

The Fracking Lobby Groups and America's Natural Gas Alliance (ANGA), Public Relations Arm of the Fracking Industry

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[America's Natural Gas Alliance \(ANGA\)](#) – the public relations arm of the oil and gas [fracking](#) industry – has released its [2012 Internal Revenue Services \(IRS\) 990 form](#), and it's rich with eye-opening revelations, some of which we report here for the first time.

Incorporated as American Natural Gas Alliance, Inc., ANGA received \$76.7 million from its dues-paying members for fiscal year 2012. Not strictly a lobbying force alone at the state-level and federal-level, ANGA has pumped millions of dollars into public relations and advertising efforts around the country and hundreds of thousands more into other influence-peddling avenues.

[The Nation Magazine's Lee Fang](#) revealed in a recent piece that [ANGA gave \\$1 million in funding to "Truthland,"](#) a pro-fracking film released to fend off Josh Fox's "[Gasland: Part II.](#)"

On its [website](#), "[Truthland](#)" says it is a project of both [industry front group Energy in Depth](#) and the [trade association, Independent Petroleum Association of America](#). The "[Truthland](#)" [website was originally registered in Chesapeake Energy's office](#), Little Sis revealed.

Fang also revealed ANGA gave \$25,000 to "ASGK Strategies, a political consulting firm founded by White House advisor David Axelrod," as well as "\$864,673 to Edventures Partners, an education curriculum company that has partnered with ANGA to produce classroom materials that promote the use of natural gas."



David Axelrod; Photo Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

In his piece, Fang also points out ANGA has given millions of dollars to Democratic Party-affiliated PR firms, perhaps unsurprising given its [new CEO is Martin "Marty" Durbin, nephew of U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin \(D-IL\)](#), the U.S. Senate's Majority Whip.

"The 990 shows that ANGA paid the Glover Park Group over \$2.9 million for 'research/advertising' and Dewey Square Group \$738,957 for 'grassroots communications,'" [wrote Fang](#). "Both firms are run by mostly former Clinton administration officials." ANGA donated another \$6,500 to Dewey Square for general operational support.

Donations to Media Outlets

ANGA also gave big to media outlets, a *DeSmog* review of the 990 reveals. It doled out \$165,000 to *The Texas Tribune*, \$100,000 to Bloomberg Businessweek, \$50,000 to National Journal and another \$25,000 to the [Environmental Media Association, co-founded by Norman Lear](#), also the co-founder of the [liberal group People for the American Way](#).

Departing New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg – owner and namesake of Bloomberg Businessweek – is also a major financial supporter of fracking, [giving \\$6 million to the Environmental Defense Fund](#) in August 2012 to promote “responsible regulation” in 14 states. He also gave money to [EDF’s recently-published controversial fracking climate study](#).



Michael Bloomberg; Photo Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

[ANGA also recently became a founding partner of MSNBC.com’s](#) newly launched website, on whose platform it will regularly publish “native advertisements,” sometimes also referred to as “branded content.”

Bipartisanship, Attacks on Renewables, Money to Green Group

One thing is crystal clear in ANGA’s 990 forms: they “buyartisan.” That is, they donate money to both sides of the political aisle, although the bulk of the dollars flows to the right.

ANGA donated \$25,000 to the Democratic Attorneys General Association, while giving nine times as much to the Republican Governors Association to the tune of \$225,000. It then tossed another \$200,000 to the Republican State Leadership Committee, throwing \$25,000 more to [Third Way](#), a think-tank of sorts of the [corporate Blue Dog Democrats](#).

Not content with its vast market share of the U.S. utilities market, ANGA gave \$100,000 to the “[Care for Michigan Coalition](#),” an industry-funded nonprofit [created to defeat Michigan’s Proposal 3](#) in the November 2012 elections. Proposal 3 would have mandated 25-percent of Michigan’s energy portfolio come from renewable energy sources by 2025, known by energy policy wonks as 25×25.

[Other major Care for Michigan Coalition donors](#) included Warren Buffett’s BNSF (whose [trains carry vast amounts of frac sand](#) and [oil fracked from North Dakota’s Bakken Shale](#)), DTE Energy, CMS Energy and the Michigan Manufacturers’ Association.



Warren Buffett and President Barack Obama; Photo Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

ANGA didn’t limit its patronage to sworn enemies of renewable energy, though. It also handed \$30,000 to the Texas League of Conservation Voters.

Donations to “Other ALECs”

The [American Legislative Exchange Council](#) (ALEC) is by far the most powerful and famous corporate-funded nonprofit that companies and trade associations donate money to, receiving an equal voice and a vote on model legislation passed at its annual meetings. Yet, it’s not the only registered nonprofit incorporated to “educate” elected officials, serving as lobbying forum for corporations.

Enter the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), which I categorized as one of the [“Other ALECs” in an investigative series published for TruthOut](#). ANGA donated \$50,000 to NCSL during fiscal year 2012, according to its 990 form, giving another \$41,000 to the National Association of Counties and \$10,000 to the National League of Cities.

Public Citizen explained in a November 2012 report that lobbyists are increasingly using seemingly innocent state-level and local-level trade associations for politicians’ annual meetings as lobbying venues.

“There is no doubt that corporate sponsors are getting what they pay for: the ears of decision makers whose decisions will have a direct impact on their bottom lines,” Public Citizen wrote in [“Access for Sale: A Report on Corporate Funding of Associations of State and Local Government Officials.”](#)

Not to be outdone, [ANGA will be sworn in as a dues-paying member of ALEC](#) at its States and Nation Policy Summit set to take place December 4-6 in Washington, DC, according to a memorandum sent out to its members on October 30, 2013.

“He Who Has the Gold Makes the Rules”

If ANGA’s latest 990 forms prove anything, it’s the “golden rule.” Just not the one you’re taught as a kid. That is, when it comes to money in politics, “He who has the gold makes the rules.”

Yet, [another proverb also comes to mind](#): “When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realize that one cannot eat money.”

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