

Exxon again cuts funds for climate change skeptics

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NEW YORK (Reuters) - Exxon Mobil Corp is pulling contributions to several groups that have downplayed the risks that greenhouse gas-emissions could lead to global warming, continuing a policy started in 2006 by Chief Executive Rex Tillerson.

Exxon will not contribute to some nine groups in 2008 that it funded in 2007. It said in its corporate citizenship report that the groups' "position on climate change could divert attention from the important discussion on how the world will secure the energy required for economic growth in an environmentally responsible manner."

The groups Exxon has stopped funding include the Capital Research Center, Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, Frontiers of Freedom Institute, the George C. Marshall Institute, and the Institute for Energy Research, according to Exxon spokesman Gantt Walton.

Exxon's tone on climate change has softened since Tillerson took the reins of the company at the beginning of 2006, replacing the often-combative Lee Raymond.

Tillerson has said that nations should work toward a global policy to fight climate change and in 2006 the company stopped funding a handful of groups that were climate change skeptics.

But environmental activists charged that Exxon continued to fund other groups working against policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with Greenpeace arguing that the company gave more than \$2 million to climate change skeptics in 2006 alone.

The company cut its spending again in 2007 on such groups, including the Heartland Institute, which hosted a conference in March with the theme, "Global warming is not a crisis."

(Reporting by Michael Erman; Editing by Braden Reddall)