

## Heartland Institute

*The Heartland Institute is funded by dark money and corporate donors who benefit from the false and misleading information it peddles to undermine conservation efforts and efforts to combat climate change.*

**Summary:** The Heartland Institute is a libertarian think tank that has advocated for the [elimination of federal public lands](#). The organization [opposes](#) the Biden Administration's [America the Beautiful Conservation initiative](#) that aims to conserve 30% of lands and waters by 2030, and participated in an anti-conservation summit hosted by American Stewards of Liberty.

Founded in 1984 by David Padden, Heartland was created to influence the politics of the American Midwest as the libertarian movement's influence exploded in the 1970s and 80s. The group's founder, David Padden, was also a founding director of libertarian think tank [The Cato Institute](#) (originally named the Charles Koch Foundation).

Heartland is a prolific pusher of climate change skepticism. The Institute researchers work to promote skepticism of climate change and misrepresent the scientific consensus. In support of this mission, Heartland has hosted annual conferences to [promote climate-denial](#), put up billboards that compared climate activists to the [Unabomber](#), compiled misrepresentative lists that claim to point to scientists denying climate change, and mailed 200,000 unsolicited [anti-climate propaganda pamphlets](#) to public school teachers. They have also created model legislation alongside ALEC to [repeal climate policy](#) and run public campaigns to [promote fracking](#).

Current Heartland president James Taylor recently gave a rambling anti-climate speech at an [anti-conservation event](#) hosted by American Stewards of Liberty in which he referred to climate change as a "[gateway drug for \[the\] 30x30 land grab.](#)" and shared conspiracy theories about the America the Beautiful Initiative. The group also has a history of supporting transferring federal lands to states.

Much like its work for big tobacco, Heartland's climate denial work is funded by large corporate donors with interest in fighting off climate reform policy. Fossil fuel giants like Murray Energy and [Exxon](#), as well as [Koch-connected groups](#) Donors Trust and Donors Capital Fund, have given to Heartland. Companies with a vested interest in opposing emissions policies, like General Motors, have also given to Heartland in support of its climate-denial agenda.

Our detailed report can be found below:

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**[Heartland President James Taylor Presented American Stewards Anti-Conservation Event](#)**

*Heartland President James Taylor Touts Claim That Conservation Is Part Of A "United Nations Agenda..."*

**In An Op-ed Promoting An American Stewards of Liberty Anti-Conservation Event, Heartland Institute President James Taylor Wrote That 30x30 Is Only A Beginning, Claiming Leaders Are Attempting To Impose A "United Nations Agenda."** Taylor wrote an Op-ed where he claimed, "The Biden administration is attempting to impose upon America a United Nations agenda to 'conserve' at least 30% of each nation's land, primarily under government ownership or control, by the year 2030, supposedly to protect the environment. Statements from leaders of the agenda suggest that number may then grow to 50% and then 70%. An American, pro-freedom public policy organization is hosting a summit in Lincoln Friday to oppose such a government land grab." [Lincoln Journal Star, [04/20/22](#)]

**Taylor: "Our Nation Will Only Remain Free When Individual People Own And Control The Vast Majority Of The Land, Not The Government."** [Lincoln Journal Star, [04/20/22](#)]

*Taylor Referred To Global Warming As The "Gateway Drug" To Justify Imposing 30x30 "And All Sorts Of Other Evils"*

**James Taylor Gave A Presentation At ASoL's Lincoln Event In May 2022, Titled "Climate Alarmism: The Gateway Drug For 30x30 Land Grab."** James Taylor gave an anti-30x30 presentation at ASL's "Stop 30x30" event in May 2022. [Americanstewards.us, [04/22/22](#)]

**Taylor Referred To Global Warming As The "Gateway Drug" To Justify 30x30.** Taylor commented, "For the 30x30 agenda, like so many other leftist agendas, global warming is the gateway drug. This is how they justify their actions. This is how they get people to say, 'I'm not sure if I agree with this, but we have to save the planet. Global warming is destroying us all.'" [Rumble.com, 3:00, [05/31/22](#)]

**Taylor: Climate Change Is The "Justification For 30x30 And All Sorts Of Other Evils That The Left Is Trying To Impose On American Society."** Taylor commented that climate change is the "justification for 30x30 and all sorts of other evils that the left is trying to impose on American society." [Rumble.com, 3:30, [05/31/22](#)]

*Heartland Previously Sent Climate Books To Over 200,000 Teachers Which Were Described As "Intended To Confuse," And Was Working With Coal Consultant On A "Climate Curriculum" For Children*

**Heartland Sent Climate Books To Over 200,000 Teachers Which Were "Intended To Confuse."** A book titled 'Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming' has been delivered to 25,000 science teachers. It will go out to around 175,000 more in the coming

weeks, until every science teacher in the country has a copy. At least, that's the Heartland Institute's plan, according to reporting by PBS Frontline. The book itself looks pretty official. It's got a badge in the upper right-hand corner that labels it a second edition, though I have to admit I didn't know there was a first. 'It's not science, but it's dressed up to look like science,' Ann Reid, the director of the National Center for Science Education, told Frontline. 'It's clearly intended to confuse teachers.'"  
[Washington Post, [03/29/17](#)]

**Heartland Was Working With A Coal Industry Consultant On A "Climate Curriculum" For Children.** "As Brad Johnson reported today at ThinkProgress, confirmation that Heartland is working with David Wojick, a U.S. Energy Department contract worker and coal industry consultant, to develop a 'Global Warming Curriculum for K-12 Schools.'" [Desmog.com, [02/14/12](#)]

## **Support For Transferring Federal Lands To States**

**Heartland Promoted Cato Handbook For Policymakers, Which Recommended That Congress "Should Privatize The Lands Held By The Forest Service And The U.S. Department Of The Interior."** The Heartland Institute promoted the Cato Handbook for Policymakers, which, "recommends Congress should privatize the lands held by the Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior..." [Heartland.org, [02/16/17](#)]

## **Climate Disinformation And Denialism**

*The Heartland Institute Has Two Websites It Uses To Counter Information On Climate Change*

**The Heartland Institute Has A Website, Climaterealism.Com, Which It Uses To Counter Information On Climate Change.** The Heartland Institute has a website, Climaterealism.com, which it uses to counter information on climate change, with articles like "CNN Hypes False Dengue Fever Claims, Putting Climate Fears Ahead of Facts, Again." [[Climaterealism.com](#), Accessed 02/09/24]

**The Heartland Institute Has A Website, Climateataglance.Com, Which It Uses To Counter Information On Climate Change.** The Heartland Institute has a website, Climateataglance.com, which it uses to counter information on climate change, with one such post reading, "Climate activists often claim Pacific islands are sinking under rising seas and spawning climate refugees. Objective and published scientific evidence debunks claims that climate change is causing small islands to disappear under rising seas. In fact, new studies have shown most islands to be growing in size, not shrinking." [[Climateataglance.com](#), Accessed 06/09/22]

*Heartland Institute Misrepresented A Climate Scientist's Data About Global Warming And Refused To Remove The Reference Despite Direct Refutation From The Scientist Himself*

**Heartland Institute Misrepresented Climate Scientist's Data About Global Warming, And Refused To Remove Reference To Scientist's Work.** "The chief scientist at New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, Dr Jim Salinger, knows all about misrepresentation. Two months ago, an Exxon-funded group, the Heartland Institute, said his work undermined the theory that burning carbon was a cause of global warming. The Heartland Institute - essentially a free-market lobby group - emphasizes 'the climate is always changing.' It is a theme common to many climate change deniers who talk about a so-called Little Ice Age (1300-1900) and Medieval Warm Period (800-1200). Salinger's research studied variation in climate, so it was enrolled in the denial campaign. Climate variations were normal, Salinger said, but this did not weaken conclusions about the dangers of burning oil and coal. 'Global warming is real,' he said, and demanded reference to his work be removed. The institute refused." [Sydney Morning Herald, [08/02/08](#)]

*Heartland Institute Ran A Billboard Comparing Climate Activists To "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski*

**Heartland Institute Forced To Take Down Billboard Comparing Climate Activists To Ted Kaczynski.** "A stark mug shot of domestic terrorist Ted Kaczynski briefly took center stage in the increasingly ugly debate over climate change Friday as the Heartland Institute, a libertarian think tank funded by major corporations, launched a billboard campaign equating people convinced that global warming is real to the convicted killer. 'I still believe in Global Warming. Do you?' read big orange letters next to the Unabomber's infamously grizzled face on an electronic billboard along the Eisenhower Expressway outside Chicago, the Heartland Institute's home." [Washington Post, [05/04/12](#)]

**Heartland President Said He Would Switch Off Sign After Backlash.** "The billboard went live Thursday afternoon. But by 4 p.m. Eastern time, an outcry from allies and opponents alike led the Heartland Institute's president, Joe Bast, to say he would switch off the sign within the hour." [Washington Post, [05/04/12](#)]

**The Heartland Institute "Knew This Was A Risk When Deciding To Test It, But Decided It Was A Necessary Price To Make An Emotional Appeal To People Who Otherwise Aren't Following The Climate Change Debate."** "'The Heartland Institute knew this was a risk when deciding to test it, but decided it was a necessary price to make an emotional appeal to people who otherwise aren't following the climate change debate,' Bast wrote in an email to some of the institute's supporters, explaining his decision to end the campaign." [Washington Post, [05/04/12](#)]

### ***Original Billboard As Purchased By Heartland Institute:***



[Desmog.com, [05/04/12](#)]

## **Ties To Koch Brothers And Exxon**

*Exxon Gave \$800,000 To Heartland Institute*

**Exxon Gave \$800,000 To Heartland According To Greenpeace.** “The Heartland Institute received almost \$800,000 from Exxon, according to Greenpeace research based on Exxon's corporate donation disclosures.” [Sydney Morning Herald, [08/02/08](#)]

*Heartland Founder David Padden Was A Founding Director Of Koch-Backed Cato Institute*

**Heartland Founder Was Director Of Cato Institute, Which Was Originally The “Charles Koch Foundation.”** The group’s founder, David Padden was also a founding director of libertarian think tank, The Cato Institute (originally named the Charles Koch Foundation.) [Chicago Tribune, [10/06/11](#)]

*Heartland Received Donations From Koch Industries Charity Foundation, Donors Trust, And Donors Capital, Three Koch-Connected Groups*

**Heartland Received \$25,000 In Funding From Koch Industries Charity Foundation.** “Curiously, there was a notable absence of funding from publicly traded oil companies, although the privately owned Koch Industries – a major oil refiner – was indirectly represented by its co-owner's contribution of \$25,000, through his own charity foundation.” [CSM.com, [02/16/12](#)]

**Heartland Received Funding From Donors Trust.** “Not content with climate denial and obstruction at the State level, Donors Trust also transmitted \$4.5 million in anonymous money to eight different national climate denial organizations. These include the Heartland Institute, notorious for comparing climate scientists to the Unabomber and sending 200,000 fake, climate-denying textbooks to school teachers around the country.” [Whitehouse.senate.gov, [12/09/20](#)]

**Koch Brothers Were Top Contributors To Donors Trust In 2011.** “In 2011, fully 95 percent of the Franklin Center’s revenues came from a charity called Donors Trust, whose top contributors were the Koch brothers. (CJR first profiled the Franklin Center last September.)” [Archives.cjr.org, [04/22/13](#)]

**Heartland Received Over \$21 Million From Donors Capital Fund, A Koch Connected Group, Between 2001-2017.** According to DeSmog, Heartland received \$21,486,044 from Donors Capital Fund (a Koch connected group) between 2001-2017. [Desmog.com, Accessed [01/10/24](#)]