



May 14, 2008

Mr. Red Cavaney, President  
American Petroleum Institute  
1220 L Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005-4070

Re: Suspending Unethical PR Campaign

Dear Mr. Cavaney,

I write you on behalf of EARTHWORKS members across the country and the hundreds of community groups and organizations we count as partners. We are disappointed that you and your member companies, many of whom advertise their green credentials, have decided to launch a multi-million dollar, multi-year public relations and advertising campaign in an effort to “burnish” your industry’s image (Wash. Post, May 9, 2008, p. D 1).

We call on you to suspend your public relations campaign. And with consumers paying close to \$4 a gallon for gasoline, the public's tolerance will be low for what amounts to resources wasted on self-promotion. When API's largest member, ExxonMobil, invests nearly zero dollars in renewable energy, it isn't time for mere image "burnishing".

Instead, it is time for good works and for industry commitments and actions that make a real difference on climate protection and alternative energy sources. The best public relations your industry could buy would be to take the funds you have earmarked for this campaign and spend them, starting today, to create and bring to market renewable, sustainable energy sources. So we are calling on you to do this as well.

A similar ethic, and commitment, should extend to all of the companies who are members of the associations that participate in API. The net result would be a significant pool of resources and an enhanced reputation for the sector.

Consumers are smart. We all feel the pain of \$4 per gallon fuel, but we will respect companies who actually put their money where their mouth is. Americans have always shown themselves willing to pay a price if it leads to real progress. So gas at \$4 may be a little easier to swallow, or burn, if we know that the companies we buy from are truly committed to putting any spare dollar into creating responsible, secure fuel sources rather than simply trying to burnish their image.

Consumers want to know that the companies they are buying from are responsible, ethical actors. They will also start to ask questions about the practices you employ from the



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retail pump back to the source. Ultimately they will want to know about the community and the ecosystem from which their fuel originated and the impacts on the climate from drill or mine site to the pump. We will certainly be asking your member companies these questions.

The best way for an industry or a company to burnish its reputation is by doing good works and having others give them public credit. We are prepared to publicly commend you for suspending your ad campaign and we can assure you that hundreds of others will join us if you put that money to good use creating new, cleaner energy solutions.

We will soon be launching a No Dirty Energy campaign, with partners around the world, building on the model of our successful No Dirty Gold campaign. With this letter we welcome the opportunity to engage with any of your members who are willing to tackle these issues in a serious, forward-thinking manner. While we are committed to exposing irresponsible corporate behavior, like this PR campaign, we will also spotlight responsible actors who simultaneously advance their corporate interest AND the public good.

We look forward to your positive response.

Sincerely,  
Bruce Baizel  
Staff Attorney,  
Oil & Gas Accountability Project/  
EARTHWORKS