

# NRDC Sues EPA Over Fracking - Has The Settlement Been Pre-Arranged?



By Hank Campbell — May 4, 2016



The United States Environmental Protection Agency maintains

a cozy relationship with environmental groups - it has been caught releasing proposals for early commentary to them [and even republished Sierra Club talking points about Keystone XL as being officially from the Obama administration](#) [1].

Well, why is that a surprise? The EPA is stuffed with former environmental activists. Being at Union of Concerned Scientists is practically a shoe-in for a government job during the last seven years. Yet those clearly conflicted EPA officials have never recused themselves from decisions, even when being lobbied by their friends with activist organizations.

How close are these friends? [EPA's former policy administrator Michael Goo invited League of Conservation Voters and Natural Resources Defense Council members](#) [2] to parties where they could buy T-shirts from him for \$20. And buying T-shirts seems to have helped them. [The New York Times criticized EPA for letting NRDC draft a blueprint](#) [3] for its ruling on coal power plants. Who [suggested in a Dec. 9, 2011 email to Dave Hawkins](#) [4], environmental lawyer at NRDC, that his group produce the material for EPA efforts to shut down coal-fired plants? That same Michael Goo.(1)

It's also no secret the EPA has brought plenty of environmental activism tactics to the fore since it hired all those environmentalists, like engaging in blatant propaganda the way anti-science groups frequently do. [The U.S. Government Accountability Office found that EPA](#) [5] "violated publicity or propaganda and anti-lobbying provisions contained in appropriations acts with its use of certain social media platforms in association with its "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) rulemaking in fiscal years 2014 and 2015."

Friends share knowledge on how to mobilize the public for good causes and all that.

NRDC just announced it is suing the EPA because the government does not regulate natural gas extraction using hydraulic fracturing -- fracking -- enough. Wow, friendship over, right? Not at all; it instead smells more like more collusion, because it has happened on too many occasions that the EPA has provided environmental groups with the tactic to sue on, and then they just pre-arrange

to settle the case and taxpayers are stuck with the bill, while environmental lawyers get even richer. One time [they even declared water a pollutant](#) [6] in a settlement, leaving a county in Virginia on the hook for up to \$500 million.

“Waste from the oil and gas industry is very often toxic and should be treated that way,” according to Amy Mall, who is a top fundraiser or a lawyer, anything but a scientist, that gets handed a title like senior policy analyst at NRDC.

There is just one problem: the number of studies showing waste water from fracking is harmful is still zero, regardless of what NRDC political science majors claim in press releases. **(2)** And this further smacks of collusion because [the EPA had to be prevented in federal court from blaming things on fracking without doing any studies](#) [7]. If it could make energy more expensive for poor people, they would do it -- that is also something officials share with anti-science groups like NRDC.

Fracking is being blamed for everything, of course. [Even too many hotel rooms](#) [8]. So maybe NRDC is having a weak quarter in its fundraising -- that \$300,000,000 they have in the bank didn't get there promoting science -- and it thinks fracking is an easy target. That part is hard to know.

What is easy to know is that NRDC did not file this latest lawsuit without sensing it was going to get some kind of payoff. What is impossible to know is if the payoff has been determined in advance. And we may never know. Because even former EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson [was caught using a bogus email address to avoid scrutiny when corresponding outside the legal channels that would show up in Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\) requests](#) [9]. Former EPA Administrator Carol Browner did the same thing to hide emails with plans to torpedo American energy companies. So it will surprise no one if that is still being done.

#### **NOTES:**

**(1)** Goo has since left EPA to work for the Department of Energy. Who is the Chief of Staff for the Secretary there? The former President of the activist group Union of Concerned Scientists, Kevin Knobloch.

**(2)** If you want to read actual science about the science and health of fracking, you can get our peer-reviewed publication [here](#) [10].

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#### **Links**

[1] <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/sep/15/emails-show-collusion-between-epa-environmental-lo/?page=all>

[2] <http://dailycaller.com/2015/07/14/emails-detail-epas-wild-goofest-party-complete-with-boozy-ice-luge/?source=acsh.org>

[3] [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/07/us/how-environmentalists-drew-blueprint-for-obama-emissions-rule.html?ref=energy-environment&\\_r=1&source=acsh.org](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/07/us/how-environmentalists-drew-blueprint-for-obama-emissions-rule.html?ref=energy-environment&_r=1&source=acsh.org)

[4] <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/interactive/2015/07/09/goo-email-on-power-plants/?source=acsh.org>

[5] <http://www.gao.gov/products/B-326944>

[6] [http://www.science20.com/science\\_20/blog/epa\\_says\\_water\\_pollutant-93162](http://www.science20.com/science_20/blog/epa_says_water_pollutant-93162)

[7] <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-03-30/epa-agrees-to-dismiss-well-contamination-case-against-range?source=science20.com>

[8] [http://www.science20.com/news\\_articles/fracking\\_blamed\\_for\\_too\\_many\\_hotel\\_rooms-145253](http://www.science20.com/news_articles/fracking_blamed_for_too_many_hotel_rooms-145253)

[9] <https://cei.org/richard-windsor?SOURCE=acsh.org>

[10] <http://acsh.org/news/2014/06/12/fracking-health-facts-vs-fiction/>