

# Selling lies

Posted: Monday, July 20, 2015 12:15 am

Guest Opinion writer Douglas Marshall offers a very public admission that he smells conspiracy in the subject of climate change. But his admission is sad to read because his sense of smell is off by 180 degrees.

Journalists just reported on Exxon's conspiracy to deceive the public — their in-house scientists knew by 1981 that climate change is real and is caused by burning fossil fuels, yet Exxon waged an expensive campaign to lie to the public about it so they could keep selling their enormously profitable products. Then Exxon lied again last week: When asked about this conspiracy, Exxon said climate science was just beginning in 1981 and no one knew anything conclusively. That's a lie, too: The National Academy of Science recognized a consensus on climate change already in the 70s.

I remember Ford Motor Company's conspiracy over the Pinto's deadly design flaws. They knew of the dangers, but due to the cost of fixing the flaws, they chose not to issue recall notices. Ford kept building and selling the Pinto with the same flaws until an internal Ford memo brought the conspiracy to the public's attention.

Big Tobacco's scientists knew that smoking caused serious illnesses, and spent 50 years conspiring to hide the facts from the public, and misinform the public. They also lied about their ability to control the amount of nicotine cigarettes contain because they wanted to maintain addictions.

Bloomberg Business reported last November on Big Oil's conspiracy to establish an enormous network of organizations that pretend to be concerned about environmentalism, energy prices, public welfare and even our national parks. These fake think tanks conspire to lie to the public and promote Big Oil's business a little longer.

Ford's conspiracy maimed or killed Pinto drivers; Big Tobacco killed smokers and hurt their friends and relatives with second hand smoke; Big Oil's conspiracy has destabilized the climate, is killing species, and threatens humanity.

The decision of people at Ford, Big Tobacco and Big Oil to use their wealth and power to deny facts despite the harm they create reminds me of paragraph 117 of the Pope's encyclical: "Once the human being declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion, the very foundations of our life begin to crumble, for 'instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature'."

If readers feel powerless in the face of climate change and the conspirators who have prevented Congress from enacting appropriate climate legislation, please contact Citizens' Climate Lobby to help us build the political will for climate legislation.

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