

# NEWS!

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## Running on Hydrocarbons New Report Tracks Oil & Gas Funding of Texas Lawmakers as They Review Regulation of that Industry

Austin - Current Texas lawmakers took \$11.3 million from the oil and gas industry over the past two election cycles, according to a new report, [Running on Hydrocarbons](#), released today by *Texans for Public Justice, Public Citizen and the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter*. The Energy & Natural Resources sector supplies lawmakers with more money than any other sector besides Lawyers & Lobbyists (even as Energy & Natural Resources is the leading employer of Texas lobbyists).

The Texas Senate is scheduled to consider Texas Railroad Commission Sunset legislation ([HB 1818](#)) this week. Critics contend the industry's influence helps to explain the legislature's apparent unwillingness to fundamentally reform the Railroad Commission, which has received scathing Sunset reviews as a result of its weak and conflicted regulation of the oil and gas industry.

[Running on Hydrocarbons](#) is a follow-up to the groups' earlier [Rigged](#) report, which found that Railroad Commissioners take 60 percent of their campaign funds from the oil and gas industry that they regulate. The new report released today is an analysis of oil and gas contributions to the 181 current members of the Texas Legislature.

“The influence of oil and gas money in our political system again appears to prevent real reform of the Railroad Commission by the Texas Legislature, despite three recent efforts from the Sunset Commission staff,” said Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of the Sierra Club’s Lone Star Chapter. “Virtually every reform or amendment that would have impacted the industry was rejected by legislative leadership. If our elected leaders choose campaign cash over protecting Texans from oil and gas industry hazards, Texans should elect new leaders.”

Legislative hydrocarbon dependency varies wildly. The industry supplied a stunning 62 percent of Rep. Mike Lang's war chest. Oil heir Van Taylor was the most dependent member of the Senate, taking 15 percent of his money from that industry.

The largest recipients of petrodollars in absolute terms were Speaker Joe Straus, who got \$2.3 million from that industry (14 percent of his total), followed by more than \$500,000 in industry funding to Rep. Jonathan Stickland (36 percent of his total). The industry's top legislative contributor was Farris Wilks, whose family sold Frac Tech Services for \$3.5 billion in 2011.

“Just follow the money,” said Public Citizen Legislative Counsel Carol Birch, “it explains a lot of bad votes once again this session.”

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“With the legislature and Railroad Commission both awash in oil money, meaningful regulation of the Texas energy industry remains a pipe dream,” said Texans for Public Justice Director Craig McDonald.

"[Running on Hydrocarbons: Oil and Gas Contributions to Texas Lawmakers](#)," is a report of Texans for Public Justice, the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter and Public Citizen's Texas Office.

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