

He Waged Intimidation Campaigns Against Climate Scientists; Now He's Helping Trump Remake the EPA

Lee Fang, The Intercept December 9 2016

<https://theintercept.com/2016/12/09/david-schnare-trump/>

Many of the leading scientists working on climate change research around the country have found themselves targeted by David Schnare, an attorney working for a coal industry-backed nonprofit. In recent years, Schnare has hounded academics with lawsuits and voluminous record requests as part of a campaign the Union of Concerned Scientists has called “harassment” **designed** to “chill their speech, and discourage them from tackling contentious topics.”

Now, Schnare is working for Donald Trump.

On Monday, the Trump transition team named Schnare to the team revamping the Environmental Protection Agency, the agency that **oversees** climate change and pollution-related research and science. Schnare is one of many operatives with fossil fuel ties to join Trump’s EPA team, but his name stands out as someone who has gone beyond mere advocacy by actively working to intimidate individual scientists.

Schnare, the general counsel for the Environment & Energy Legal Institute, a group formerly known as the American Tradition Institute, has gone after climate scientists for the last five years.

Dr. James Hansen, a former NASA scientist whose 1988 congressional testimony brought national attention to the dangers of climate change — and who in 2006 revealed that the Bush administration was censoring climate change research — was among the first targets. In

2011, Schnare filed a lawsuit demanding years of Hansen's records, and in the accompanying [press release](#), claimed that Hansen was engaged in “global warming’ activism” as a ploy to enrich himself.

That year Schnare also [joined](#) the legal battle against former University of Virginia climate scientist Michael Mann, filing a request for Mann's personal emails and other correspondence, and suing UVA to force disclosure. Mann, an award-winning scientist whose research has shown earth's temperature rise, had long been a target of the fossil fuel industry, had faced [death threats](#) for his work on climate change.

Schnare lost the Mann lawsuit; a Virginia court ordered his group to pay Mann [\\$250](#) in damages.

Schnare and his organization have filed similar requests against University of Arizona scientists Jonathan Overpeck and Malcolm Hughes, NASA scientist Gavin Schmidt, and Katharine Hayhoe, a scientist at Texas Tech University.

Gretchen Goldman, the research director of the Union of Concerned Scientists, says that Schnare's “E&E Legal does the dirty work that fossil fuel companies don't want to associate themselves with, including harassing and attacking scientists.”

Goldman also noted that a former fellow with Schnare's organization [worked](#) to help pass legislation in North Carolina to ban state agencies from using scientific research showing [sea-level rise](#).

“They literally tried to outlaw sea level rise,” says Goldman. “What kind of scientific analysis do you think they are going to try to ban at the EPA?”

Last year, The Intercept was the [first to report](#) that Schnare's colleague, Christopher Horner, had received funding through a sister organization from Alpha Natural Resources, a major coal mining company. A subsequent filing [revealed](#) that Peabody Coal, the largest private sector coal firm in the world, has directly supported Schnare's E&E Legal.

