# Climate denial shifts to downplay solutions amid surge in right-wing misinformation funding



In recent years, the nature of climate change denial has evolved significantly, with outright denial of global warming becoming less common among vocal opponents of climate action. Instead, a new wave of climate misinformation has emerged, characterised by claims that climate solutions are ineffective, that climate change has certain benefits, or that pollution reduction policies are merely tools for government control. This shift reflects an adaptation to the growing reality of climate change impacts experienced globally, according to a report by Yale Climate Connections.

Data from the U.S. Center for Countering Digital Hate indicates that by 2023, these newer forms of denial comprised 70% of climate misinformation claims on YouTube, a sharp increase from 35% in 2018. Social media and online platforms play a central role in spreading such misinformation. Pew Research highlights that approximately one in five U.S. adults and 37% of adults under 30 regularly source their news from social media influencers. An analysis by Yale Climate Connections found that eight out of the ten most popular online shows spread false or misleading information about climate change. This analysis builds on findings by Media Matters for America, which points to a dominance of right-leaning influencers in digital media spaces, including podcasts and streaming shows.

The misinformation often follows a revised narrative that questions the efficacy of climate solutions and suggests climate change could be beneficial. Influencers like Jordan Peterson and Charlie Kirk frame concern about climate change as akin to adhering to a “pseudo-religion.” Kirk has been quoted saying, “Climate change is the wrapper around Marxism. You have Marxism at its core and you have climate change on the exterior. Climate change activism, environmentalism, pseudo-paganism—we call it a Trojan horse.”

This updated denial has extended into conspiracy claims, where some argue climate change is a government ploy to exert control over populations. Tortoise Media, a British news website, noted the merging of climate scepticism with COVID-19 scepticism, pointing out that some personalities crossing between both sceptic movements are the same. The site’s analysis, entitled “Hot Air,” tracked frequent accounts spreading climate misinformation across Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, and various blogs, observing increased prominence of narratives around government control.

The narrative has also been echoed by figures in the U.S. government. Energy Secretary Chris Wright told Fox Business that, “There’s pluses to global warming,” while EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin stated, “We are driving a dagger straight into the heart of the climate change religion.”

Financial backing has played a significant role in amplifying these voices. Media Matters found that about 60% of the top online shows promoting these views are right-leaning and have approximately five times the followers of their left-leaning counterparts. Conservative media companies like PragerU, which heavily promotes new climate denial themes, allocate nearly half of their budgets to marketing efforts. Wealthy political donors and families, including the Kochs, Mercers, Thiels, Murdochs, and Uihleins, have been identified as powerful backers of media that promotes climate denial.

A prime example is The Daily Wire, co-founded by Ben Shapiro, which commands a combined online following of 25 million. This multimedia platform, producing films, children’s content, and leading podcasts, was launched with significant funding from Texas fracking billionaires Dan and Farris Wilks, who reportedly invested $4.7 million.

These well-funded operations outpace the investments made by supporters of climate action, contributing to the growing reach and influence of climate misinformation campaigns.

The Energy Mix is reporting on this evolving landscape of climate misinformation, illustrating the challenges posed by the changing tactics and substantial resources behind modern climate denial narratives.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://counterhate.com/research/google-climate-change-disinformation-youtube-videos/> - This study reveals that YouTube profits from ads on climate disinformation videos, with 200 identified videos containing misinformation amassing 73.8 million views, indicating a significant spread of misleading climate content on the platform.
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