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Manchin holds a hearing on climate change facts (and GOP invites deniers who make shit up)

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Wednesday, Senator Joe Manchin's (D-W.Va) opening statement announced his intention for a [Senate Energy and Natural Resources hearing](#) on the last decade of climate science and energy policy to set "a baseline of common facts" to talk about climate change. Unfortunately, many statements made at the hearing were not at all factual.

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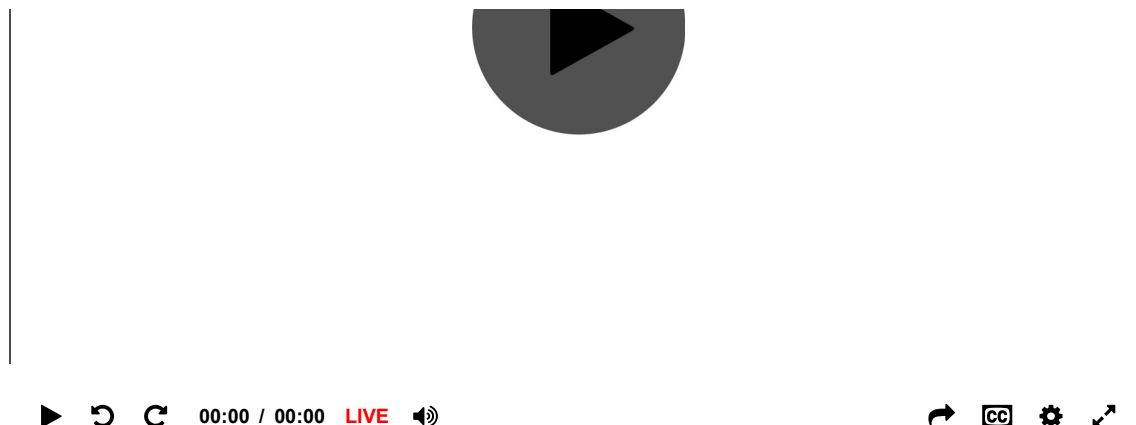
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By Climate Denier Roundup

To begin, Senator John Barrasso's (R-Wyo.) opening statement falsely claimed that the US stopping fossil fuel use won't change anything, and downplayed our contributions and contrasted it to China's emissions. But [the US has emitted way more carbon dioxide](#) over the last hundred and fifty years than any other country, and China is just starting to catch up.

Sen. Barrasso also claimed that developing countries don't consider climate change a priority, despite the fact that [they absolutely do](#), and [are adopting renewables](#) at a [greater rate than developed countries](#). By 2018, developing countries [were adding more clean power](#) than fossil fuels.

As for the job losses invoked by multiple statements in the hearing, those figures almost certainly inflated by the [covertly industry-funded front groups](#) that made them up. In reality, Keystone XL would have [only created 35 to 50 permanent jobs](#), so the threat of President Biden's policies eliminating potential jobs pales in comparison to the jobs the industry is already shedding anyway. The fossil fuel industry got \$15 billion in pandemic aid last year, but still [fired 75,000](#) workers, continuing a trend that started [well before the COVID-19 crisis](#). Meanwhile, in the U.S., more than [3 million](#)



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Switch Energy Alliance, with [advisors](#) from BP, and his movie *SwitchOn*, a [film that was praised](#) by the [formerly Koch-funded](#) Manhattan Institute's Robert Bryce in [Koch-funded](#) RealClear. It focuses on "energy poverty," a phrase previously [exploited by Peabody Coal](#) to exploit concern for global poverty and energy access to sell fossil fuels. It's a sequel to his earlier film *Switch*, which was [panned by climate scientists](#). It's using very legitimate developing world concerns as [distractions and excuses](#) as part of his activism to [consistently](#) oppose US climate policy, [downplay renewables](#) and [promote gas](#).

Dr. Tinker's opening comments claimed the environmental impact of [solar](#) and wind are greater than fossil fuels, [which](#) is [simply false](#).

The other Republican witness, Mr. Mark Mills, Senior Fellow of The [Manhattan Institute](#) focused on the critical earth mineral mining, essential for clean technology and regular technology alike. While global mining conditions certainly need improved labor and environmental standards, that's as much an international supply chain standards issue as it is a climate one, as every computer and cell phone and even gas cars rely on those same minerals as well. But the EV industry is [addressing](#) the [issue](#) and [working](#) on [recycling](#), while the fossil fuel industry's human rights abuses [are well-documented](#), with [worker deaths](#) and billions in environmental and economic damages.

Mr. Mills attacks on electric vehicles as being dirty were also misplaced, as the average EV [produces](#) as much pollution as a car that would get 88 mpg, overall polluting [less than half](#) of what a regular gas car does. Eventually, after being pressed by a question regarding his previous statement that EV batteries require a hundred barrels of oil to produce, he admitted that the emissions from the battery production

benefit of the [coal-gas switch](#) and sustained gas use is long-term not compatible with even a disastrous a 3.6°F (2°C) pathway — to achieve that, [80% of proven fossil fuel reserves](#) need to remain in the ground.

Senator Bill Cassidy (R-La.) asked Mr. Mills about how if the US stops drilling for oil, other countries with worse emissions-per-energy-unit will drill more, leading to more overall emissions. This ignores methane leaks in the US, which makes American gas particularly polluting — [twenty times worse than Russian gas](#). So even compared to other [nations](#) US gas is actually quite dirty, leading to the [cancellation](#) of [several major export projects](#) and calling [gas export policy](#) into question.

Unfortunately, one of the things that didn't come up was one of our favorite facts discovered while researching the witnesses. In 2016 Scott Tinker [penned an op-ed arguing](#) for a “radical middle” between the ‘alarmist’ who claimed fracking was causing earthquakes and those they'd label deniers. He highlighted the TexNet project to study the issue as an example of such a radical middle position, a collaboration between his Bureau of Economic Geology at U-T Austin, the state of Texas, and the oil industry.

In 2019, the project showed that [fracking actually was causing earthquakes](#).

So what good is a baseline of facts, if the frackers wreck it anyway?



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(Originally appeared at [DailyKos.](#))

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and the national and local politics and policy that make it all possible.

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