

BARRIERS TO LOUISIANA ENERGY DOMINANCE

2026



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisiana possesses unparalleled natural advantages, boasting abundant natural resources, strategic port infrastructure, a skilled workforce, and strong geographic positioning. Louisiana should be a national leader in energy production, innovation, and economic growth, yet a combination of outdated regulatory frameworks, legal and policy barriers, and well-funded advocacy campaigns is preventing Louisiana from realizing its full energy potential.

The Pelican Institute's **Roadmap to Reform: Six Pillars for Louisiana Energy Dominance** is the desired end goal. While the recommendations that make up that report are summarized below, the core idea is this: a free-market approach with light-touch, predictable regulatory structures that promote an “all of the above and below” energy landscape is the best pathway to success.

So, what stands in the way? The principal barriers between Louisiana and true energy dominance include legislative policy, regulatory structures, and public discourse that all too often hinder the state's energy future. Rather than succumb to either government-directed industrial policy or externally-funded opposition campaigns, Louisiana must chart a path grounded in free enterprise, property rights, and competitive markets.

The stakes extend beyond energy policy alone. How Louisiana addresses these barriers will determine whether the state embraces the economic opportunity and individual liberty that come with energy leadership or remains constrained by outdated government-centric approaches reminiscent of mid-20th-century Longism.

INTRODUCTION: A VISION FOR LOUISIANA ENERGY DOMINANCE

The Pelican Institute's *Roadmap to Reform* establishes six foundational pillars for achieving Louisiana energy dominance:

- 1. Streamline permitting and environmental reviews responsibly**
- 2. Reduce litigation risk and regulatory uncertainty**
- 3. Advance sensible tax policy**
- 4. Enhance market competition**
- 5. Expand consumer choice to electric power**
- 6. Remove government barriers to energy production.**

These pillars rest on a fundamental principle: energy abundance drives economic prosperity, and free markets deliver energy abundance more effectively than government mandates or bureaucratic planning.

BEYOND LONGISM: THE FREE ENTERPRISE ALTERNATIVE

For much of the 20th century, Louisiana’s political economy was shaped by the legacy of Huey Long, in a system characterized by concentrated government power, patronage networks, and state-directed economic development. While Long-era policies promised populist benefits, they often entrenched inefficiency, corruption, and economic stagnation.

Louisiana’s path to energy dominance requires a decisive break from this government-centric model. Instead of politicians and bureaucrats selecting winners and losers, competitive markets should allocate resources. Instead of regulatory barriers protecting incumbents, open entry should drive innovation. Instead of state subsidies and mandates, consumer choice and private investment should guide development.

This transition is not merely ideological—it is eminently practical. States and nations that have embraced energy freedom consistently outperform those relying on government control. Texas’s [competitive electricity markets have driven investment and reliability](#). North Dakota’s [regulatory efficiency](#) has unleashed domestic energy production. Globally, jurisdictions with secure property rights and minimal regulatory friction attract capital and talent.

Louisiana possesses every natural advantage. What it needs now is the policy framework to unlock that potential and the political will to remove the barriers standing in the way. So, what are those barriers?

BARRIER #1: EXISTING STATE LAWS

Louisiana’s statutory framework contains numerous provisions that actively impede energy development, limit consumer choice, and protect incumbent interests at the expense of innovation and competition. Addressing these legislative barriers presents the most direct path to advancing the state’s energy future.

Public Utility Regulation and Market Structure

Louisiana’s current regulatory structure for electric utilities reflects a mid-20th-century model that prioritizes monopoly service territories over competitive markets. While the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) regulates investor-owned utilities through cost-of-service ratemaking, this approach creates perverse incentives that reward capital expenditure regardless of efficiency and insulate utilities from competitive pressure.

The state’s utility regulatory framework limits opportunities for new market entrants, restricts consumer choice, and makes it difficult for innovative business models to emerge. Unlike Texas, which restructured its electricity market to allow retail competition, Louisiana consumers remain captive to geographically-assigned monopolies with limited alternatives.

Permitting and Regulatory Approval Processes

Current state law creates redundant and time-consuming approval processes for energy infrastructure projects. Multiple state agencies maintain overlapping jurisdiction over various aspects of energy development, leading to duplicative reviews, inconsistent standards, and unnecessary delays.

The coastal zone management program, while serving important environmental protection functions, has been interpreted in ways that create uncertainty for developers and extend timelines beyond what is necessary for thorough environmental review. These delays translate directly into increased costs, making Louisiana less competitive with neighboring states for energy investment.

Workforce & Occupational Licensing Barriers

Louisiana maintains some of the nation's most extensive occupational licensing requirements, creating barriers to workforce development in energy-related fields. Many of these licensing requirements lack clear public safety justifications and instead function primarily to limit competition and restrict labor market entry.

For the energy sector to expand, Louisiana needs a robust pipeline of skilled workers: electricians, pipefitters, HVAC technicians, and numerous other trades. Excessive licensing requirements make it harder for workers to enter these fields, limit interstate mobility for qualified professionals (though the Legislature has taken positive action on this front in recent years), and increase labor costs without corresponding safety benefits.

Louisiana, being a hotbed for data centers and other types of investment, will see the need for electricians, plumbers, and other tradesmen skyrocket, with salaries **eclipsing the \$100k mark** for many. Government unnecessarily standing in the way of licensure for these trades will deter further investment.

Tax and Fiscal Policy

While Louisiana has taken steps to improve its tax climate, significant barriers remain. The state's corporate income tax structure, combined with local taxes and fees, creates a higher burden than many competing jurisdictions. Property tax assessments on industrial facilities can be unpredictable, creating additional uncertainty for long-term capital investment.

Louisiana remains among the small number of states that tax business inventory regardless of profitability. This tax carries a high compliance cost by requiring businesses to track and value their inventory. It also places the state at a competitive disadvantage compared to states that have exempted inventory and creates a disincentive to maintain inventory or expand operations here. Until recently, Louisiana also had the highest severance tax rate on oil production of any state, except Alaska, at 12.5%—far **exceeding the rates of neighboring oil-producing Southern states**. After the 2025 legislative session, this rate has dropped to 6.5% for oil from wells completed on or after July 1, 2025.

It remains true that states boasting no income tax are still leading the way when it comes to GDP growth. Zero income tax states **Florida, Texas, and Nevada** outpace every state in the union.

BARRIER #2: REGULATION, LEGAL ENVIRONMENT, AND BUREAUCRACY

Beyond specific statutes, Louisiana faces significant challenges from regulatory interpretation, administrative processes, and legal uncertainties that impede energy development.

Litigation & Legal Threats

Louisiana's legal framework has enabled certain types of litigation that create uncertainty for energy companies and threaten long-term investment. The proliferation of coastal erosion lawsuits filed by local governments against energy companies, often with heavy involvement from private contingency-fee attorneys, exemplifies how the state's legal environment can be weaponized against industry.

These lawsuits seek to hold energy companies retroactively liable for alleged environmental impacts from operations conducted decades ago under valid permits and in compliance with then-applicable regulations. Regardless of the underlying environmental merits, this litigation approach creates massive uncertainty for any company considering long-term investments in Louisiana and worsens the economy for all.

The Pelican Institute's report [*How Coastal Lawsuit Abuse Continues to Undermine Louisiana's Economy*](#) found that Louisiana's share of U.S. GDP has declined from 1.4% in 2009 to 1.1% in 2024, resulting in more than \$600 billion in lost economic activity over that period (in 2017 dollars). This decline reflects sustained underinvestment in high-wage industries, particularly oil and natural gas.

Research previously linked increased litigation risk after 2013 to a sharp reduction in new offshore wells in Louisiana state waters, leading to lost production value, reduced royalties, and roughly 2,000 fewer energy jobs. Since then, broader downstream effects have materialized: offshore reserves and production have dropped significantly compared to federal Gulf levels, the state's oil and gas share of GDP has fallen from over 7% to under 3%, and employment and wages in the sector have declined.

Because Louisiana's economy is far more concentrated in oil and gas than the national average, losses in this sector have an outsized impact on earnings, local economies, and public revenues.



Regulatory Uncertainty and Inconsistent Enforcement

Even where statutory authority exists for beneficial energy development, regulatory agencies sometimes apply standards inconsistently or interpret their authority in ways that create unnecessary barriers. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), for instance, faces pressure from both industry seeking clear standards and activists demanding increasingly stringent interpretation of environmental laws.

This regulatory uncertainty makes it difficult for companies to plan long-term investments. When agencies can shift interpretation of existing rules without legislative action, investors face heightened risk. The **recent end of administrative deference** through Louisiana’s regulatory reform represents an important step forward, but significant work remains to ensure regulations are applied consistently and predictably.

Utility Commission Practices and Procedures

The Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) wields enormous power over the state’s energy sector, yet its processes and standards have not always promoted efficiency or innovation. The commission’s traditional cost-of-service ratemaking approach creates an incentive structure where utilities profit from capital expenditure rather than operational efficiency.

Recent Commission decisions regarding renewable energy mandates and integrated resource planning demonstrate how regulatory bodies can effectively mandate policy outcomes that the Legislature has not enacted into law. Furthermore, the Commission’s cumbersome and often opaque procedural requirements make it difficult for customer advocates and businesses with innovative models to participate effectively in regulatory proceedings. This tilts the playing field toward large incumbent utilities with extensive regulatory affairs departments.

Competition, not regulatory shortcuts, will help meet rising electricity demand. Although intended to accelerate large-scale energy projects, the LPSC’s new **“Lightning Initiative” allows incumbent monopoly utilities to bypass competitive bidding** for new generation and capacity. By sidelining independent producers and alternative procurement models, it reduces market discipline that typically helps control costs and improve reliability.

Research on similar policies, such as **Right of First Refusal (ROFR) laws**, shows that insulating monopoly utilities from competition often leads to higher prices, slower infrastructure development, and long-term costs for ratepayers. Critics argue that the LPSC’s approach risks repeating those mistakes, potentially shifting the full cost of new infrastructure onto consumers while weakening incentives for efficiency and innovation.



BARRIER #3: THE PUBLIC DEBATE AND OUTSIDE INFLUENCE

Achieving good policy requires robust debate with a focus on data and evidence-based analyses. All too often, however, real debate is muddled by bad information, emotional appeals, and strange-bedfellow partnerships.

This is certainly true of Louisiana’s energy policy debate. A sophisticated network of advocacy organizations directs millions of dollars from out-of-state, anti-oil and gas donors to shape public opinion, influence policymakers, and block energy development projects. Understanding this landscape is essential for anyone seeking to advance Louisiana’s energy future.

To be clear, the Pelican Institute believes in robust debate which can emerge from local, state, and national players. However, informed debate is made better by an understanding of the players and points of view of those with the loudest megaphones.

\$115 Million in Out-of-State Spending

According to a Pelican Institute review of data from the Foundation Directory, a database that compiles publicly available nonprofit financial documents, out-of-state donors have directed at least \$115.5 million to a group of Louisiana-based anti-oil and gas advocacy organizations since 2020. This sum represents 98.4% of the total funding that these Louisiana-based nonprofits received between 2020 and 2025.

This analysis centers on reviewing donation data to the **12 Louisiana-based members** of Louisianans Against False Solutions (LAFS), a coalition of advocacy groups **dedicated to** a “transition away from fossil fuels.”

Top donors include the Bloomberg Philanthropies (former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg), the Rockefeller Family Fund, Bezos Earth Fund (Jeff Bezos), Tides Foundation (seeded by George Soros), Waverley Street Foundation (Laurene Powell Jobs), the Windward Foundation (associated with the former Arabella Network), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the U.S. Energy Foundation, among others.

Breakdown of LAFS members and out-of-state donations since 2020, per Foundation Directory and ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer databases:

Organization	Out-of-state donations since 2020	Total since 2020	Percent out-of-state
Deep South Center for Environmental Justice	\$36,478,974.00	\$36,511,163.00	99.9%
Foundation for Louisiana	\$29,336,117.00	\$30,179,674.00	97.2%
Taproot Earth	\$26,752,014.00	\$26,762,014.00	99.9%
Healthy Gulf	\$11,894,112.00	\$12,551,238.00	94.8%
Alliance for Affordable Energy	\$8,948,043.00	\$9,290,133.00	96.3%
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance	\$1,010,000.00	\$1,087,608.00	92.9%
Rise St. James*	\$616,463.00	\$671,463.00	91.8%
Inclusive Louisiana	\$290,000.00	\$335,640.00	86.4%
Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition	\$106,000.00	\$161,000.00	65.8%
350 New Orleans*	\$15,025.00	\$40,025.00	37.5%
No Waste Louisiana*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sierra Club Delta Chapter*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total:	\$115,446,748.00	\$117,589,958.00	98.2%

**Denotes that data is incomplete for these groups due to how they are organized with the IRS (eg, at the time of this analysis, Rise St. James was a fiscally-sponsored project of the Earth Island Institute, meaning it did not file its own IRS Form 990 tax return).*

The data shows that the vast majority of this \$115.5 million comes from donors and foundations based in California (\$42.9 million), Washington, DC (\$21.9 million), and New York City (\$17.7 million), meaning that 70.3% of all donations came just from these three locations.

Top 30 donors to Louisiana-based LAFS members, per Foundation Directory and ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer databases:

Top 30 Donors	Total Donations
Waverley Street Foundation	\$15,300,000.00
Windward Fund	\$9,871,000.00
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	\$8,065,472.00
Freedom Together Foundation	\$6,550,000.00
Amalgamated Charitable Foundation Inc	\$6,529,523.00
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	\$5,691,866.00
United States Energy Foundation	\$4,892,850.00
Bezos Earth Fund	\$4,000,000.00
The Kresge Foundation	\$3,827,000.00
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	\$3,746,000.00
Resources Legacy Fund	\$3,201,975.00
Project South: The Institution for the Elimination of Poverty & Genocide	\$1,985,187.00
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Inc.	\$1,907,767.00
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation	\$1,785,000.00
RSF Regenerative Social Finance	\$1,470,500.00
Silicon Valley Community Foundation	\$1,338,350.00
The Ford Foundation	\$1,275,000.00
Rockefeller Family Fund Inc.	\$1,176,000.00
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund Inc	\$1,075,000.00
The Schmidt Family Foundation	\$1,062,000.00
National Academy of Sciences	\$1,050,000.00
Working Families Organization Inc	\$1,035,000.00

Top 30 Donors	Total Donations
Public Welfare Foundation Inc	\$1,004,130.00
Skoll Foundation	\$1,000,000.00
The Bloomberg Family Foundation Inc	\$1,000,000.00
The Libra Foundation	\$1,000,000.00
The Partnership Project Inc.	\$905,000.00
Solutions Project Inc.	\$836,988.00
Surdna Foundation Inc.	\$802,000.00
Tides Foundation	\$715,500.00

This data demonstrates the degree to which Louisiana-based advocacy groups working to stop energy infrastructure development in the state are overwhelmingly funded and supported by out-of-state actors whose stated goal is to phase out fossil fuels entirely. As part of their broader climate agenda, these funders are diametrically opposed to Louisiana’s traditional role as center for and innovator in energy development for the U.S.

Anti-Energy Infrastructure Organizations and Donors in Louisiana

Several organizations actively working to influence Louisiana energy policy have received substantial funding from the sources described above:

- **The Alliance for Affordable Energy:** This New Orleans-based organization advocates for renewable energy and energy efficiency policies before the Louisiana Public Service Commission and in legislative debates. **Public records** show the organization has received funding from national foundations supporting clean energy advocacy. While the organization frames its work around consumer protection and affordability, its policy positions consistently favor restrictions on traditional energy sources and mandates for renewable energy.
- **The Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN):** LEAN has operated in Louisiana for decades, advocating on environmental issues ranging from industrial pollution to coastal protection. The organization has received grants from **various national foundations** and has been involved in **litigation** opposing energy projects.
- **Louisianans Against False Solutions (LAFS):** LAFS is a coalition of 16 advocacy groups **dedicated to** a “transition away from fossil fuels.” The coalition is actually a fiscally-sponsored project of the Foundation for Louisiana, and has a particular focus on opposing both projects and pipelines associated with carbon capture and sequestration (CCS).

- **Rise St. James:** Rise is a St. James Parish-based group that actually operates as a fiscally-sponsored project of the **Earth Island Institute**, an environmental nonprofit based in Berkeley, California, with approximately \$30 million in annual revenue. Under this arrangement, Rise St. James' finances – including its donors, revenue, and expenditures – are not publicly disclosed independently. Rise founder Sharon Lavigne has publicly acknowledged **support** from philanthropy associated with former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Earth Island Institute receives funding from major national foundations, including George Soros' Open Society Foundations and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, among others.
- **Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ):** Top donors to DSCEJ include Bloomberg, Earthjustice, the Sierra Club, Bezos Earth Fund, among others. Since 2012, DSCEJ has been awarded more than \$34 million in federal taxpayer grants, including \$12 million during the Biden administration. The organization is currently **suing** the Trump administration after it rescinded its EPA environmental justice grants.
- **Healthy Gulf:** Operating across the Gulf Coast region, Healthy Gulf (formerly the Gulf Restoration Network) focuses on coastal and marine environmental issues. The organization has opposed **offshore drilling** expansion and various coastal industrial **projects**. In 2021, Healthy Gulf **received \$1 million** from the Bloomberg Family Foundation as part of its Beyond Petrochemicals campaign. **Foundation tax filings** show Healthy Gulf has also received grants from national environmental funders.
- **350 New Orleans and other 350.org affiliates:** These organizations represent the local presence of 350.org, an international climate activist network founded by Bill McKibben. The 350 movement explicitly opposes fossil fuel development and has organized protests and advocacy campaigns against Louisiana energy projects. The Bloomberg Family Foundation gave 350.org **\$750,000** in 2021 and **\$500,000** in 2022.

In addition to Bloomberg Philanthropies, other major national groups funding climate activists include:

- **Bezos Earth Fund:** In 2020, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos **launched** the Bezos Earth Fund, pledging to give it \$10 billion by 2030 for climate-related projects. The Fund's director of energy last year said its ambition is to **"phase out fossil fuels."** The New Orleans-based nonprofit Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ) received **\$4 million** in 2021 from the Earth Fund.
- **Arabella Advisors/Windward Fund:** Recently **rebranded** as Sunflower Services, Arabella is the billion-dollar **"dark money" network** that has directed millions toward liberal policies and political activity in recent years. The Windward Fund – the network's environment-focused **funding vehicle** – has an annual budget of some \$200 million per year, and its broader Arabella network has funded protests of President Trump and directed tens of millions to groups opposing the President.
- **George Soros/Open Society Foundation/Tides Foundation:** Investor and activist George Soros is the largest donor to liberal causes in America, **giving \$32 billion**

to his Open Society foundations. Soros was an original seed funder to the Tides Foundation and has contributed some \$600,000 to 350.org. According to [recent media reports](#), Soros has funded recent “No Kings” protests against President Trump.

- **David Rockefeller Fund:** Foundation benefiting from the estate of John D. Rockefeller, who made his fortune in fossil fuels through Standard Oil, but whose descendants are [now dedicated to](#) “taking down the fossil fuel industry.” The Rockefeller network also launched the Funder Collaborative on Oil and Gas, which is [working](#) to “stop the expansion of oil and gas infrastructure” in the U.S. It has invested in [various Louisiana environmental advocacy groups](#), including \$200,000 to 350.org in 2020, \$10,000 to Inclusive Louisiana in 2021, and \$10,000 to Louisiana Bucket Brigade in 2021.
- **The Elizabeth B. and Arthur E. Roswell foundation:** This Maryland-based nonprofit has donated a total of [\\$853,000](#) to Louisiana-focused climate groups between 2020 and 2024.

The influence of these advocacy organizations extends into media coverage of energy issues. Environmental organizations maintain sophisticated media operations that provide journalists with ready-made story angles, expert sources, and visual content. This makes it easier for reporters facing deadline pressure to tell stories that align with environmental advocacy narratives.

Furthermore, some foundations directly fund journalism projects focused on climate and environmental issues. While this funding can support valuable reporting, it also creates incentives for coverage that emphasizes problems with energy development while giving less attention to economic benefits or technological solutions.

National media outlets often approach Louisiana energy issues through a predetermined frame—either as examples of corporate malfeasance and environmental injustice, or as symbols of resistance to necessary climate action. This framing obscures more nuanced discussions of how Louisiana can pursue both environmental protection and economic opportunity.

The Bloomberg Climate Network

Perhaps no single individual has deployed more resources to influence state and local climate policy than former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Through his foundation and associated organizations, Bloomberg has created a comprehensive infrastructure for advancing his climate agenda at the state and local level, including in Louisiana. Bloomberg Philanthropies grants in Louisiana support litigation, lobbying, media campaigns, and the placement of Bloomberg-funded fellows directly within state and local government offices.

Overall, Bloomberg has spent more than [\\$3 billion](#) on climate advocacy initiatives. The leaders of multiple “hyper-local” activist groups in Louisiana have admitted to accepting undisclosed funding from Bloomberg, including Sharon Lavigne of [Rise St. James](#) and Roishetta Ozane of [The Vessel Project](#).

The strategy is sophisticated and multi-faceted:

- **Direct Government Integration:** Bloomberg Philanthropies' American Cities Climate Challenge and similar programs offer “free” technical assistance to cities and states. New Orleans has engaged extensively with Bloomberg climate initiatives, leading to the adoption of the city's **Climate Action Plan** in December 2022, which established ambitious targets including net-zero emissions by 2050, 100% clean electricity by 2035, and 75% no-or-low emission vehicles in the city fleet by 2035. Through the Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Fund, New Orleans received \$200,000 over two years to support youth-led climate projects aligned with the city's Climate Action Plan priorities. Assistance to governments in these programs also comes in the form of embedded fellows—effectively Bloomberg employees working within government agencies to advance climate policies aligned with Bloomberg's priorities. These fellows bring expertise and capacity that cash-strapped governments welcome, but they also bring a predetermined policy agenda. The city's Office of Resilience and Sustainability works closely with Bloomberg-funded programs, receiving technical support from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and participating in Bloomberg's **broader city network initiatives** including C40 Cities and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.
- **Legal Capacity Building:** This funding network has spurred the creation and support of legal organizations that provide litigation support for climate-related lawsuits against energy companies. While Louisiana's coastal erosion lawsuits against energy companies appear to be driven primarily by contingency-fee attorneys working with parish governments, the broader climate litigation infrastructure is funded by foundations in Bloomberg's network. Louisiana currently faces over 40 coastal erosion lawsuits filed since 2013 by parish governments against more than 200 energy companies, with the first jury verdict in Plaquemines Parish ordering Chevron to pay \$745 million in April 2024.
- **Media and Communications:** Organizations in this **ecosystem** produce research reports, media content, and communications materials designed to shape public opinion on energy and climate issues. In Louisiana, groups like the Alliance for Affordable Energy, which has appeared in advocacy campaigns alongside other organizations reportedly receiving foundation support, produce analysis and media content on utility regulation, renewable energy mandates, and opposition to fossil fuel infrastructure. These materials often present as objective consumer protection or environmental analysis while advancing particular policy conclusions that favor restrictions on traditional energy sources and mandates for renewable energy. The sophistication of these communications operations, including professional reports, expert testimony before regulatory bodies like the Louisiana Public Service Commission, and media-ready spokespersons, reflects capacity that extends beyond what grassroots organizations typically command without external support.

The scale of this effort is remarkable. Public tax filings reveal Bloomberg Philanthropies has deployed hundreds of millions of dollars nationally for climate advocacy, with Louisiana receiving a portion of these resources through various channels.

Strange Bedfellows: Leftist Environmentalists and Local Grassroots —

One of the most intriguing dynamics in Louisiana energy debates involves the tactical alliance between left-wing environmental organizations and local grassroots groups that are often otherwise quite conservative. While these factions disagree on most policy questions, they have found common cause in opposing particular energy infrastructure projects.

This alliance typically forms around specific projects—often natural gas pipelines, liquefied natural gas (LNG) export facilities, or, most heatedly, carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) projects—where environmental groups’ climate concerns align with local residents’ property rights concerns or aesthetic objections.

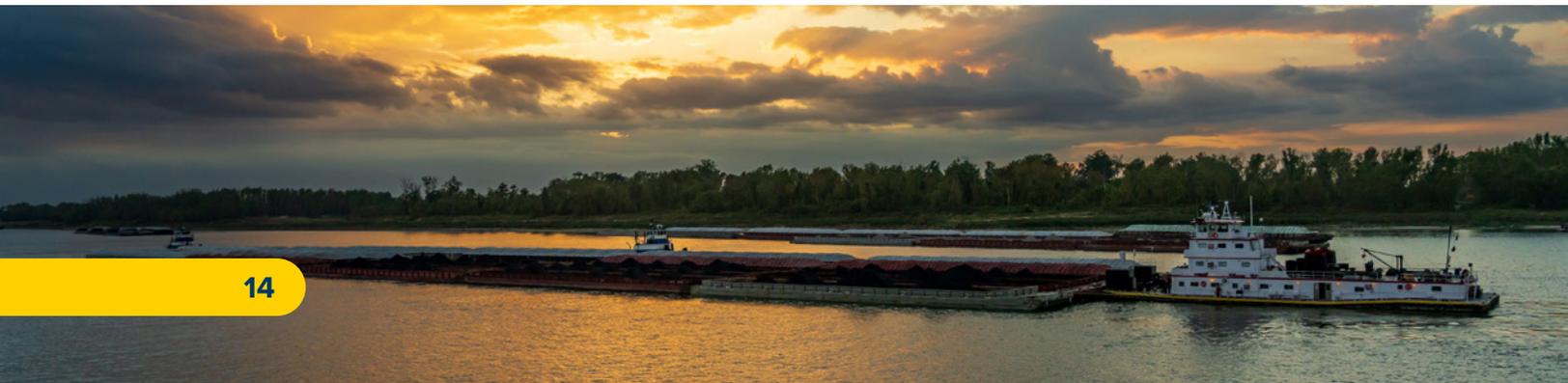
National and state environmental groups oppose fossil fuel infrastructure as part of their broader climate agenda. They view each new pipeline, export terminal, or industrial facility as locking in decades of additional greenhouse gas emissions. Their opposition is ideological and strategic.

Meanwhile, some conservative-leaning Louisiana residents have loudly opposed specific energy projects based on property rights concerns, visual impact, local environmental effects, or procedural objections to how projects were approved. Their opposition is typically localized and project-specific rather than ideological.

Sophisticated environmental organizations have learned to frame their messaging to appeal to conservative audiences. Rather than emphasizing climate change, they highlight property rights, local control, and opposition to corporate welfare. To further complicate the policy debate, opposition that might appear to be organic local grassroots mobilization often receives significant behind-the-scenes support from well-funded national organizations with broader agendas. They provide legal resources, technical expertise, and organizing support to local opposition groups, amplifying their effectiveness.

Across the country, this creates a challenging dynamic for lawmakers and other decision-makers seeking to better understand these issues. This is not to suggest that local residents or others involved don’t genuinely hold their stated concerns, nor does it suggest they shouldn’t have a platform for making their cases. It does, however, demonstrate how their capacity to mount effective opposition has been dramatically enhanced by outside support.

In Texas, groups such as the Texas Easement Action Alliance (TEAA) present themselves as local **grassroots** organizations with conservative-leaning goals but are funded by far-left nonprofit organizations **based in other states**. TEAA is sponsored



by the Bold Education Fund, a partner of the **billionaire-funded** Bold Alliance based in Nebraska that promotes liberal policies.

In Louisiana, the most prominent example of this dynamic has been the emergence of the Louisiana CO2 Alliance and its umbrella coalition, Save My Louisiana. These groups have actively branded themselves as “conservative” and claim to be supporters of the oil and gas industry. However, as recent media reports have documented, the leaders of the Louisiana CO2 Alliance and Save My Louisiana have been working in close coordination with anti-fossil fuel activists such as the Sierra Club and the Bold Alliance – which plays a key role in protesting pipeline development around the country—as well as other opponents of energy infrastructure.

Specifically, the media outlet **DC Journal** reported in February 2026 that “Save My Louisiana Board of Directors member Robert Maddox has been identified as participating in a July 2025 private Zoom call—apparently sponsored by the Sierra Club—and mistakenly posted to the Internet. During the call, Maddox and the anti-oil and gas activists coordinate closely on how best to work together to oppose energy infrastructure development. Maddox also asks for follow-up conversations to present his campaign plan to the broader Sierra Club leadership. Maddox likens his strategy to ‘cutting off the head of the snake.’”

At the same time, the Louisiana CO2 Alliance **named** a new president, activist Renee Savant, in January 2026. Both **DC Journal** and **The Hayride** have highlighted Savant’s decidedly left-leaning social media history. An outspoken opponent of fracking, Savant’s social media feeds are rife with criticisms of President Donald Trump and his policies on a range of issues, from immigration to energy. She summed up her perspective by **condemning** President Trump and his supporters as “An idiot with idiots following him.”

Meanwhile, Allen Parish Policy Juror Roland Hollins, the founder of the Louisiana CO2 Alliance and Save My Louisiana, praised Savant last year, calling her “the woman behind the curtain” of their efforts. **Said Hollins**: “Your voice helped wake up communities across Louisiana. We couldn’t have done it without you.”

This situation also raises the issue of local government entering the state climate policy debate using taxpayer dollars. The Louisiana CO2 Alliance is chaired by elected officials from Allen, Vernon, Jefferson Davis, and Beauregard parishes. These parishes have committed **public funds to support the alliance’s activities**, including lobbying the Louisiana Legislature to impose additional regulations on CCS projects. Meeting minutes reveal that Jefferson Davis Parish paid \$1,450 to join the alliance, and Beauregard Parish pledged up to \$5,000 in support. The Louisiana CO2 Alliance is composed predominantly of police jurors, along with at least one justice of the peace, and membership costs several thousand dollars. Allen Parish hired Renee Savant to manage the organization; she received an initial \$1,450 followed by \$2,475 every quarter.

Taxpayer-funded lobbying raises a host of ethical, democratic, and fiscal concerns. It allows government entities to advocate for particular policy outcomes using public resources, often with limited transparency or direct voter approval. Louisianans should not be compelled to pay for the promotion of policies they may oppose.

WEAPONIZED LAWSUITS: EARTHJUSTICE'S SPRAWLING LEGAL NETWORK, FUNDING CONNECTIONS TO CHINA

As the Pelican Institute previously [documented](#), Louisiana's status as an energy leader within the United States leaves it particularly vulnerable to litigation aimed at impeding energy development. The most high-profile actor in this space is Earthjustice, a nonprofit headquartered in San Francisco, CA. Earthjustice's influence in Louisiana is pervasive, and a review of its top donors shows significant overlap with many of the Louisiana-based anti-oil and gas advocacy organizations already discussed within this paper.

Billing itself as “the premiere nonprofit public interest environmental law organization,” Earthjustice [has](#) 220 lawyers on staff and 680 active legal cases. It maintains a [Gulf Regional Office](#) in Houston, TX where it conducts legal campaigns across Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi. In Louisiana, it has represented groups such as RISE St. James, Concerned Citizens of St. John, and the Alliance for Affordable Energy in lawsuits, permit challenges, and civil rights complaints. Its efforts have targeted a range of industry players, including Formosa Plastics' proposed [petrochemical](#) plant, [Denka's](#) chloroprene-producing facility, a [planned](#) Mitsubishi Chemical plant, and a proposed methane gas power plant by [Entergy Louisiana](#).

Earthjustice maintains a close relationship with the Bloomberg Philanthropies and has praised its founder, former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg multiple times. Tax documents from the Foundation Center indicate that the Bloomberg Family Foundation has donated at least \$34.25 million to Earthjustice. Earthjustice is a formal partner to Bloomberg's \$1 billion-plus [Beyond Carbon](#) initiative, as well as his \$85 million [Beyond Petrochemicals](#) campaign. The group has expressed how it is “[proud](#)” to work alongside Bloomberg and called him a “[powerful ally](#)” to the climate movement. A cumulative list of Earthjustice's top donors since 2003 may be seen below:



Top 20 Donors	Total Donations
Foundation For The Carolinas	\$92,461,750
The Bloomberg Family Foundation Inc	\$34,250,000
Donor Advised Charitable Giving, Inc.	\$30,245,719
Robertson Foundation	\$29,232,000
Sandler Foundation	\$29,000,000
Freedom Together Foundation	\$26,500,000
Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund	\$15,561,104
Gordon & Llura Gund Foundation	\$12,190,194
The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation	\$9,931,300
The Dianne & David Stern Foundation	\$9,500,000
The Satterberg Foundation Inc	\$8,788,137
Vanguard Charitable	\$8,695,136
Earthjustice	\$8,576,800
The Pew Charitable Trusts	\$8,443,994
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	\$8,000,000
Climate Imperative Foundation	\$7,590,000
Crankstart Foundation	\$7,450,000
TIDES FOUNDATION	\$7,294,284
Energy Foundation China	\$6,562,936
Sergey Brin Family Foundation	\$6,512,343

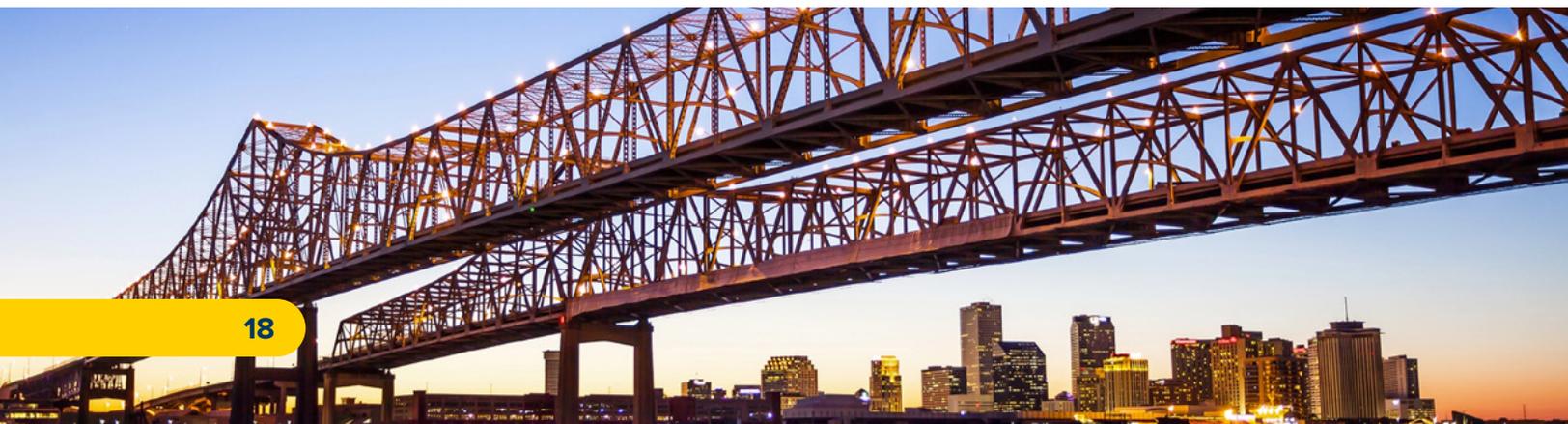
Finally, Earthjustice’s relationship with the U.S. Energy Foundation (EF) has been a particular point of controversy. Earthjustice’s latest [2025 Annual Report](#) indicates that its Chair of the Board of Trustees is Stuart Clarke, a Director at the William Penn Foundation. Clarke also [serves](#) as the Board Chair for EF. This close relationship, along with Earthjustice’s historical track record of taking money from EF and its affiliated entity Energy Foundation China (EFC) raises eyebrows.

EFC has faced intense scrutiny over allegations of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) connections and improper foreign influence. CEO Zou Ji has been described as “**deeply tied**” to the CCP, while board member **Hongjiun Zhang** previously worked for China’s National People’s Congress. The organization has been **accused** of **violating** lobbying disclosure laws by failing to register as a foreign agent and of abusing its nonprofit status due to its ties to the Chinese government.

Since 2006, Earthjustice has received \$8.5 million from EFC and EF. These two groups were previously the same legal entity, then known simply as the Energy Foundation, before they **split** off in 2019. Despite the apparent separation, they maintained **shared office space** in San Francisco until 2022 and continued sharing **personnel** through at least 2024, with six EFC employees being compensated by EF as late as July 2024. This calls into question their independence from each other.

The foundation has also been accused of funneling millions to U.S.-based organizations to advance Chinese energy policies, including China’s **five-year plan**, and of funding **climate lawfare** aimed at weakening the United States. In Louisiana, groups within LAFS have taken \$6.4 million from EF and EFC, with a breakdown provided below:

Louisiana Organizations	Total EF Donations	Total EFC Donations	Percent out-of-state
Deep South Center for Environmental Justice	\$1,980,000.00	N/A	99.9%
Alliance for Affordable Energy	\$1,662,650.00	\$1,215,230.00	97.2%
Healthy Gulf	\$625,200.00	N/A	99.9%
Taproot Earth	\$300,000.00	N/A	94.8%
Foundation for Louisiana	\$250,000.00	N/A	96.3%
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance	\$75,000.00	\$300,000.00	92.9%
Grand Total	\$4,892,850.00	N/A	91.8%





CONCLUSION: OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ACHIEVE LOUISIANA ENERGY DOMINANCE

Louisiana possesses extraordinary natural advantages for energy leadership, but they will not automatically translate into energy dominance. The barriers examined in this white paper—outdated legislative frameworks, regulatory uncertainty, and well-funded opposition campaigns—stand between Louisiana and its energy potential.

The consequences of inaction are already visible. Capital is mobile. Projects are discretionary. When Louisiana sends mixed signals, investment does not wait—it relocates. Every year that reform is delayed, the state risks losing jobs, revenue, and strategic relevance to faster-moving competitors with more welcoming policy environments.

The stakes extend well beyond energy policy. How Louisiana addresses these barriers will determine whether the state can translate its natural advantages into broadly-shared prosperity, or whether it remains an economic underperformer. Energy dominance means good jobs for Louisiana workers across the skills spectrum. It means expanded tax revenues to fund education, infrastructure, and public services without punitive tax rates. It means energy security for Louisiana families and businesses. It means positioning Louisiana as an indispensable part of American and global energy supply.

Achieving Louisiana energy dominance will require leadership from elected officials willing to challenge entrenched interests and make difficult reforms. It will require engagement from Louisiana business leaders willing to advocate publicly for policy changes. It will require Louisiana residents understanding what is at stake and demanding that their representatives act.

The Pelican Institute's six-pillar framework provides a roadmap. The barriers identified in this analysis show what stands in the way. Louisiana has been at its best when it has embraced economic freedom and entrepreneurial energy. The state's energy future offers an opportunity to recapture that spirit—to build an economy grounded in competitive markets, private initiative, and individual opportunity rather than government favoritism and outside control.

With clear vision, principled leadership, and sustained commitment to free enterprise reforms, Louisiana can achieve true energy dominance—and with it, unprecedented economic opportunity for all Louisianians.



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