



**ENERGY AND POLICY
INSTITUTE**

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

Fearless, factual, global news

Independent journalism funded by readers

Support us with \$5 a month →

The Guardian

News

Opinion

Sport

Culture

Lifestyle

More ▾

Environment ▶ Climate crisis Wildlife Energy Pollution Green light

Floodlight
Fossil fuels

This article is more than 2 years old

They fought for clean air. They didn't know they were part of a gas industry campaign

Miranda Green
for Floodlight and
Sammy Roth for
the Los Angeles
Times

Wed 11 Aug 2021 07:00
EDT

Share



A natural gas fueling station near the border between the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of Long Beach owned and operated by Clean Energy Fuels. Photograph: Carolyn Cole/Los Angeles Times

Residents around the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach were paid to show support for natural gas trucks at community hearings

Diesel truck pollution from the busiest port complex in the United States has fouled the air in nearby neighbourhoods in southern California for decades. So when port officials asked for feedback on cleaning up that pollution, hundreds of people weighed in.

Most viewed



Trump gag order expanded after he attacks judge's daughter on social media

Iran decides on response to



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 Be [REDACTED] Affiliation: Method Campaigns

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

Translation Needed / Necesita Traducción: YES

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.

Method Campaigns

Subject: Follow Up
Date: Monday, September 11, 2017 at 1:19:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Helen Hwang
To: Jacqueline Illum
Attachments: ACT Now Plan Summary.pdf, ACT-Now-Plan-Final.pdf, clean-air-action-plan-2017-draft-document-final.pdf

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 [CAAP](#) 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



Helen H. · 3rd

Campaign Director at Accelerator for America Action
Los Angeles, California, United States · 410 connections ·

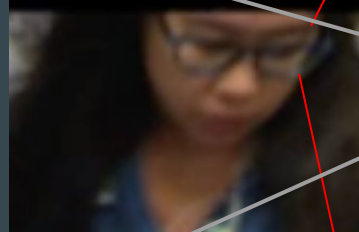
[Contact info](#)



Senior Account Manager

Method Campaign Services

Nov 2014 – Jun 2018 · 3 yrs 8 mos
Los Angeles

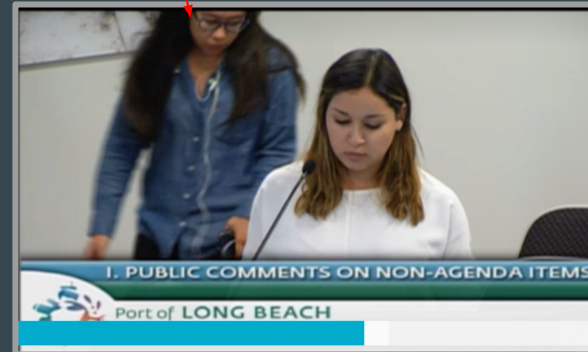


CITY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF HARBOR COMMISSIONERS SPEAKER CARD

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	Affiliation:	Method Campaigns
Contact Information (Phone No. and /or Email):	931-		
Translation Needed / Necesita Traducción:	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CHECK HERE IF YOU ARE A PAID SPEAKER/LOBBYIST AND PROVIDE CLIENT INFORMATION BELOW:		<input type="checkbox"/>	
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. 2017-010




Case study #2: Umass hydrogen study

☰ | **B** | NEW: GAMES | METRO | WEATHER | SPORTS | POLITICS | BUSINESS | WATCH: GLOBE TODAY

Study touting hydrogen — a technology favored by gas firms — was funded by gas interests, e-mails show

By [Sabrina Shankman](#) Globe Staff, Updated November 17, 2022, 3:16 p.m. ✉️ [f](#) [t](#) [p](#) [c](#) 62



GLOBE/ILLUSTRATION BY GLOBE STAFF/ADOBE

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 nestled 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 nestled 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.

[Usovicz on the companies funding the study \(p. 99\)](#)

From: [AnknerUsovicz, Mary P](#)
To: [Niezrecki, Christopher](#)
Subject: Hydrogen Study
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 3:07:28 PM

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

AIM Foundation's tracked changes to the report's executive summary

An early version of the report's executive summary, seen in a Microsoft Pages document shared with the Globe, shows tracked changes from Bob Rio, senior vice president of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts

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.**

Bob Rio added this on October 20

Bob Rio added this on October 21

Bob Rio added this on October 20

Bob Rio added this on October 21

Bob Rio added this on October 21

Other types of records

Group chats



Slack, message boards

dschryver@apga.org

Here's the latest activity across everything

Since 9am on Monday, December 18

[APGA Direct-Use Task Group](#)

These messages were posted

Daniel L. posted [NARUC Releases Best Practices and Recommendations to Promote and Support the Expansion of Natural Gas Service in Unserved and Underserved Areas](#)

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'...

John G. posted [OIRA Release: Furnace Rule Parked Until FY2019](#)

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/eAgendaMain> that shows the "Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions". 700 regul...

Someone commented on [Natural Gas is a Win-Win](#)

Nikki Adkisson

This is great! Thank you!

People discussed [DOE Drops RFI on its "Process Rule"](#)

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> Note that the comment deadline has been moved up to February 16, 2018; the pre-

Metadata Requests

Source Mailbox E-mail Address	Subject	Received Time	Sent Time	Has Attachment	Sender
FRichards@agdc.us	RE: Strategy document	5/22/17 16:31	5/22/17 16:31	FALSE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	UPDATED Delegation assignments	5/23/17 16:59	5/23/17 16:58	TRUE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
FRichards@agdc.us	RE: AKLNG-Loan Guarantee v.05222017 FR edits 05232017	5/24/17 13:42	5/24/17 13:40	TRUE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
FRichards@agdc.us	Meeting with OMB - Keith Meyer, Frank Richards and Gene Therriault with OMB: Andrew Abrams, the Deputy Associate Director, who handles the Transportation and Infrastructure portfolio, and two individuals from the Natural Resources team	5/25/17 17:35	5/25/17 17:35	FALSE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
FRichards@agdc.us	RE: Meeting with OMB - Keith Meyer, Frank Richards and Gene Therriault with OMB: Andrew Abrams, the Deputy Associate Director, who handles the Transportation and Infrastructure portfolio, and two individuals from the Natural Resources team	5/25/17 17:39	5/25/17 17:39	FALSE	Frank Richards
FRichards@agdc.us	RE: I have an "ask"	5/25/17 17:52	5/25/17 17:52	FALSE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	DJGribbin	5/26/17 14:57	5/26/17 14:56	FALSE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	Chao and Catanzaro	5/31/17 23:12	5/31/17 23:11	FALSE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	RE: AGDC trip to DC - updated schedule!	6/2/17 16:46	6/2/17 16:45	FALSE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	Here is the new Priority Title List with EXIM removed	6/2/17 20:24	6/2/17 20:23	TRUE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	RE: Vincent DeVito - Department of the Interior	6/2/17 22:33	6/2/17 22:31	FALSE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	Re: Vincent DeVito - Department of the Interior	6/2/17 23:08	6/2/17 23:08	FALSE	Keith Meyer
KMeyer@agdc.us	Notes	6/14/17 16:05	6/14/17 16:04	TRUE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	RE: federal issues list - asap	6/26/17 18:23	6/26/17 18:22	TRUE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	FW: slide deck	6/27/17 18:26	6/27/17 18:24	TRUE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	Re: Citizenship request by EXIM	6/27/17 22:11	6/27/17 22:11	FALSE	Fritz Krusen
KMeyer@agdc.us	Council on Environmental Quality Meeting Notes June 29 2017 Final	7/3/17 18:20	7/3/17 18:20	TRUE	Frank Richards
KMeyer@agdc.us	RE: Council on Environmental Quality Meeting Notes June 29 2017 Final	7/6/17 16:54	7/6/17 16:52	TRUE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	Re: Council on Environmental Quality Meeting Notes June 29 2017 Final	7/6/17 16:58	7/6/17 16:58	FALSE	Frank Richards
KMeyer@agdc.us	RE: Council on Environmental Quality Meeting Notes June 29 2017 Final	7/6/17 17:03	7/6/17 17:02	FALSE	DPearce@hollandhart.com
KMeyer@agdc.us	RE: Kogas minutes	7/10/17 16:56	7/10/17 16:56	FALSE	Keith Meyer
KMeyer@agdc.us	RE: Kogas minutes	7/11/17 15:40	7/11/17 15:38	TRUE	DPearce@hollandhart.com

FOIA Logs

Request #	Status	Date Received	Requestor	Requestor Email	Requestor Phone	Request	Response Due
ORR-2024-001	Closed	1/6/2024	Daniel Tait	taitd@energypolicy.org	256-303-7773	a copy of Commissioner Eric's travel records for calendar year 2023.	1/11/2024
ORR-2024-002	Closed	1/9/2024	Susan Pendergrass	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	all Open Records Act/FOIA requests and responses thereto regarding Georgia Power Company from and provided to Kristi Swartz, any other reporter or anyone else for the month of December 2023.	1/12/2024
ORR-2024-003	Pending IT	2/13/2024	Daniel Tait	taitd@energypolicy.org	256-303-7774	<p>all communications records of Commissioner Eric's (including attachments) containing any of the following keywords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daymark - Shawn Kelly - nuclear <p>October 1, 2020, through November 20, 2020</p>	2/16/2024
ORR-2024-004	Closed	3/4/2024	Jarret Faber	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	all complaints filed by consumers against Power Home Solar, LLC (d/b/a Pink Energy) or GoodLeap, LLC (f/a/a Loanpal, LLC), as well as any and all records reflecting investigations done into Power Home Solar, LLC (d/b/a Pink Energy) or GoodLeap, LLC (f/a/a Loanpal, LLC)	3/7/2024
ORR-2024-005	Pending Response from Requester	2/20/2024	Charles Roth	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	complaints to Georgia Power/Southern Energy from Jan. 1, 2020 through Dec. 31, 2023	2/23/2024
ORR-2024-006	Pending Response from Requester	2/28/2024	Khahilia Shaw	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	all commissioners with the key terms: "11th Circuit", Rose, VRA; Grimberg; McCorkle; Mosley; Voting Rights Act; and Woodall November 1, 2023	3/4/2024
ORR-2024-007	Pending Response from Requester	3/1/2024	S. Meghan Pittman	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	<p>regarding 1128 Longstreet Road, Elberton, Georgia ("Sonny Solar PV Project") and Bulldog Solar, LLC ("Bulldog Solar Project");</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any and all documents regarding the Sonny Solar PV Project; Any and all documents regarding the Bulldog Solar Project; Any permits, plans, designs, drawings, correspondence, stop work orders, photographs, any documents including but not limited to anything related to erosion or sedimentation control for the Sonny Solar PV Project; Any permits, plans, designs, drawings, correspondence, stop work orders, photographs, any documents including but not limited to anything related to erosion or sedimentation control for the Bulldog Solar Project; and Any correspondence, permits, requests, or other documentation with Georgia Power Company regarding the two Standard Contracts for the Purchase of Non-Firm Energy with Sonny Solar PV Project and Bulldog Solar Project. <p>Request for report containing line losses the EMCs. Referred to EIA.</p> <p>Any correspondence with Georgia Power Company or its representatives, including presentations given to or received by Georgia Power Company or its representatives, pertaining to the process for requests for proposal (RFPs) including timing, expediting, modifying, etc. since January 1, 2022.</p>	3/6/2024
ORR-2024-008	Closed	3/11/2024	Alex Thomas	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Request for report containing line losses the EMCs. Referred to EIA.	3/14/2024
ORR-2024-009	Pending Search	3/18/2024	S. Env. Law Ctr.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Any correspondence with Georgia Power Company or its representatives, including presentations given to or received by Georgia Power Company or its representatives, pertaining to the process for requests for proposal (RFPs) including timing, expediting, modifying, etc. since January 1, 2022.	3/21/2024
ORR-2024-0010	Pending IT	3/21/2024	Daniel Tait	taitd@energypolicy.org	256-303-7773	<p>provide a copy of all communications records of all Commissioners and their assistants containing any of the following keywords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Kennedy •Bisping •Ragan •McCallum •B312 •Blection •11th •Byror <p>The request should include emails (sent, received, BCC, and CC), email attachments, text messages, encrypted messages (such as Signal and/or WhatsApp etc.), messaging apps (such as Slack, Teams and/or Airtels etc.), cloud based file storage and document systems (such as Microsoft One Drive, Google Drive, and/or Dropbox etc.), social media direct messages for professional purposes (such as Facebook and/or Twitter etc.) and any other electronic records.</p> <p>This request should search professional accounts and any personal accounts used for professional purposes.</p> <p>Please limit this request from January 1, 2024 to the date of processing this request</p>	3/26/2024
ORR-2024-0011	Open	4/2/2024	Daniel Tait	taitd@energypolicy.org	256-303-7773	a copy of the calendars for each Commissioner and a copy of the public records log of the commission.	4/5/2024
ORR-2024-0012	Open	4/1/2024	Pendergrass	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	<p>Please limit this request from January 1, 2024 to the date of processing this request</p> <p>Please forward all Open Records Act/FOIA requests and responses thereto regarding Georgia Power Company from and provided to any reporter or anyone else for the month of March 2024.</p>	4/4/2024

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