



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Kathleen Sabo, Executive Director, 505-274-2442 or ksabo@nmethicswatch.org

Oil And Gas Industry Contributions Keep Pouring Into New Mexico Political War Chests

The oil and gas industry's contributions to New Mexico political campaigns continue to be a commanding presence in New Mexico politics.

This is according to the most recent analysis by New Mexico Ethics Watch of general election campaign finance reports filed with the Office of the Secretary of State. The reporting period ran from September 8 through October 5, 2020.

During the second campaign reporting period of the 2020 general election, the oil and gas industry spent more than a quarter million dollars on political activities in New Mexico. More than half that amount came from out-of-state.

Combined with the first batch of campaign finance reports in early September, the industry contributed more than \$1.16 million on New Mexico political campaigns between June 30 and October 5 of this year, during the first and second general election reporting periods.

Earlier this month, oil and gas lobbyists reported about \$2 million in contributions to politicians and political organizations in the state over the previous five months. (Lobbyists in New Mexico have different reporting schedules than candidates and political action committees (PACs).)

The per capita annual income of the average New Mexican, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, is just over \$26,000.

"As is obvious with every round of campaign finance reports, the oil and gas industry is not shy about flexing its financial muscles in this state," said Kathleen Sabo, executive director of New Mexico Ethics Watch. "Though so many New Mexicans are barely scraping by during the ongoing financial crisis, the oil and gas industry seems to have no trouble fueling the campaigns of New Mexico politicians."

New Mexico Ethics Watch's latest findings for the second general election reporting period include:

- * Individuals, businesses, and PACs associated with the oil and gas industry made nearly \$255,000 in contributions.

- * More than 60 percent of oil and gas contributions went to Republicans, though some of the largest recipients of these contributions went to Democratic Party leaders in the Legislature.

- * The California-based Chevron corporation, which led the industry in political contributions during this year's primary (almost \$900,000) and the first general election reporting period (\$388,000), virtually disappeared in this latest batch of reports. The company made a single contribution of \$5,000 in late September.

- * The top contributors from the oil and gas industry in the last month include: Occidental Petroleum (\$50,250); ConocoPhillips (\$40,500); PNM Responsible Citizens Group (\$25,600); Pic Quick, a major gasoline retailer (\$22,500), and the Jalapeño Corporation (\$17,500).

- * The largest individual contributors from the oil and gas sector during this reporting period were Peyton Yates, a founder and co-manager of Santo Petroleum in Artesia, (\$32,000); Mark Veteto, president of Me-Tex Oil & Gas in Hobbs, (\$1,500) and Sealy Cavin, president of Hat Mesa Oil Company (\$1,000)

- * The top five candidates receiving the most oil and gas money in the first general election reports are: House Speaker Brian Egolf, D-Santa Fe, (\$13,000); House Minority Leader James Townsend, (\$10,750); Senate Minority Leader Start Ingle, R-Portales, (\$10,000); State Sen. Candace Gould, R-Albuquerque, (\$9,500); and State Rep. Patricia Lundstrom, D-Gallup, (\$6,750). Lundstrom is chairwoman of the House Appropriations and Finance Committee. Gould is a freshman senator who is running a competitive race this year. She's married to Marathon Petroleum lobbyist Leland Gould.

Once again, the efforts of New Mexico Ethics Watch were hampered by the Secretary of State's new campaign website, launched last month. The site remains difficult to navigate, even for those with years of experience in analyzing campaign finance data.

New Mexico Ethics Watch and Common Cause New Mexico collaborated on a comprehensive report on oil and gas industry involvement in financing political campaigns, from 2017 through

2019, earlier this year. That report can be found at

http://nmethicswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Oil-and-Gas-Report_05012020.pdf

New Mexico Ethics Watch will continue to analyze general election campaign finance reports as they become available, crunching the numbers on oil and gas and other industry contributions.--

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New Mexico Ethics Watch is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization and a principal leader in ethics reform in New Mexico. Our values are that ethics is for everyone; that good government leads to improved schools, healthier communities, and better business, and attention to ethics in public life leads to more equitable opportunities for all.

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