

Deny, Deceive, Delay: Demystified

How Big Carbon uses disinformation to sabotage
climate action, and how we stop them.



Climate Action
Against Disinformation



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Information Integrity on the COP30 Agenda

Climate policy is popular—89% of the planet wants more of it. By putting information integrity on the agenda, we're getting closer.

Climate change is real. It is unequivocally caused by human activities, including burning fossil fuels for energy and transportation, and by large-scale agriculture (the combined efforts of Big Oil and Big Ag, hereafter “Big Carbon”). And it is already [hurting people around the globe](#). When the world’s political leaders gather in Belém, Brazil for the 30th Conference of Parties (COP30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), they should know that a [survey found that 89% of the global public](#) want more climate action from those leaders.

Most of the world’s people don’t just want more action, they’re willing to put their money where their mouth is—literally. [69% of the public](#) would be willing to contribute 1% of their monthly income to fight climate change.

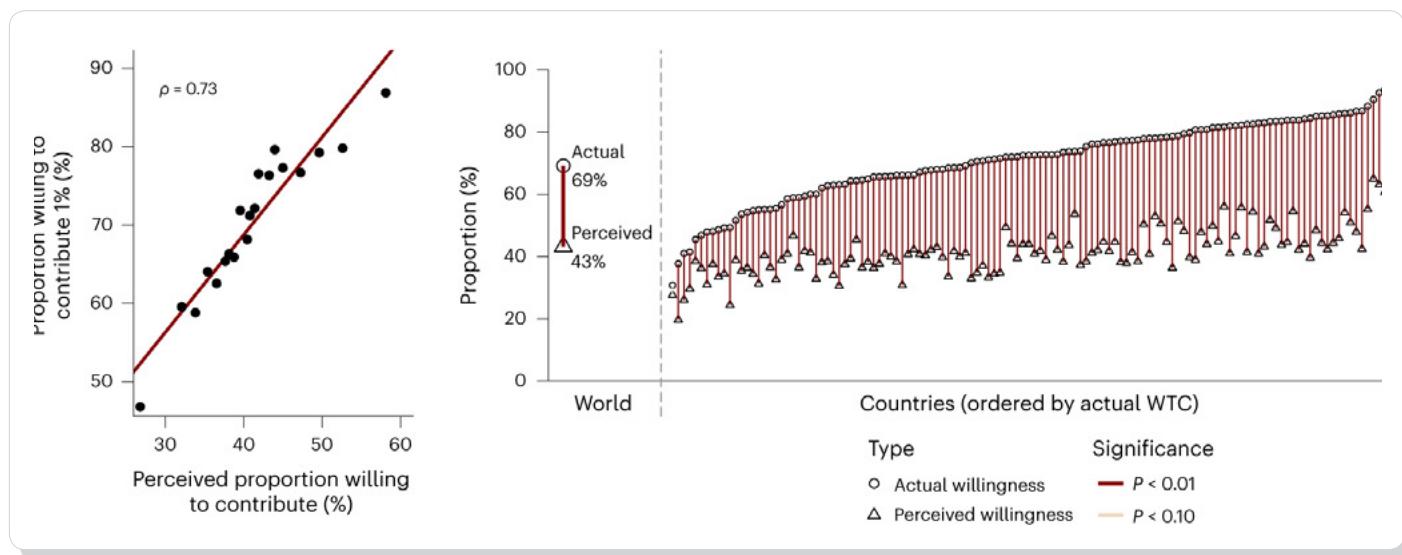
Yet when asked, those surveyed think on average only 43%, a minority, would do the same.

A majority of the world’s people are willing to act and even to contribute a percentage of their own wealth, but that majority think they’re in the minority. This is the impact of climate disinformation.

89% **69%**

State that their national government should do more to fight global warming.

Would be willing to contribute 1% of their household income to fight global warming.



Beliefs and perception gaps. (From: Globally representative evidence on the actual and perceived support for climate action.)

Just like the public, policymakers are influenced by disinformation, and dramatically underestimate the degree to which people would contribute 1% of their income to fight climate change—on average, [policymakers think its just 38%](#), even lower than the public's guess of 43%, and far below the actual level of willingness at 69%. This is the further goal and impact of climate disinformation.

Big Carbon's disinformation is designed to cause ordinary people to underestimate the strength of the scientific consensus on climate change. It is also causing people to underestimate the strength of solidarity in demanding action. Spread rapidly and cheaply via online social media platforms and search engines (Big Tech), this disinformation is undermining policy and sabotaging action.

That's why it's so important that, for the first time, information integrity has made it to the Action Agenda. Coming in last, but not least—at number 30 of the [30 Key Objectives of COP30](#)—is “Information integrity in climate change matters.”

Recognizing the need to build community to overcome the obstruction, Brazil worked with the UN and UNESCO to create the [Global Initiative on Information Integrity on Climate Change](#) ahead of its role as COP30 host. By putting information integrity on the agenda, Brazil is establishing itself as a leader in the global efforts to confront the damage Big Tech can do to a [country](#), a [democracy](#), a [planet](#) and its [people](#).

This report covers disinformation in Brazil in the lead-up to COP30, a history of obstructive efforts, the digital disinformation that's used to target COPs, and policy solutions addressing the problem.

It is split into four sections:

1. [Four Brazilian Examples of Disinformation](#)
2. [Sabotaging Climate Action: A History](#)
3. [Digital Disinformation and Obstructing Modern UN COPs](#)
4. [The New Solutions To The Information Pollution](#)

1 [Four Brazilian Examples of Disinformation](#)

As the world's attention turned to Brazil as the host of COP30, CAAD's Brazilian colleagues at [FALA](#), fresh from documenting the \$78 billion [“supply chain of lies”](#) in Brazil since 2020, launched the Observatory for Information Integrity. The project and its accompanying “Oii” newsletter document how disinformation has been used to hurt Brazilians.

[The first edition of Oii](#) proved that the situation in Brazil will be both familiar and startling to the traditionally Anglocentric climate disinformation community.

The findings are familiar in that the disinformation is coming from the far right and polluters, as identified by Carlos Milani, a professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro and co-author of the book [“Climate Obstruction,”](#) who has said: “Climate denial in Brazil is pushed most explicitly by far-right figures, a small group of anti-environmentalist activists and ultra-conservative leaders (such

as Ricardo Felício, Evaristo Miranda, Bertrand de Orleans e Bragança, Alain Santos, among others)..."

But, unlike in US or UK contexts, in Brazil and other nations of the Global Majority, physical intimidation is much more common. For example, [Cristiana Losekann, professor at the Federal University of Espírito Santo, described](#) how machine gun-armed officials intimidated communities on behalf of companies at an event in 2025. The violence against, and [murder](#) of, environmental land defenders forms the extreme end of the spectrum of tactics that corporations and states use to secure a profit over the objections of people. As Global Witness has [reported](#), at least 146 land and environmental defenders were killed or disappeared in 2024, and over 2,250 since 2012.

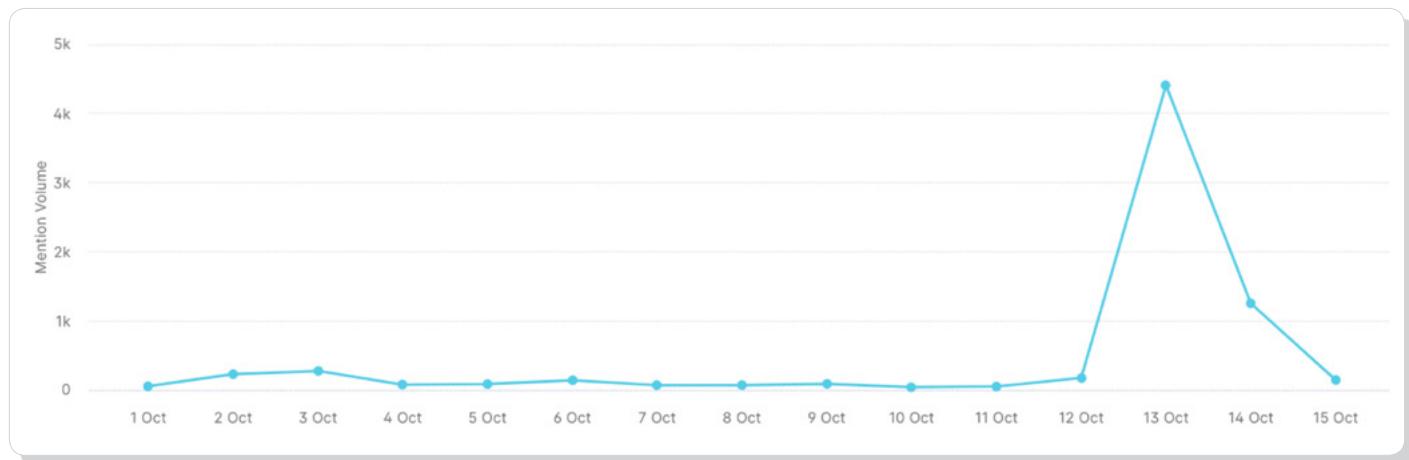
The lies also have a policy cost. As [Oii showed, via analysis with CAAD](#), a lie about Brazil's environmental regulations was spread at least 1,383 times on social media before Brazil's congress voted to gut the standards via the "Devastation Bill"—the biggest environmental policy setback since Brazil's military dictatorship. A longtime regional insider told

Oii staff that they were 'in shock' because they had never seen climate disinformation influence the ballot box like this before—environmental issues were rarely mentioned as [far-right](#) figures swept into office.

Meanwhile, on social media, Big Tech is broadcasting climate disinformation unchecked, with Oii announcing its findings in September 2025: "[COP disinformation hits record high](#)." Oii and CAAD found a 267% increase in COP-related disinformation from July to September, finding some 14,000 examples online.

One notable instance featured a newer technique, the use of generative AI to create an entirely fake story. [The AI clip is of a flooded city](#), supposedly Belém, except, as Oii writes, "the reporter doesn't exist, the people don't exist, the flood doesn't exist, and the city doesn't exist. The only thing that does exist is the abundance of angry comments against the politician mentioned in the video and against the climate conference in Belém, on X (formerly Twitter) and TikTok."

Did the platforms carrying the clip care? Their response to Folha de São Paulo,



Mentions of COP30 accompanied by mentions of "corruption", "Janja", "Janjapalooza" or "Golpe30" on X, news portals, Instagram Public, Facebook Public, and YouTube between October 1-15, 2025. Source: Brandwatch.

[the major Brazilian newspaper that published Oii's findings](#), was hardly indicative of concern. [Oii pointed out](#): "Meta, which controls Instagram and Facebook, and YouTube just sent links to their general disinformation policy pages, which make no mention of climate issues. LinkedIn did not comment. X and Reddit did not respond."

CAAD's October analysis of social media confirms that COP30 remains a target of digital abuse, which fits with the fact that [women](#), and [climate scientists](#), are often singled out for the type of [misogynistic](#) hate [online](#) that platforms have failed to address. A case in point is a 150% increase in "Janjapalooza" and "Golpe30" posts after [false](#) reports that First Lady Janja da Silva would be a spokesperson for COP30. This continues the attacks that were first directed at the First Lady for organizing an event on hunger and poverty during the November 2024 G20 summit.

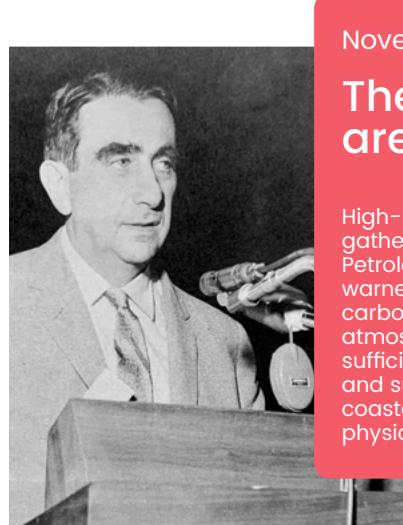
2 Sabotaging Climate Action: A History

The fact that information integrity is on the COP30 agenda is an encouraging development because it means policymakers are finally recognizing that polluters are lying to prevent regulations that would hamper their profits.

[As early as 1912](#), there were mainstream media reports on the connection between coal consumption and climate change, a relationship known to scientists since [Eunice Newton Foote established](#) in 1856 that carbon

dioxide (CO₂) trapped heat, and since John Tyndall "discovered" the greenhouse gas effect a few years later.

The American Petroleum Institute (API) was alerted [to its product's climate harms as early as 1959](#), and [was told in 1968](#) that its products were changing the climate. In 1980, Stanford climate scientist John Laurmann informed oil industry executives that their products—fossil fuels—were causing global warming, and that the effects could be "[globally catastrophic](#)." Eight years later, NASA climate scientist James Hansen warned the US Congress that [warming was already happening](#).



November 1959

The Execs are Warned

High-level oil executives, gathered by the American Petroleum Institute, are warned that increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere "will be sufficient to melt the icecap and submerge . . . all the coastal cities" by renowned physicist Edward Teller.

Policymakers got to work addressing the issue, establishing the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to provide policymakers with the science establishing the problem, and then creating the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to begin working towards solutions, in part with annual Conferences of Parties (COPs), now at number 30. Why has it taken so many years to produce [so little climate action](#)?

As the Union of Concerned Scientists charted in its [Decades of Deceit](#) report, the fossil fuel industry soon started working hard at something other than telling the truth and changing its business models: obstructing climate action.

The fossil fuel industry sabotaged global climate action by creating and deploying disinformation, such as exploiting journalistic practices to create a false balance between independent climate scientists and professional climate deniers. They funded university centers and think tanks to give disinformation with a veneer of credibility, and launched and funded partisan media outlets to spread those false narratives.

By 1998, as the API “[Roadmap](#)” memo shows, industry players were hard at work spreading disinformation to undercut scientific consensus and make reporters and the public doubt its strength on the fact that fossil fuels cause climate change. They were also busy undermining the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which they had already convinced the US to reject ratifying.

Victory Will Be Achieved When

Average citizens “understand” (recognize) uncertainties in climate science; recognition of uncertainties becomes part of the “conventional wisdom”

Media “understands” (recognizes) uncertainties in climate science.

Media coverage reflects balance on climate science and recognition of the validity of viewpoints that challenge the current “conventional wisdom”

Industry senior leadership understands uncertainties in climate science, making them stronger ambassadors to those who shape climate policy

Those promoting the Kyoto treaty on the basis of extant science appear to be out of touch with reality.

By the mid-2000s, however, the weight of multiple lines of scientific evidence and effective climate science communications efforts successfully undid the disinformation efforts, educating and mobilizing the public and policymakers alike on the need to act swiftly on climate change. Indeed, in 2007, the

[Nobel Peace Prize](#) was jointly granted to Al Gore and the IPCC.

When it appeared that disinformation wouldn’t suffice for the industry to overcome the strengthening public understanding of climate change, they found a short-cut: partisan polarization.

2009’s “[Climategate](#)” was an early and powerful “hack-and-leak attack” and a signal example of a polarizing disinformation campaign. It served to justify elite politicians’ climate denial, turned “climate change” into a politically charged issue, and used partisanship to bypass the need to build public support.

2.1. Climategate: The Hack-And-Leak Attack That Poisoned and Polarized Climate Politics

NATO’s 2024 [Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment](#) gave a clear warning: “Hack-and-leak attacks, where data is stolen or leaked and potentially doctored, should be a concern when it comes to environmental data and policies.”

However, NATO neglected to explain exactly why hack-and-leak attacks are such a threat to climate change policy in its report—these attacks are a threat to policy because they already successfully undermine policy.

While many may now take for granted [the 2011 finding that climate change denial is predominantly a phenomenon of white conservative males](#), prior to 2009, there was sufficient reason for conservative politicians in the US to [appear willing](#) to tackle climate change. A notable example is [the 2009 ad](#)



[calling for climate action at the Copenhagen COP that included Donald J. Trump's signature.](#)

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2009

As business leaders we are optimistic that President Obama is attending Copenhagen with emissions targets. Additionally, we urge you, our government, to strengthen and pass United States legislation, and lead the world by example. We support your effort to ensure meaningful and effective measures to control climate change, an immediate challenge facing the United States and the world today. Please don't postpone the earth. If we fail to act now, it is scientifically irrefutable that there will be catastrophic and irreversible consequences for humanity and our planet.

We recognize the key role that American innovation and leadership play in stimulating the worldwide economy. Investing in a Clean Energy Economy will drive state-of-the-art technologies that will spur economic growth, create new energy jobs, and increase our energy security all while reducing the harmful emissions that are putting our planet at risk. We have the ability and the know-how to lead the world in clean energy technology to thrive in a global market and economy. But we must embrace the challenge today to ensure that future generations are left with a safe planet and a strong economy.

Please allow us, the United States of America, to serve in modeling the change necessary to protect humanity and our planet.

In partnership,

Richard Baker, Chairman, Lord & Taylor, Gail, David & Lauren Barber, Blue Hill, Chris Blawie, Founder, Island Reports, Island Outpost, Guyton Carter, Editor, Verity Fair, Deepak Chopra, Adjunct Professor, Kellogg School of Business and Management, Yann Choukroun, Founder, Patagonia, Ben Cohen, Jerry Greenfield, Co-founders, Ben & Jerry's, Gregory Gilbert, Creator, Athene & Snow, Kenneth Cole, Chairman, Kenneth Cole Productions, Paulette Cole, CEO & Creative Director, ABC Home, ABC Carpet & Home, Tom Colicchio, Chef & Owner, Craft Restaurants & Patisseries, Michael Cohen, President, The Cohen Group, Barry Cohen, Founder, Chairman & CEO, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc., Diane Coffey, CEO, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc., Steve Cohen, CEO, Bally Total Fitness, Ben & Jerry's, Founder, Chairman & Co-CEO, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc., Mitch Gold, Chairman, Beto Williams, President, Co-Founders, Mitch Gold & Bob Williams, Matt Goldstein, Co-Founder & CEO, Blue Man Group, Ben Goldstein, CEO, Honest Tea, Robert Greene, Founder, Greene's Gourmet, Jenny Holzer, Artist, Jenny Holzer Studio, Adam Horowitz, President, Head of Story Development, Executive Editor, Author, Gary Hartung, CFO, OME, New York, Jeffrey Hollender, CEO, Seventh Generation, Kate Hudson, David Biegel, Co-Founders, David Biegel, Founder, Unilever Expeditions, Michael Kieschnick, President, Credo Mobile, Sheryl Leach, Creator & Founder of Birken, Even-Old Lundström, Founder, Unilever Expeditions, David Lutjens, President, Unilever Expeditions, Jeff Minkin, President, Unilever Expeditions, Will Price, Chairman & Founder, Gardner's Supply Company, Honi Rothchestein, Founder, Aveda, Founder & CEO, Intelligent Nutrients, David Rothman, Founder & Owner, Rockville Group, Maury Rubin, Founder, Chef & CEO, City Bistro, Birthright, Birthright Green, Bakery, Michael Russo, CEO, President, The Rockport Company, Gordon Sondrel, Chairman, CEO & President, Jeff Sorkin, Founder, Participant Media and Sorkin Foundation, Harvey Weinstein, CEO, Founder, President, Harvey Weinstein, Michael Bloomberg, Founder, Mayor of New York City, Martha Stewart, Founder, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Inc., Jeffrey Gundlach, CEO, TIAA-CREF, Tom Saks, CEO, TerraCycle, Donald J. Trump, Chairman and President, Donald J. Trump, Jr., EVA LIBBY K. TRUMP, EVA LIBBY M. TRUMP, EVA LIBBY THE TRUMP Organization, Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Executive Chef & Owner, Jean-Georges Management LLC

If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. african proverb
Business leaders, sign onto this initiative: businessleadersenvironmentalchange.us.

[In the weeks before the Copenhagen COP, hackers obtained climate scientists' emails, stored them on a Russian server, and sent them to climate denial bloggers, who then misrepresented the emails to make false allegations about the scientists' discourse and findings. These false claims of controversy were then amplified by right-wing blogs and partisan news outlets, elevating them far beyond climate circles. That conservative media-driven controversy was then covered credulously by mainstream press, who](#)

reported on the scandal as a scandal, before doing any due diligence to determine if the climate scientists really were saying what the bloggers and partisan outlets claimed.

As a result, [instead of a global breakthrough that year](#), the COP was [sabotaged](#) by the disinformation attack that came to be known as [Climategate](#), a controversy so sensational it was dramatised by the [BBC](#) and even got the documentary treatment from [Channel 4](#).

POLITICO

Climategate distracts at Copenhagen



'Climategate' muddled the good green message that was supposed to come out of Copenhagen. | AP photo composite by POLITICO

By TIM GRIEVE and LOUISE ROUG

COPENHAGEN — "Climategate" has muddled the good green message that was supposed to come out of the United Nations climate change talks here, forcing leaders to spend time justifying the science behind global warming when they want to focus on ending it.

Former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin stirred the pot Wednesday with a Washington Post op-ed calling on President Barack Obama to boycott the Copenhagen talks over climategate and the "agenda-driven science" it exposed.

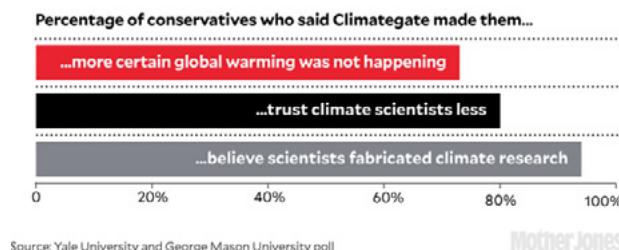
In the aftermath of Climategate, [US conservatives were reportedly largely convinced by the lies about climate scientists](#). The lie was then used as fodder to lock in [distrust of climate scientists](#) specifically,

and of [scientists in general](#), as perceived [conservative orthodoxy](#).

Eventually, [nine separate investigations](#) cleared all the scientists of the charges of misconduct. But the disinformation had already done its damage and had sown partisanship.

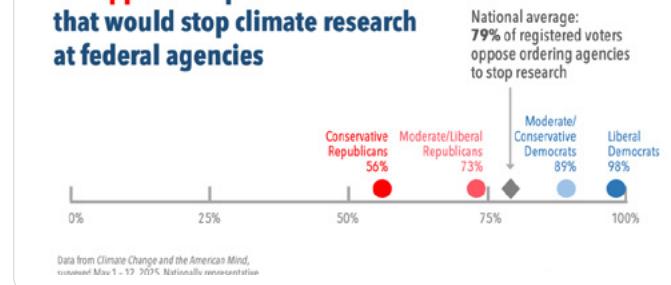
STOKING DENIAL

Climategate helped turn Donald Trump into a denier. He wasn't alone. In 2010, many who followed the story said it made them more likely to reject climate science.

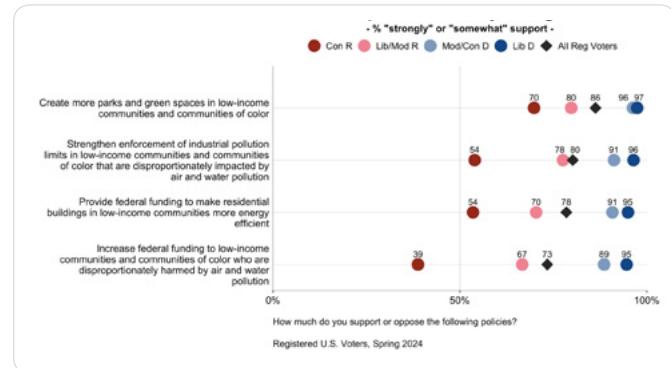


In the same way "false balance" gave the impression that scientists were split on climate change—instead of in 99% agreement—polarization is a trick that uses partisan politics to create the illusion of more widespread public support as a way to secure (or block) policy when, for example, [even most Republican voters oppose policies that cut climate research](#).

Voters across all political parties are [opposed to policies that would stop climate research at federal agencies](#)



Similarly, a majority of conservative Republicans support some climate justice goals.



To protect the public from future hack-and-leak attacks, CAAD calls on civil society to improve the mainstream information environment, hold Big Tech accountable for exposing users to harmful disinformation in digital information environments, and, most importantly, stop the [the covert Russian propagandists](#) and [fossil fuel-funded](#) sources of climate disinformation that sabotage climate action.

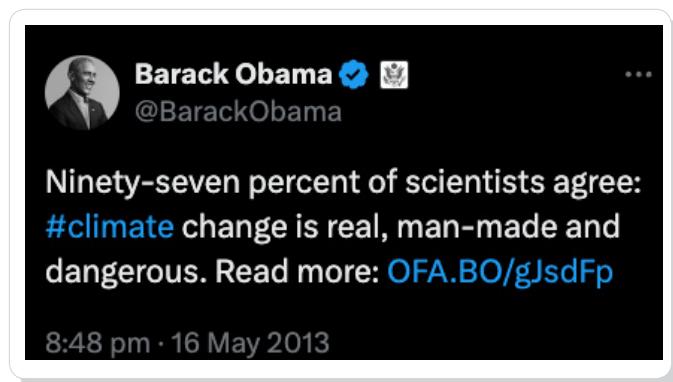
As we build towards those solutions, we also need to provide accurate information for those who are seeking it. Because, when consuming media, no one wants to be lied to.

Climategate was always a lie, but it was a useful one, giving right-wing news outlets a manufactured scandal; one that could then be used to justify torpedoing negotiations at the Copenhagen COP by those petrostates hungry for reasons to block climate action.

It has since been used to reinforce the conservative orthodoxy that you can't trust scientists or experts, and forged into an identity that rejects the reality of climate change, the safety of vaccines, the threat of Covid-19, the human rights of LGBTQ+ people, the civil rights of Black and Indigenous communities, and the equality of women.

2.2. The 97% Consensus and the Paris Agreement

After Climategate, climate communications efforts through the 2010s worked to ensure that the scientific consensus not only became clear but became widely understood, with the 2013 “[97% consensus](#)” paper proving particularly popular, even earning [a post from President Barack Obama](#). That peer-reviewed paper has been downloaded over 1.5 million times, cited by over a thousand other studies ([141 times more](#) than average) and remains, over a decade later, one of the “[most read](#)” papers in the publishing journal. (As of [November 3, 2025](#), the single most-read paper is one from 2021 that [quantifies the consensus at 99%](#), while the original 97% paper is ranked #5, followed at #7 by the 2016 followup “[Consensus on consensus](#)” paper.)



Barack Obama   ...
 @BarackObama

Ninety-seven percent of scientists agree:
#climate change is real, man-made and dangerous. Read more: OFA.BO/gJsdFp

8:48 pm · 16 May 2013

With the science of the problem established and understood, policymakers were then able to secure an agreement in 2015, at COP21, in Paris. And, once again, just like after the Kyoto Protocol, the fossil fuel industry ramped up its efforts.

This time, though, instead of being increasingly shut out of mainstream media, where fact-checking and conflict of interest disclosures make it hard for professional disinformation spreaders to do their job, industry turned to digital and social media, and found fertile ground—and willing partners—in Big Tech.

2.3. Big Carbon + Big Tech Manufacture Backlash

The 2015 Paris Agreement was a success for the planet and public, but represented a major failure in the fossil fuel industry’s efforts to obstruct climate action—one it did not take lightly. Obstruction by the fossil fuel industry post-Paris has been the subject of two major assessments published this year: one by the Brown University-led [Climate Social Science Network](#) (CSSN), and the other by the [International Panel on the Information Environment](#). They provide a global overview of the fact that climate scientists, activists, and policymakers haven’t failed; they’ve been sabotaged.

The fossil fuel industry and petrostates have obstructed action at the international level down to the local, and poisoned the digital information environment with disinformation and disinfluencers in ways that are both painfully obvious, and insidiously subtle.

For example, in 2015—the year of the Paris Agreement—the Wilks brothers, who got rich on fracking, decided to double down on their [\\$6.5 million in funding to PragerU, with another \\$4.77 million](#) to found the Daily Wire. Since then, the Daily Wire has pushed right-wing climate deniers like [Ben Shapiro](#) and [Jordan Peterson](#) into the digital limelight.

By 2017, the Daily Caller, [another right-wing “pay to play” propaganda operation](#) that has frequently [spread climate disinformation](#), was [receiving close to 40% of its revenue](#) from the Koch brothers network. (The Koch brothers’ fortune started with their father, [who got rich building oil refineries for Stalin and Hitler](#).) And this wasn’t even the Koch network’s only “Daily”—[the Daily Signal](#) went independent in

2024, a decade after its founding as a project of the [Koch-backed Heritage Foundation](#).

These websites were able to grow beyond their initial fossil-fueled funding, however, thanks to Big Tech's resistance to information integrity measures. For example, in 2024, reporting revealed [that Joel Kaplan was making vital decisions for Facebook and Instagram](#), repeatedly protecting sites like Breitbart from what few mechanisms the social media platforms had to prevent harmful false content from hurting users.

Not only does social media provide a virtual venue for the fossil fuel industry and petrostates to directly spread climate disinformation, it also has a more subtle effect on the larger population.

One study describes social media as a "[funhouse mirror factory](#)" because users assume content seen is widely popular and believed. But, in fact, past reporting from CAAD members like the Center for Countering Digital Hate found [just 10 publishers](#) were responsible for 69% of climate disinfo on Facebook, a list that included [Breitbart](#), the [Daily Wire](#), and Russian state media.

Multiple other studies have confirmed this effect. One, for example, describes the "[false social reality](#)" created by Big Tech, which leads people to believe that only a minority support climate action despite vast majorities of the US public being in support of climate policies, since disinformation makes us underestimate the level of public support.

This is borne out globally, too, as a worldwide survey of people found that 89% of the global public wants more climate action from their leaders, and 69% of us would give 1% of our personal monthly income to fight climate change. But when asked, people, on average, think that only 43% of others would also give

1%. So, despite an overwhelming global majority being willing to pay for climate action, the vast amount of disinformation being spread by Big Tech and Big Carbon makes it feel otherwise.

The impact of Big Tech and Big Carbon's work means that when people turn to social media to see their friends, family, and community, they're instead seeing a carefully cultivated, and skewed, view of the world—one that benefits the Big Tech players making a profit from the distortion, as well as the Big Carbon polluters paying them for the advertising and attention.

Big Carbon's spending and Big Tech's algorithms are preventing us from seeing and hearing one another online. Instead, we're exposed to one lie after another; about [race](#), about [gender](#), about everything that can be used to cultivate a contrarian identity that rejects scientific expertise and accepts conspiracy theories as truth.

80%

of major US anti-trans organisations have received fossil fuel funding.

For example, the anti-trans backlash may at first appear independent of the fight against climate action, but it turns out that some [80% of major US anti-trans organisations](#) have received fossil fuel funding. These organisations have used [the intersectional issues of the "culture war"](#) to recruit from the "manosphere" because, while climate disinformation is unpopular, scapegoating others with the help of Big Tech is apparently a viable way to further solidify support among (mostly conservative, white) men especially when factoring in legal costs for defending against a frivolous lawsuit.

That's why we can't just talk about climate disinformation; we have to address the constellation of online harms. The "Information Integrity" framework, evident in CAAD's work, as well as the UN, UNESCO and Brazil's at COP30, strives to include the vast spectrum of digital dangers at once, leading us to holistic and structural solutions.

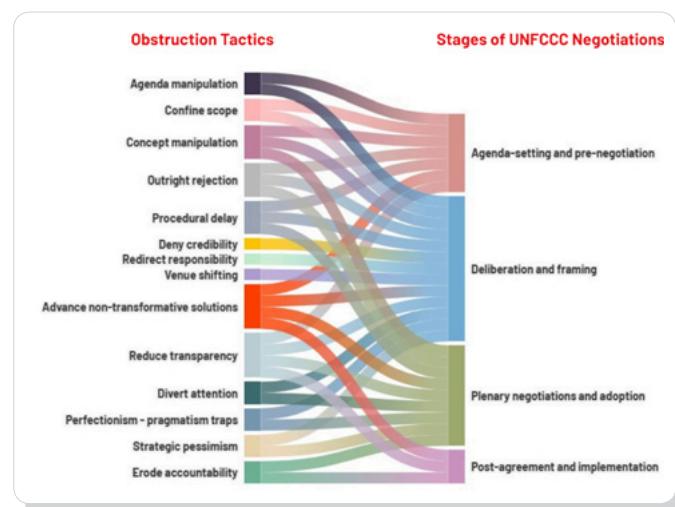
3 Digital Disinformation and Obstructing Modern UN COPs

The 2009 Climategate hack-and-leak attack is emblematic both of how disinformation was used to sabotage the Copenhagen COP in the early days of digital media, and how the growth of social media platforms' power as a "[funhouse mirror factory](#)" has been used by fossil fortunes to erode the Paris Agreement consensus with a "[false social reality](#)." But this is just one way that the UN's COPs are targeted by the forces of obstruction.

[A primer from the Climate Social Science Network](#) has created a typology of 14 different obstruction tactics used throughout the COP negotiation process—from the overt, like outright rejections of including fossil fuels in texts, through the procedural weaponization of the rules and logistics to delay decisions, to the more subtle narrowing of frames to exclude tough questions, or the setting up of a "perfect" alternative policy potential to reject the current offer on the table.

As the CSSN's graphic shows, these tactics are used before, during, and after every COP.

"Anticipating obstruction is key to ensuring COP30 delivers on its symbolic weight as a turning point in the global climate regime," [the brief](#) concludes. "Familiar tactics are likely to



resurface, and the Brazilian Presidency and allies can counter these moves through strong agenda discipline, building coalitions across negotiating blocs, further embedding science into the negotiation process, and mobilizing public and diplomatic pressure when obstruction is most blatant. By identifying these tactics in advance, COP30 can limit their impact and keep negotiations focused on substance and ambition above all else."

But obstruction doesn't only come from inside the UNFCCC negotiation rooms. As CAAD has documented over the past four years, the digital information environment is rife with climate sabotage, and often the same problems emerge year after year.

The first [Deny, Deceive, Delay report](#) covered 2021's COP26. Over 100 pages long, "DDD1" documented the digital spread of four

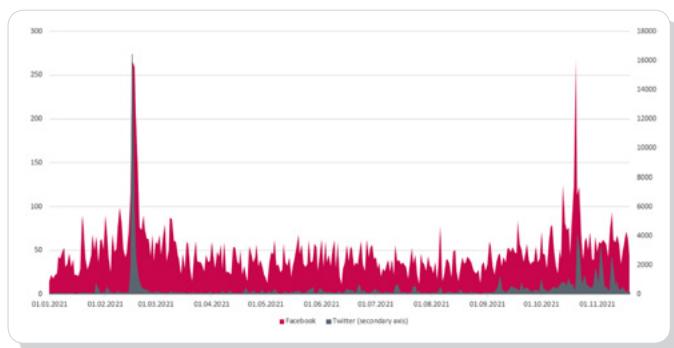
key “[discourses of climate delay](#)”—like the supposed unreliability of renewables—and provided a structural network analysis and case studies of the “repeat offenders” responsible for the spread of disinformation. It also provided seven policy suggestions, evidenced with examples of the problematic content they would address.

[Deny, Deceive, Delay \(Vol. 2\)](#) covered COP27, and, having found many of the same discourses once again, CAAD focused on what was new—like Twitter’s promotion of [#climatescam](#)—and on quantifying the fossil

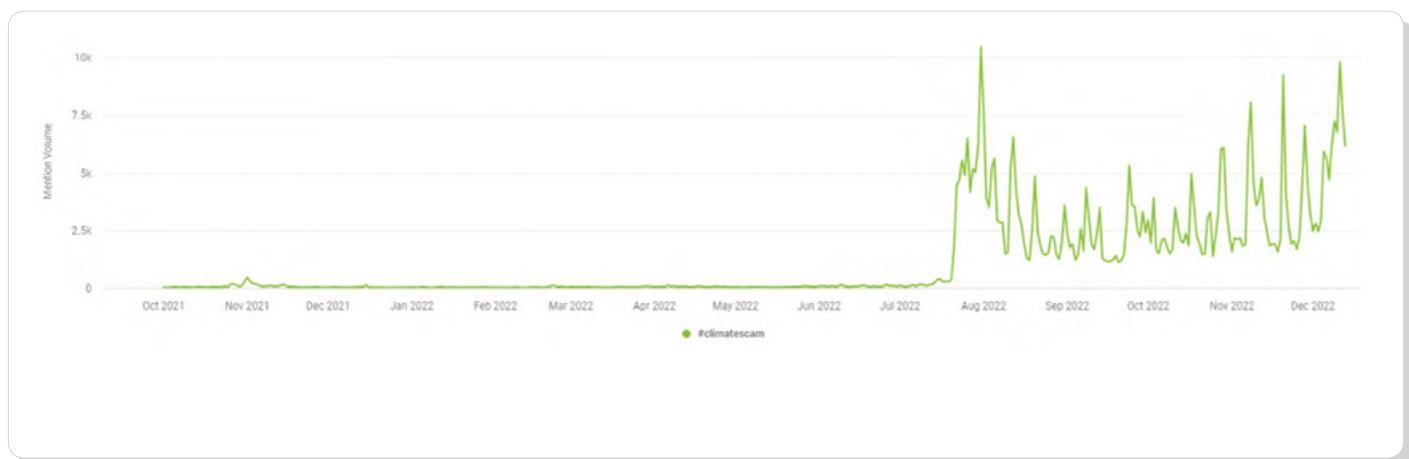
fuel industry’s roughly \$4 million spend on Meta advertisements in the lead-up.

Ahead of COP28, [Deny, Deceive, Delay \(Vol. 3\)](#) charted the dramatic and unparalleled growth of [#climatescam](#) on Twitter (now X), demonstrated how the digital advertising industry provides a funding stream for climate disinformation websites, showed how Russian state media outlets stoke division and promote fossil fuels, and documented over \$5 million in Facebook advertisements from fossil fuel companies in the months leading up to the COP.

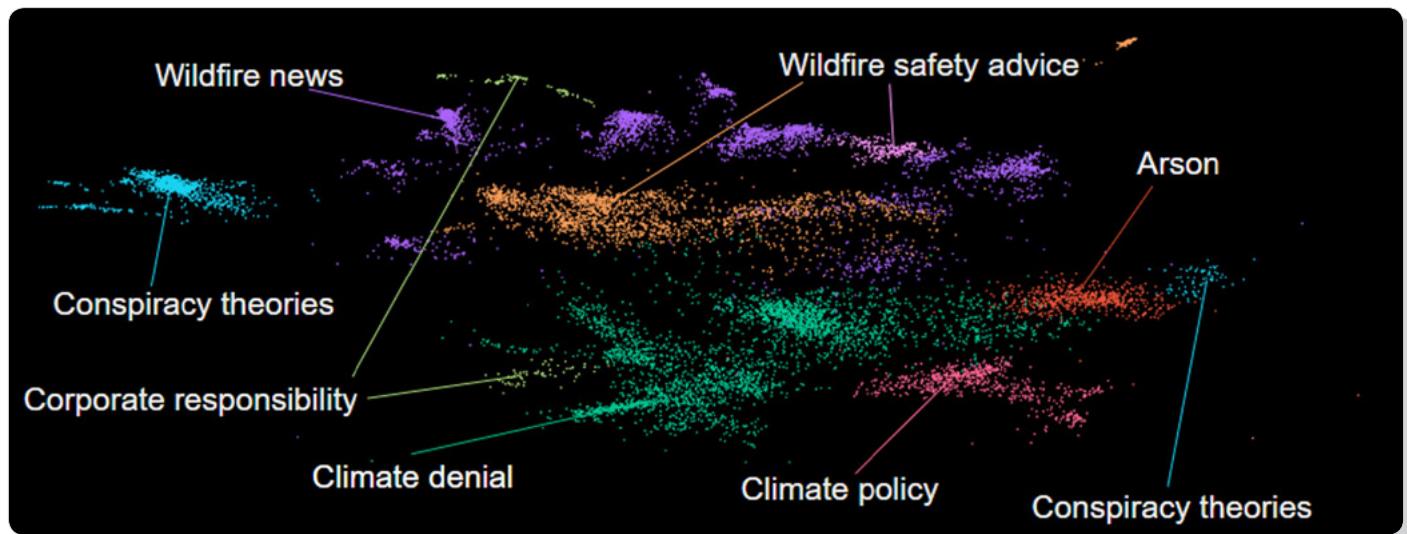
By COP29, CAAD could no longer access Facebook or Instagram data through CrowdTangle, as [Meta had bought and shut it down](#). Neither could we measure narratives on Twitter at scale, as it had made access to its [API cost-prohibitive](#), especially when factoring in legal costs for [defending against a frivolous lawsuit](#).



Number of posts claiming that renewable energy is unreliable on Facebook and Twitter (secondary axis includes retweets) from 01.01.21 – 19.11.21.



Volume over time of Twitter posts (original and retweets) containing [#ClimateScam](#) between 1 October 2021 and 13 December 2022.



Overview of key themes identified during the topic modelling stage. Each group of messages (displayed by a colour) contains a similar topic. Topics were manually labelled by a CAAD analyst based on 50 representative posts in each case. The largest three clusters are wildfire news, wildfire safety advice, and climate denial. Arson, climate policy, and conspiracy theories are tightly clustered and significantly larger than topics around corporate responsibility.

[Extreme Weather, Extreme Content](#), CAAD's 2024 pre-COP report, was nevertheless still able to show that "core narratives over the past year are uncannily similar to those identified by CAAD after COP26 in Deny, Deceive, Delay Vol.1." The same sets of actors were still attacking renewable energy, working to distract from the climate changes making extreme weather worse, and giving Meta millions of dollars for fossil fuel advertising. "From October 24 2023 to October 24 2024," the [report](#) found, "just 8 fossil fuel entities paid Meta \$17 million in exchange for around 700 million impressions."

Despite CAAD's identification of the problems back in 2021, and continued analysis over subsequent years through our reports and [COP, LOOK, LISTEN newsletters](#), Big Tech did not appreciate the findings. Instead of addressing the problems CAAD identified, and taking up the solutions we offered to address the same sorts of bad actors spreading the same sorts of lies using the same coordinated inauthentic behaviours, the Big Tech companies cut off access to their data and clamped down on

research—without data access, researchers can't keep revealing the scale of their failure to protect users from harmful false content.

4 The New Solutions To The Information Pollution

Measures like the [EU's Digital Services Act](#) (DSA) that work at the supranational level are making Big Tech companies more transparent and accountable for harms. And while some companies give all social media a bad name, websites like [Wikipedia](#) and [Pinterest](#) prove that climate disinformation policies and information integrity are not only possible, but necessary.

[France's greenwashing law](#) is starting to apply to misleading fossil fuel ads across

the country, while [a survey in 13 EU countries showed that The Hague's municipal ban on fossil fuel advertising](#) was supported by twice as many people than opposed it. Year after year, CAAD identifies millions of dollars of fossil fuel advertising that warps public perceptions in their favor—treating Big Carbon [like we did the tobacco industry](#) is the solution.

In [Canada](#), polling shows [86% of people](#) want the government to require social media companies to ensure accuracy and not promote disinformation during extreme weather events, and 82% want Canada to join global initiatives to strengthen information integrity on social media platforms. In Canadian policy circles, meanwhile, the question of "[digital sovereignty](#)" has been top of mind for lawmakers newly [wary of foreign interference](#) on social media and its pernicious influence on local politics—[such as Russia's covert funding](#) of a Canadian and American podcast studio, revealed by a 2024 US Department of Justice [indictment](#) of the Russian actors behind it. The transparency measures that would protect people from covert Russian propaganda campaigns like this, without eliminating their ability to participate anonymously online, would also address the fossil fuel disinformation spread via the same digital infrastructure, accounts, and dynamics.

In the United Kingdom, the [Online Safety Act 2023](#) makes platforms responsible for removing harmful content and disinformation.

Japanese lawmakers are considering [a law to address the spread of false content during disasters](#).

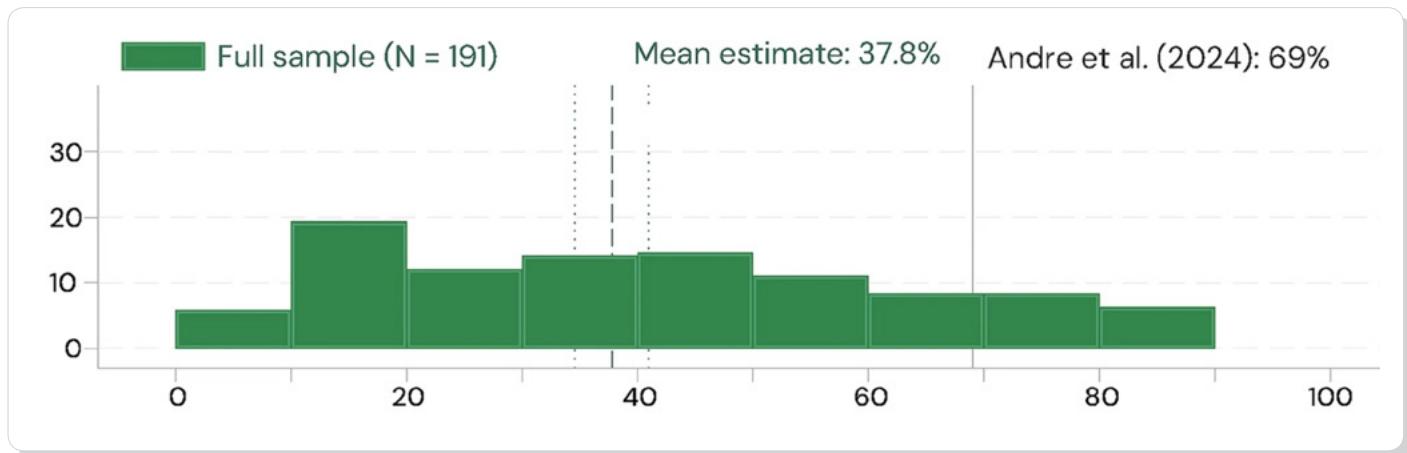
In Brazil, a [law](#) is being considered that would require transparency and efforts to reduce disinformation, and one [protecting children has already been passed](#). Brazil's Supreme

[Court](#) has also ruled that social media companies are responsible for the content they host, potentially leveling the playing field with more traditional media where information integrity standards provide an additional layer of protection against broadcasting harmful false content to millions, if not billions, of people. However, the exact way the Court's ruling changes platforms' responsibilities still needs to be clarified by Brazil's Congress, where obstruction is more viable than in the Court.

These, and the [79 examples of legislation addressing Big Tech found in TechPolicyPress's tracker](#), are encouraging examples of the answers to climate disinformation that can begin to reduce its overall extent in the information environment at the structural level, while also addressing the old information environment pollution with new solutions.

Today, just as the climate counter-movement managed to make the 97% consensus feel like a 50/50 split, Big Carbon uses disinformation and Big Tech to polarize climate politics, making the 89% of the public that wants climate action seem like a minority who still needs to convince others of their cause.

But, 89% of people on Earth do want more climate action from their leaders, making the 11% minority a decided fringe. Over the years, CAAD has shown how climate obstructors need to [use bots to look popular](#) when they're not, [how they leveled ad hominem attacks](#) because [they lost the science](#), and how they glorified [violence](#) against [activists](#). None of which would be socially acceptable behavior if it happened in a physical environment, but, for some reason, is accepted as common online.



Distributions of responses to perceived willingness to contribute income to fight climate change. (From: United Nations Environment Assembly attendees underestimate public willingness to contribute to climate action.)

This digital harassment impacts climate policymakers, too, as no one is immune to disinformation.

[A study found](#) that UN Environment Assembly members, just like the public, dramatically underestimated the level of public support for their work. Policymakers thought around just 38% would be willing to give 1% of their income to fight climate change, far below the real level of a 69% majority, and a strikingly similar estimate to the general public's 43% underestimation.

Reminding negotiators of the demand for climate policy is part of why CAAD worked with Brazil, the UN, and UNESCO [to establish a Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change](#) (GIIICC). As part of it, Brazil issued a call for cases of information integrity answers in action, and was met with [an incredible response of over 100 examples](#).

In 2025, climate disinformation isn't used to make the public think climate change is a hoax, it's used to make the majority of the public, who want climate action, to feel alone and powerless, and like they can't demand action from their leaders.

The answer, then, won't be found in fact checking, important as that may be. The real solution to climate disinformation is in the combined effort of rebuilding real-world community, shattering the funhouse mirror factory, and correcting the false social reality.

And with "Information integrity in climate change matters" on the agenda at COP30, we're finally headed in the right direction.

CAAD hopes you'll join us in building a more truthful global community.



**Climate Action
Against Disinformation**

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