Using Public Records To Follow the Money in Environmental Stories

Charlie Spatz, Energy and Policy Institute
Contact: charlie@energyandpolicy.org
Case Study #1: Port of LA

They fought for clean air. They didn’t know they were part of a gas industry campaign.
California Public Records Act
Records Request Form

Request Information
Today’s Date: 8/11/19

Record Description (Please describe in detail):
Please provide all public speaker request forms submitted to Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners at the following meetings:

8/10/17
8/17/17
9/7/17
10/6/17
10/19/17
11/2/17 (joint meeting with Long Beach)

To clarify, these are the speaker cards that members of public must fill out to speak during the public comment period of the Board of Harbor Commissioners.

Record Date(s):
CITY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF HARBOR COMMISSIONERS SPEAKER CARD

NOTE: THIS IS A PUBLIC DOCUMENT. YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PROVIDE PERSONAL INFORMATION IN ORDER TO SPEAK, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY FOR THE PRESIDING OFFICER TO CALL UPON YOU.

Date: 9/7/2017
Agenda Item: C

Name: Sholeh Br[redacted]
Affiliation: Method Campaigns

Contact Information (Phone No. and/or Email): 931-[redacted]

Translation Needed / Necesita Traducción: ❌

CHECK HERE IF YOU ARE A PAID SPEAKER/LOBBYIST AND PROVIDE CLIENT INFORMATION BELOW: ❌

Client Name: 

Client Contact Information (Phone No. and/or Email): 

Please see reverse of card for important information and submit this entire card to designated personnel.
Hi Jackie,

Hope you had a great weekend.

Just wanted to circle back with you about connecting with your colleague Erica and others who you think might be great to work with to help fight our cause.

I have also attached a couple of documents for your reference or to share. Also, here is the direct link to the [CAAM](http://www.caam.org) and our response to it. Our response is not to replace it but simply amend it so that it is stronger and more aggressive to cleaning up our air.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Best,

Helen Hwang
Case study #2: Umass hydrogen study
From: Itai Vardi <itai@energyandpolicy.org>
Date: Tue, Oct 19, 2021 at 7:27 PM
Subject: UMass Lowell public records request submitted 10.19.21
To: Itai Vardi <itai@energyandpolicy.org>

1) Any and all emails to and from (including CCs and BCCs) College of Mechanical Engineering's Director of Business Development Mary Ankner Usovicz, from 1.1.2021 to the date of processing of this request, and which include any or all of the following 5 terms in the email body and/or the 'to', 'from', 'cc' or 'bcc' lines: a) hydrogen, 2) @aimnet.org, 3) @eversource.com, 4) @nationalgrid.com, 5) @avangrid.com. Please include all attachments as well as the entire threads in which responsive emails may be nested within.

2) Any and all emails to and from (including CCs and BCCs) Julie Chen, Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, from 8.1.2021 to the date of processing of this request, and which include any or all of the following 5 terms in the email body and/or the 'to', 'from', 'cc' or 'bcc' lines: a) hydrogen, 2) @aimnet.org, 3) @eversource.com, 4) @nationalgrid.com, 5) @avangrid.com. Please include all attachments as well as the entire threads in which responsive emails may be nested within.

3) Any and all ethics disclosures pursuant to the Massachusetts Conflicts of Interest Laws, (G.L. c. 268A disclosures) on file for College of Mechanical Engineering’s Director of Business Development Mary Ankner Usovicz, from 1.1.2019 to the present.
Dear Chris:

As requested, the following is the funds that we have collected to date. The cut off for accepting any additional funds is 2/1. The steering committee at AIM that will be overseeing the study would like to do an announcement and kick off meeting prior to 2/15 so we need to have selected and hired a graduate student by the 15th.

National Grid
Eversource
Enbridge
Public Policy Group- lobbyist for Vistra
Energy New England

For a total of $56,500.00.

Outstanding Commitments

Nextera 15-20K
Liberty Energy 10K
ENEL 15-20K
It is our conclusion that the use of hydrogen in some applications which currently use fossil fuels will reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions and help contribute to meeting the Commonwealths 2050 net-zero carbon goals and if widely adopted, help reduce CO2 emissions globally. We believe that the challenges related to the use of hydrogen – cost, and safety primarily can be overcome with proper and appropriate regulations.
Other types of records
Group chats

Slack, message boards

dschryver@apga.org
Here’s the latest activity across everything
Since Sam on Monday, December 18

**APGA Direct-Use Task Group**

These messages were posted


  On November 27th the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) released a new report on best practices and recommendations for state regulators to promote and support the expansion of natural gas service in unserved and underserved areas. The report was prepared by NARUC…


  Last week the Trump Administration made a show of its work toward deregulation. The best source is from the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) here [https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/AgendaMain](https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/AgendaMain) that shows the “Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions”… 700 regul…

Someone commented on [Natural Gas is a Win-Win](https://www.natgaswire.com/articles/natural-gas-is-a-win-wa)

  Nikki Adkins

  This is great! Thank you!


- Barton Day

  The RFI has now been published in the Federal Register: [https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-12-18/pdf/2017-27066.pdf](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-12-18/pdf/2017-27066.pdf) Note that the comment deadline has been moved up to February 16, 2018; the pre-
# Metadata Requests

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**Notes:**
- **Resident**
- **Non-Renewal**
- **Penalties**
- **Other**
FOIA/RTK tips and tricks

- Keep asking for status updates (automate) and document your engagement with agencies
- Call the FOIA officer before you file a complex request to a new agency
- Ask for the attachments and make sure they’re included
- Original file types are usually better than PDFs
- Calendars are a great place to start
- Ask sources what to request, but don’t send too good of a request
- Don’t give up