵

The Origin of a Network

While recent years have seen a rise in opposition to offshore wind, the involvement of conservative think tanks appears to have been seeded a decade ago. In 2012, as a senior fellow at the American Tradition Institute, a climate denial think tank, John Droz helped organize an energy conference that emerged as “a Who’s Who of climate deniers and... local residents around the country who are trying to block projects.”^{36 37}

Representatives of think tanks deeply involved in the climate denial movement were present at the anti-wind conference, including the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT), the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), The Heartland Institute, the State Policy Network, and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).³⁸

Prior to this 2012 conference, Droz edited a strategy memo written by Illinois-based anti-OSW attorney Rich Porter that outlined a “national professional PR campaign” to cause “subversion in message of [wind] industry so that it effectively becomes so bad no one wants to admit in public they are for it (much like wind has done to coal, by turning green to black and clean to dirty).”³⁹ This campaign “must appear as a ‘groundswell’ among grass roots.” The tactics delineated in this memo include trainings for local anti-OSW groups, coordinated messaging and advertisements, and

collaborations with other interest groups such as traditional environmentalists, the Tea Party, and property rights organizations. The document also recommends “joining forces” with think tanks like Heartland, CEI, and CFACT – which were represented at the conference.

There are many links between that era and current anti-OSW actors. Droz and Porter’s strategy memo recommended working with the North American Platform Against Windpower, whose CEO, Sherri Lange, currently writes anti-OSW stories for MasterResource, a blog run by the Institute for Energy Research– another climate denial think tank recommended by Droz.^{40 41 42 43} Droz is a “principal” at the blog. Lisa Linowes, co-founder of Save Right Whales, is a contributor there.⁴³ The climate denial think tanks that appeared at the 2012 conference and in the

This campaign “must appear as a ‘groundswell’ among grass roots.”

strategy memo also play key roles in the current iteration of offshore wind opposition. Droz still frequently co-signs

anti-climate policy comments and letters with obstructionist think tanks including CFACT, Heartland, and David Stevenson, who represents the Caesar Rodney Institute.^{44 45 46 47}

Droz has also trained thousands of people on anti-wind strategies.⁴⁸ Together, these experienced anti-OSW activists and think tanks deploy tactics in line with those outlined by Droz and Porter: shared messaging, support for local opposition groups, and occasional outright “astroturfing” (creating fake grassroots groups).

CFACT, Heartland, and David Stevenson’s ACOP co-founded a new coalition, Save the Whale Coalition, which advanced unfounded concerns that the construction of offshore wind turbines would be a death knell for endangered right whales.⁴⁹ It is not surprising that Save The Whale Coalition has applied similar arguments as Save Right Whales, as they share member groups and a potent – though misleading – message that appeals to self-identified concerned environmentalists.

Climate denial think tanks are key links between the past and present of anti-wind action. They orchestrate the “appear[ance] as a ‘groundswell’ among grass roots” that Droz and Porter wrote about. While local groups appear at the forefront of the current anti-OSW movement on the East Coast, they’re often entwined with seasoned climate denial organizations that operate sophisticated campaigns to sway public opinion and policy sentiment against wind energy.

Financial Flows

The Donors

We identified several key donors that help make this network run: the Charles Koch Foundation; the Charles Koch Institute; DonorsTrust; the State Policy Network; and the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association. These donors all have intimate ties to the fossil fuel industry, and many have a clear history of establishing astroturf groups that appear to be a groundswell. Over the last five years, organizations active in the fight against offshore wind have been receiving a steady flow of funds from prominent donors affiliated with the Koch network and the fossil fuel industry.

Several of these selected donors hardly need an introduction. The Charles Koch Foundation, Charles Koch Institute, and DonorsTrust are key charitable wings of the sprawling Koch network of donors, think tanks, and astroturf groups that advance right-wing causes, especially obstruction to climate policy.^{50 51 52} The network began blocking climate action and obfuscating climate science in 1991, in a confluence of fossil fuel industry self-interest and anti-regulatory ideology.⁵³

The State Policy Network (SPN) is another key player in the Koch network. As represented in our map, it is a climate denial group and a coalition, as well as a significant donor. This is because SPN develops and disburses financial support and ready-made policy to its member groups in all fifty

states. For example, SPN groups recently passed a series of laws preempting bans on gas hookups in buildings.⁵⁴

In 2013, SPN president Tracie Sharp said that the group follows a model much like IKEA. SPN provides “raw materials” and helps its member groups assemble policies and campaigns that fight battles in state politics. “Pick what you need,” she said, “and customize it for what works best for you.”⁵⁵ SPN has received more than \$24 million from the Koch dark money channel DonorsTrust between 2019 and 2021, and more than \$132,000 from the Charles Koch Foundation itself between 2017 and 2021.⁵⁶

“It’s all funded by people who have a world view that’s really in opposition to any kind of collective action to resolve inequities in our society,” said Charles Siler, a former employee for two SPN-affiliated groups. “It’s all about undermining and destroying collective power, because it’s the only opposition that wealthy people actually face.”⁵⁷

Between 2017 and 2021, SPN spent a total of \$870,000 on five of its affiliates that are members of ACOP: the Caesar Rodney Institute; the John Locke Foundation; the Mackinac Center; the Thomas Jefferson Institute; and the Maine Policy Institute.⁵⁸ Given the explicit intent of SPN member groups to customize national scale policy, and Sharp’s admission that “[SPN’s] grants are driven by donor intent,” the line between fossil fuel funding, SPN, and local anti-OSW groups along the Eastern seaboard is not a difficult one to draw.⁵⁹

Finally, the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association is a trade association that represents 98% of American oil refining capacity.⁶⁰ Its board consists of fossil fuel and chemical industry representatives, which include Marathon Petroleum, CITGO Petroleum, and the chemical production wings of ExxonMobil and Chevron.⁶¹ With \$145,000 in contributions to Heartland, \$50,000 to SPN, and \$20,000 directly to the Caesar Rodney Institute between 2017 and 2021, the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association greases the gears of some of the most substantial actors in the anti-

offshore wind network.⁶²

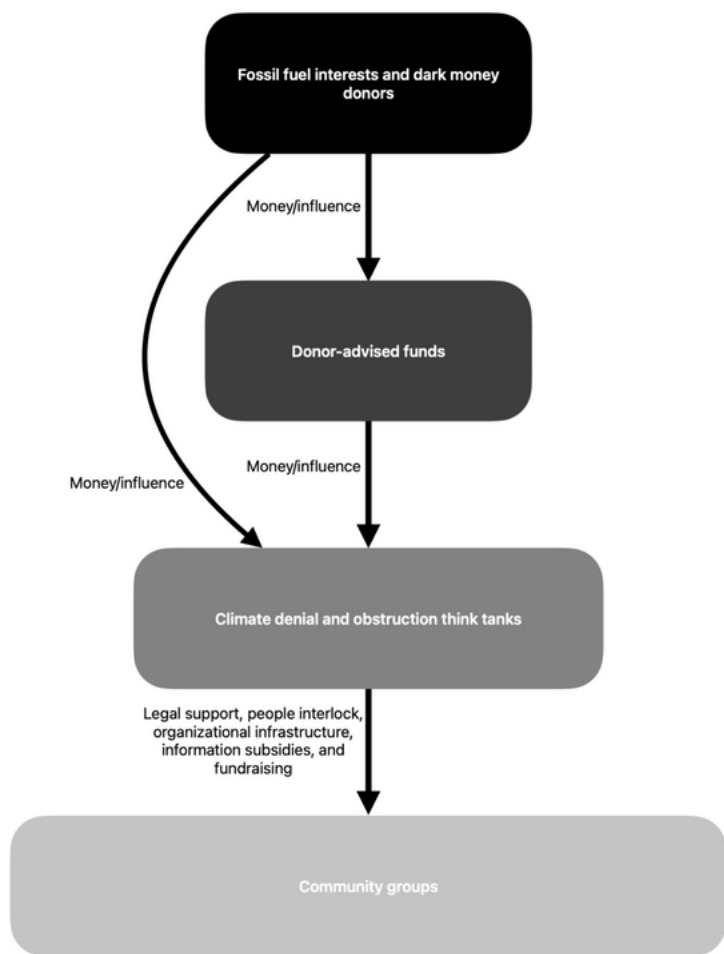


Figure 3: Schematic diagram of donor influence in the anti-offshore wind network.

The Recipients and their Roles

The Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF), which has featured prominently as an ally of actors in the movement against offshore wind, is one of the largest recipients of oil, gas and dark money funds. It received more than \$6.6 million from the Charles Koch Foundation and Charles Koch Institute between 2017 and 2021.⁶³ ⁶⁴ It also accepted more than \$490,000 from DonorsTrust in 2021, nearly quintupling what it had received in the previous two years combined.⁶⁵ TPPF is a climate denial group that published four articles and videos deriding wind power in the month of September,

2023 alone.⁶⁶ These pieces, with titles such as “Green Garbage” and “The Biden Administration’s offshore wind junk heap” play up the downsides of offshore wind— and the latter claims without evidence that offshore wind is killing whales.⁶⁷

“Green Garbage” was written by Carson Clayton, who directs TPPF’s Life:Powered campaign that makes “the moral case for fossil fuels.”⁶⁸ Though Texas generates almost a third of its energy from wind power, TPPF fights against renewable energy policy and defends the fossil fuel industry on a national scale.⁶⁹ ⁷⁰

These financial ties directly trickle down to the local anti-OSW groups. Free of charge, TPPF launched a lawsuit against an offshore wind project on behalf of six companies and organizations involved in the fishing industry.⁷¹ Meghan Lapp, a fishing industry spokeswoman whose employer, Seafreeze, is represented in the suit, indicated that she was willing to look past TPPF’s climate change denial. “The fishing industry needed somebody to represent them,” she said.⁷²

Like TPPF, funds from the Mercatus Center can be directly traced to the new movement against offshore wind. The Mercatus Center, a right-wing think tank based at George Mason University, has become a poster child for Koch influence. It was founded by the Kochs in the 1980s, and by 2010 it had received more than \$30 million from the Koch family foundations.⁷³ A former Koch staffer referred to Mercatus as “a lobbying group disguised as a disinterested academic program.”⁷⁴

In 2022, Mercatus contributed \$20,000 to Environmental Progress, whose paid staff support Save Right Whales.⁷⁵ It was Mercatus’s first contribution to Environmental Progress. Now, Save Right Whales directs visitors on its website to contribute to Environmental Progress as a way of supporting the coalition.⁷⁶

Environmental Progress has also received \$295,500 from Vanguard Charitable and \$587,600 from Schwab Charitable Fund, two donor-advised funds.⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ Donor-advised funds often function as mediating links between donor and recipient, obscuring who the real donor is. This makes them

ideal for the climate denial movement.⁷⁹ Both Vanguard Charitable and Schwab Charitable Fund have been identified to be large financial contributors of the climate change countermovement.^{80 81 82}

Furthermore, since 2019, Environmental Progress has accepted \$125,000 from the Rodel Charitable Foundation which is committed to the “advancement of nuclear energy because our current technologies (particularly wind, solar and hydro power) will not produce enough energy supply to significantly reduce the use of fossil fuel sources.”^{83 84}

Michael Shellenberger, the founding president of Environmental Progress, has ties to the Nuclear Energy Institute, which includes utilities and fossil fuel-affiliated companies such as Dominion Energy and Duke Energy.^{85 86} Shellenberger is also on the advisory board of Alliance for Responsible Citizenship, which has stated, “Nuclear + petrochemicals...will keep us going” and includes prolific climate obstructionist Bjørn Lomborg and Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy on its board.⁸⁷

There are other examples of organizations using other actors in the network for fundraising purposes. Just as Save Right Whales raises money through Environmental Progress, contributions on the Delaware-based anti-OSW group Save Our Beach View’s web page went to the Caesar Rodney Institute, a State Policy Network member group that received at least \$44,000 from DonorsTrust and the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers’ Association between 2017 and 2021.^{88 89 90}

U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ) spoke at a fundraiser for the Caesar Rodney Institute on November 2nd, 2023, entitled “Protecting Delaware’s Coastal Beauty.”⁹¹ Rep. Van Drew had previously spoken at a July fundraiser for Defend Brigantine Beach, an anti-OSW group in New Jersey. Bob Stern, president of Save Long Beach Island, also spoke. So did Mike Dean, a member of Protect Our Coast NJ, who had recently appeared on a Fox News segment baselessly blaming

offshore wind for killing whales.^{92 93} Whale conservation and other anti-OSW rhetoric became a key talking point for Republicans in New Jersey during the 2023 election season, but those who adopted it failed to make expected gains.⁹⁴

Information Flows

The flow of dollars from right-wing megadonors and think tanks is critical to the activities of the anti-OSW movement, but money only tells one part of the story. Without financial strings attached, individuals and organizations with widely varying missions and degrees of national influence have engaged in complex trades of information and tactics that have helped advance the movement. When a leader of one offshore wind group speaks at another’s event, or when an article published by a prominent national think tank appears in an anti-OSW facebook group, talking points and strategies spread across the movement.

Information in the anti-OSW network flows circularly. Just as anti-OSW articles by climate denial think tanks are republished on Facebook by leaders of local-level anti-OSW groups, those leaders also appear at events, fundraisers, and in media produced by national groups. Actors in the movement reinforce one another. A select few individuals are likely responsible for relaying an outsized amount of information in the anti-OSW movement. Many actors wear many hats, moving between different roles at groups that fill different roles in the movement.

For example, MasterResource, the “free-market energy blog” created by the Institute for Energy Research, published a piece in May, 2023 describing how Si Kinsella, a resident of Suffolk County, New York, was suing to slow down the construction of an offshore wind project.⁹⁵ The author of the piece, Sherri Lange, is the CEO of the North American Platform Against Wind Power, a coalition that claims to have 480 members in 22 countries.^{96 97} Kinsella is a member of Save Right

Whales, which was co-founded by Lisa Linowes—herself a MasterResource contributor who has held positions at two climate denial think tanks in the past several years, including the Texas Public Policy Foundation.^{98 99} The other is the Institute for Energy Research, which founded and produces MasterResource.^{100 101}



Figure 4: Lisa Linowes in the anti-offshore wind network

David Stevenson and the Caesar Rodney Institute also exhibit unusual centrality in the anti-OSW network. To block a local offshore wind project in Delaware, they founded Save Our Beach View, a grassroots-appearing member of ACOP. Stevenson also leads ACOP, which uses the Caesar Rodney Institute’s tax-deductible non-profit status to fundraise.^{102 103 104 105}

Stevenson and his Caesar Rodney Institute sent out 35,000 mailers filled with misinformation to coastal Delaware residents in 2018, which it parlayed into \$50,000 in raised funds and 700 new members for Save Our Beach Views.¹⁰⁶ The think tank’s work on Save Our Beach View and ACOP was acknowledged by SPN on the national level

when it named the Caesar Rodney Institute as a 2023 finalist for its “Best Issue Campaign.”¹⁰⁷

Stevenson also appeared as a “witness” at a “field hearing” hosted by Rep. Van Drew in March, entitled “An Examination Into Offshore Wind Industrialization.” This event is one of many in the last few years designed to inform the public of the treacheries of offshore wind.

Many of the other witnesses at Van Drew’s event, all of whom gave speeches, are tightly interwoven in our map. Meghan Lapp, the Seafreeze policy liaison and Texas Public Policy Foundation plaintiff was one of them. So was Michael Donohue, described by Van Drew’s office only as a former New Jersey Superior Court Judge.¹⁰⁸ Donohue is also the Special Counsel on Offshore Wind to Cape May County (MD) as it attempts to beat back a local offshore wind project. Additionally, he chairs the Cape May County GOP, which endorsed Van Drew after the congressman switched parties in 2019.¹⁰⁹

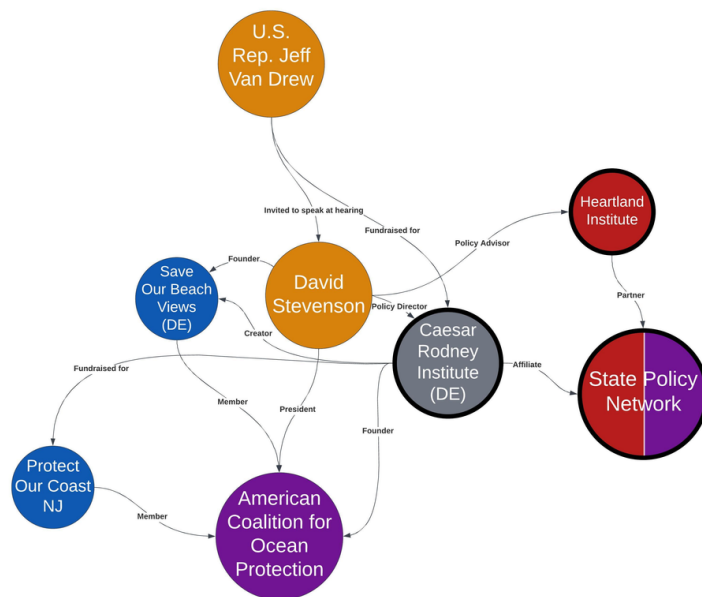


Figure 5: David Stevenson and the Caesar Rodney Institute are central to the anti-offshore wind network.

There is other evidence of how information flows between actors across our map. Mary Chalke, the Nantucket Residents Against Turbines co-director who appeared at the 2021 press conference with Stevenson, also appeared at a

February, 2023 forum alongside Green Oceans leadership. Chalke was wearing a whale costume.¹¹⁰

On July 2nd, 2023, Green Oceans member Constance Gee attended a floating rally against offshore wind sponsored by CFACT, one of the climate denial think tanks central to Droz and Porter's anti-OSW strategy.^{111 112} These in-person interactions at forums, fundraisers, and speaking engagements demonstrate that the shared goals of

a variety of actors in the anti-OSW movement have translated into material alliances that advance their cause.

While not represented in the

map, it is hard to overstate the degree to which Facebook is central to anti-OSW discourse. Though groups are apparently organized and led locally, members share news articles, conspiracy theories, and events from across the world. These groups are numerous and generally centered around a particular anti-OSW group or region of contention. "SaveLBI Community Group" has 2,700+ members and "Save our shoreline-Stop the wind farms off the coast of NJ!" has 5,600+ members. Leaders and members of specific groups are often active in other groups outside of their home state.^{113 114 115}

Just as this map demonstrates influxes of money into the anti-OSW movement, it demonstrates how information flows between actors. Much of this "information" is misleading, unsupported by scientific research, or outright false, but those within the movement have created their own platforms to spread it, such as social media, online blogs, and events such as forums and fundraisers.¹¹⁶ Money is not the only currency in the anti-OSW movement. With each transmission of a false idea, with each forum that spreads misinformation, the anti-OSW movement has gained strength. Strong, complex, personal relationships between a wide variety of actors operating on a wide array of scales has been essential to the movement's growth.

Conclusion

As the climate crisis accelerates, scalable solutions such as offshore wind are essential to reducing our carbon emissions locally and globally. Instead of being met with the encouragement, offshore wind development has sparked national backlash from a complex web of actors. This network is funded by some of the most prolific

contributors to right-wing politics and climate change denial over the last half century. It mobilizes communities and politicians through experienced think tanks, such as the

Texas Public Policy Foundation and the Caesar Rodney Institute, that have perfected anti-climate strategies for decades. These public relations and obstruction specialists are now actively engaging local groups to block offshore wind projects.

National-level climate denial think tanks support local opposition groups, as demonstrated particularly strongly in the American Coalition for Ocean Protection. These actors fundraise together, support one another's events, and circulate one another's media. The Texas Public Policy Foundation is funding an anti-OSW lawsuit on behalf of six RODA members. The Caesar Rodney Institute has fundraised for Protect Our Coast NJ. Save Right Whales is supported by Environmental Progress and Michael Shellenberger, who in turn have connections with corporate entities and organizations with fossil fuel or nuclear interests. We are witnessing a dangerous confluence of knowledgeable public relations veterans and new activists.

These local groups exhibit what political scientist Leah Stokes has called "energy privilege." Often shorefront property owners, they are leveraging their immense privilege to obstruct renewable energy initiatives and thereby impose "costs on lower-income communities, and communities of

color” through the continued reliance on unjust fossil fuel infrastructure.¹¹⁷ While offshore wind opponents sue to protect the “viewsheds” of historic mansions in Newport, RI, pollution from fossil fuel infrastructure is causing cancer and life-threatening asthma in disproportionately Black, Indigenous, Latine, and low-income communities.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁹ ¹²⁰ ¹²¹

Offshore wind provides an opportunity to alleviate some of the harm of fossil fuel use, but the people, companies, and nonprofits that cause and profit from this injustice continue to perpetuate it. Offshore wind construction is fundamentally an environmental justice issue, and the movement to block it is unjust at its core.

More research is needed to determine the extent and nature of the network of offshore wind opposition.

For example, more analysis is needed on the media ecosystem developed by actors in the network, especially the prominence of opposition Facebook groups and the rise of coverage by conservative outlets such as Fox News in the United States and

Sky News in Australia.¹²² This media ecosystem has established a feedback loop of opposition and misinformation.

Also, this map has a focus on the American East Coast, but offshore wind opposition has also appeared in the Great Lakes, Canada, and Australia. Emerging research in Australia has identified similar anti-OSW rhetoric promulgated by actors in the Atlas Network, which includes the Caesar Rodney Institute, the Heartland Institute, the John Locke Foundation, and other think tanks involved in the American fight against offshore wind.¹²³ Research is needed to understand any potential ties between East Coast actors and these efforts. Finally, new and updated financial

information is needed to assess new and expanded ties between organizations in the network. Our research on financial flows is constrained by the release of IRS information, most of which predates the rapid rise of the network.

As money and information flow through this network, local activists are emboldened to build new roadblocks for offshore wind projects. No longer on the fringes of energy policy and regional political agendas, they draw strength from prominent elected officials and some of the most powerful financial interests in the county. This is no coincidence. Offshore wind opposition is a vital tool for fossil fuel interests to delay the renewable energy transition. This briefing provides an initial map so those involved – and those affected – can begin to understand this complex network.

While offshore wind opponents sue to protect the “viewsheds” of historic mansions in Newport, RI, pollution from fossil fuel infrastructure is causing cancer and life-threatening asthma in disproportionately Black, Indigenous, Latine, and low-income communities.

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>SPN member?</u>	<u>ACOP member?</u>	<u>Denial group?*</u>	<u>State Policy Network</u>	<u>Charles Koch Foundation</u>	<u>Charles Koch Institute</u>	<u>DonorsTrust</u>	<u>American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mackinac Center for Public Policy	Y	Y	Y	381,200	1,101,000	857,500	5,628,121	0	\$7,967,821
Texas Public Policy Foundation	Y	Y	Y	25,000	4,593,852	2,055,175	618,153	0	\$7,292,180
John Locke Foundation	Y	Y	Y	210,000	216,000	7,500	172,600	0	\$606,100
Maine Policy Institute	Y	Y		179,000	0	0	84,500	0	\$263,500
Thomas Jefferson Institute	Y	Y	Y	75,000	0	0	39,800	0	\$114,800
Caesar Rodney Institute	Y	Y		0	0	0	14,000	20,000	\$34,000
State Policy Network	Y		Y	x	20,130	6,000	24,585,446	51,000	\$24,662,576
Federalist Society	Y		Y	0	1,395,000	2,000,000	11,449,250	0	\$14,844,250
Heartland Institute	Y		Y	0	0	0	3,554,032	150,000	\$3,704,032
American Legislative Exchange Council	Y		Y	0	1,571,433	654,000	1,146,721	52,050	\$3,424,204
Competitive Enterprise Institute	Y		Y	0	218,730	82,000	2,080,050	145,000	\$2,525,780
Freedom Works Foundation	Y		Y	0	0	0	2,349,780	0	\$2,349,780
Mercatus Center	Y			0	189,500	0	2,080,050	0	\$2,269,550
Americans for Prosperity Foundation	Y		Y	0	22,257	44,039	1,490,671	0	\$1,556,967
DonorsTrust	Y			10,000	132,562	0	x	0	\$142,562
CO2 Coalition			Y	0	39,513	24,000	200,000	0	\$263,513
Institute for Energy Research			Y	0	114,469	44,289	96,220	0	\$254,978
Total for ACOP think tanks				\$870,200	\$5,910,852	\$2,920,175	\$6,557,174	\$20,000	\$16,278,401
Total				\$880,200	\$9,614,446	\$5,774,503	\$55,589,394	\$418,050	\$72,276,593

Figure 6: Table of contributions from fossil fuel interests and dark money groups to organizations in the anti-offshore wind network.

* "Denial group" as enumerated in Brulle et al. 2021.

DonorsTrust: 2019-2021. All other donors: 2017-2021.

All data from IRS 990 tax forms, as published by the IRS and ProPublica.

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