



January 26, 2015

Jason Bordoff, Founding Director
Center on Global Energy Policy
Columbia University
International Affairs Building, Room 901F
612 W. 115th Street
New York, NY 10025-7799

Dear Mr. Bordoff:

I'm writing again because I have not received a response to my Sept. 25, 2014, inquiry about the hiring of former [Special Ambassador Carlos Pasqual](#) and [U.S. State Department Attorney/Advisor Keith Benes](#). As you know, both were critical players in the State Department's process of evaluating whether or not the controversial Keystone XL pipeline should go forward.

An important part of the National Interest Determination (NID), which Ambassador Pascual oversaw at the State Department, is the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), with which Mr. Benes was deeply involved. This recommendation will be pivotal in President Obama's final review of the proposed project.

The production of the EIS was riven with ethics concerns. At the heart of these concerns was the hiring of ERM, a TransCanada contractor that lied about having TransCanada as a client, and what appears to be an unusually cozy relationship between Benes, ERM, and TransCanada. TransCanada is, of course, the foreign oil company that wants to build Keystone XL.

I am writing to you again because the State Department has recently indicated a timeline to furnish its final National Interest Determination recommendation on Keystone XL for consideration by President Obama. The question of the Environmental Impact Statement's integrity is more important and timely than ever.

I note that both Ambassador Pascual and Mr. Benes are now employed at Columbia University's [Center on Global Energy Policy](#), which has extensive ties to the oil industry. In fact, the Center's "Issue Briefs and Other Publications," on your website, are all related to the fossil fuel industry with the exception of one – "Valuing Distributed Energy: Economic and Regulatory Challenges."

I am requesting you address the questions below. Your answers could help both the public and those at the State Department finishing the National Interest Determination for review by Secretary Kerry.

I probably don't need to tell you that Mr. Benes' staff work was the subject of a probe by the State Department's Inspector General, who acted on [information](#) provided by my project. The State

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Department staff members working on the EIS gave [advanced background briefings to the government of Canada](#) that it would get the favorable ruling it sought, as well as to the media – all before U.S. Senate offices were told.

The timing of the hiring of Keith Benes and Carlos Pascual after the completion of the highly questionable EIS could very well be coincidence. However, Mr. Pascual and Mr. Benes are now employed by one of the best-known universities in the world, with the credibility to impact public and elected officials' views on large fossil fuel projects such as Keystone XL. Columbia University declares clearly in a "[Statement of Ethical Conduct](#)" its commitment to transparency and honesty, as well as the requirement that [audit trails be incorporated throughout all administrative and financial processes](#).

I think it is therefore reasonable to ask:

- Has your Center had any communications with or funding from TransCanada or other members of the tar sands lobby that has so aggressively pushed people such as Mr. Benes and Ambassador Pascual to give them favorable rulings?
- What are Ambassador Pascual and Mr. Benes now being paid?
- What are their duties and roughly how much time is expected of them in performing those duties?
- Will you release the communications between your Center and Ambassador Pascaul and Mr. Benes regarding their hiring at the Center, including dates?

As you know, many universities' credibility, such as that of the [University at Buffalo](#), has been jeopardized due to the taking of funds from fossil fuel interests. In order to put to rest any questions this pair of hires might create, I ask that you provide detailed information about the funding for the Center on Global Energy Policy and communications with the tar sands lobby regarding such funding.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Scott Peterson
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