As Republicans Take Control Of the House, Natural Resources Committee And House Leadership Hire Oil Lobbyists To Fill Top Staff Positions

SUMMARY: As the Republicans majority begins the new Congress, former oil industry lobbyists will have new and growing influence as top staffers for congressmen on key committees.

Incoming House Natural Resources Chairman Brue Westerman’s new Chief of Staff Nancy Peele is a longtime oil lobbyist. She’ll be joining eight other former oil industry lobbyists in high-ranking staff positions on the Natural Resources Committee and in conference leadership.

House Natural Resources Committee

Rep. Bruce Westerman’s new Chief of Staff Nancy Peele is an oil lobbyist. Peele’s notable clients include:

- In 2015, Peele lobbied Congress on behalf of Taylor Energy Co. LLC, an oil company liable for causing the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, the “longest running oil spill in U.S. history.”

- From 2010 through 2014, Peele represented Hercules Offshore Inc, a gas company that caused a “massive blowout” and two day fire in the Gulf of Mexico.

- From 2012 to 2015, Peele lobbied on behalf of Hornbeck Offshore Services to ensure that they continued to profit off the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

- Peele lobbied on behalf of Freeport-McMoRan Energy LLC, an oil and mining company that paid up to $100 million to settle accusations that it polluted and destroyed parts of Louisiana’s coastline.

Rep. Pete Stauber’s Chief of Staff Desiree Koetzle is married to a current API and former Chevron lobbyist. Desiree Koetzle herself worked as a Koch Industries lobbyist until 2009.

Rep. Tom Tiffany’s Chief of Staff Jason Bauknecht is a lobbyist who represented Koch-backed Americans for Prosperity.

Rep. Tom Tiffany’s Legislative Director and Deputy Chief of Staff Mac Zimmerman also lobbied Congress on behalf of Koch-backed Americans for Prosperity.

Rep. Paul Gosar’s Communications Director Anthony Foti lobbied Congress on behalf of Americans for Affordable Electricity and Fluor Corporation, an oil and gas engineering company.

Rep. Pete Stauber’s new Legislative Assistant Shawn Rusterholz spent the last seven years working in government affairs for Chevron and API, including two years as a registered API...
Rep. John Curtis’ Legislative Assistant Grace Bellone is a former energy lobbyist who represented Vistra Energy Corp. and Tallgrass Energy Partners LP.

**House Leadership**

Majority Leader Steve Scalise’s Chief of Staff Megan Bel Miller came to Scalise’s office straight out of working as an oil and gas lobbyist. Before becoming Scalise’s Chief of Staff in 2017, Bel Miller lobbied Congress on behalf of National Oceans Industry Association (NOIA), a group representing the offshore oil and gas industry. Bel Miller advocated for polluting industry interests on numerous conservation issues, including the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and offshore leasing.

Majority Whip Tom Emmer’s new Policy Director Ian Foley is an energy and mining lobbyist. In 2022, Foley lobbied Congress on behalf of the uranium mining industry and public utilities with oil and gas portfolios. Foley’s clients include:

- **Uranium Producers of America**: a group representing the interests of the uranium mining industry
- **Washington Gas**: a public utility company
- **Cummins Inc**: a power company
- **Total Containment**: a pipeline leak detection and mitigation company
- **Hudson Technologies**: a company invested in hydrofluorocarbon refrigerants

Bruce Westerman’s New Chief Of Staff Nancy Peele Spent Five Years As An Oil Lobbyist, Including Representing The Company Liable For The “Longest Running Oil Spill In US History.”

**Nancy Peele Is Representative Bruce Westerman’s Chief Of Staff, As Of January 2023.**

Since January 2023, Nancy Peele Serves As Bruce Westerman’s Chief Of Staff. [Legistorm, accessed 01/10/23]

**Nancy Peele Spent At Least Five Years As An Oil Lobbyist Representing Companies Responsible For Major Oil And Gas Spills, And Others Who Profited Off The Environmental Damage.**

Nancy Peele Worked As An Oil Lobbyist From 2010 Through 2015. [Legistorm, accessed 01/10/23]

Nancy Peele Lobbied On Behalf Of Taylor Energy Co. LLC, A Company Found Liable For The "Longest Running Oil Spill In US History."

Nancy Peele Lobbied On Behalf Of Taylor Energy Co. LLC In 2015. [Legistorm, accessed 01/10/23]


Taylor Energy Co. LLC Paid Over $43 Million And Transferred A $432 Million Decommissioning Trust Fund For Its Liability For The Gulf Of Mexico Oil Spill, The “Longest Running Oil Spill In US History.” “Taylor Energy Company LLC (Taylor Energy), a Louisiana oil and gas company, has agreed to turn over all its remaining assets to the United States upon liquidation to resolve its liability for the oil spill at its former Gulf of Mexico offshore oil production facility — the source of the longest-running oil spill in U.S. history, ongoing since 2004. Under the proposed consent decree, Taylor Energy will transfer to the Department of the Interior (DOI) a $432 million trust fund dedicated to plugging the subsea oil wells, permanently decommissioning the facility, and remediating contaminated soil. The consent decree further requires Taylor Energy to pay over $43 million for civil penalties, removal costs and natural resource damages (NRD).” [U.S. Department of Justice, 12/22/21]


Peele Lobbied On “Regulatory Proposals To Address GOM Oil Spill” In Consideration Of Hercules Offshore’s Interest In “Shallow Water Drilling Operations In GOM.” “19. Interest of each foreign entity in the specific issues listed on line 16 above: Have shallow water drilling operations in GOM. [...] 16. Specific lobbying issues: Regulatory proposals to address GOM oil spill to address energy development.” [U.S. House Of Representatives Lobbying Report, 04/22/13]

Hercules Offshore Inc Caused A “Massive Blowout” And Resulting 2-Day Fire In July 2013 At Its Shallow Water Gas Well In The Gulf Of Mexico. “But the year also renewed concerns about the safety of offshore drilling when Houston-based Hercules Offshore reported a massive blowout at one of its natural gas wells in July. What happened: A jack-up rig owned by Hercules Offshore of Houston caught fire on July 23 after a blowout occurred during drilling operations at a natural gas well located 55 miles off the Louisiana coast in the Gulf of Mexico. All of the 44 workers on the rig were safely evacuated, but the fire raged for two days before the well stopped flowing.” [NOLA, 12/24/13]


- The Jones Act Ensures That US-Built, -Owned, And -Crewed Vessels Are Prioritized In Addressing Oil Spills In Domestic Waters. “The "Jones Act" refers to several provisions of federal law that reserve certain maritime services within American domestic waters for U.S.-built, U.S.-owned, and U.S.-crewed vessels. [...] Pertinent to the Gulf oil spill, the law already includes well-established provisions that allow the use of foreign vessels when no American vessel is available.” [The Maritime Executive, 01/20/11]

Hornbeck Offshore Services Saw Increased Profits Due To The Gulf Of Mexico Oil Spill. “Hornbeck Offshore Services said Thursday that its earnings climbed during the third quarter, in part because the company's vessels were busy assisting with oil spill response efforts in the Gulf of Mexico. Hornbeck's fleet of offshore supply vessels stayed busier and collected higher daily rental rates because of oil spill-related demand, Chief Financial Officer James Harp Jr. said
in a conference call with analysts. As many as 15 of the company’s vessels were handling oil spill work during the peak of the response in the third quarter.” [NOLA, 11/04/10]

**Peele Lobbied On Behalf Of Freeport-McMoRan Energy LLC, An Oil And Gas Company That Paid Up To $100 Million To Settle Allegations That It Polluted And Destroyed Parts Of Louisiana’s Coastline.**

Nancy Peele Lobbied On Behalf Of Freeport-McMoRan Energy LLC In 2012. [Legistorm, accessed 01/10/23]

**Freeport-McMoRan Agreed To Pay Up To $100 Million To Settle Lawsuits Alleging That The Company Polluted And Destroyed Parts Of Louisiana’s Coastline.** “An oil company accused of polluting and destroying parts of Louisiana’s quickly-dissolving coastline has agreed to a multi-million dollar settlement, a potential watershed moment that could help the state combat land loss and lead similarly accused energy titans to follow suit. Freeport-McMoRan is one of 98 oil and gas companies named in 42 lawsuits seeking reparations for environmental damage. Six years after the first suits were filed by several coastal Louisiana parishes, Freeport-McMoRan is the first to settle. [...] Freeport-McMoRan did not admit liability but has agreed to pay up to $100 million, much of which could be reimbursed by environmental credits, said Linda Hayes, the company’s vice president of communications.” [The Daily Advertiser, 10/21/19]

**Desiree Koetzle, Rep. Pete Stauber’s Chief Of Staff And Former Oil Lobbyist, Is Married To A Lobbyist For API And Chevron.**

**Rep. Pete Stauber’s Chief Of Staff Is Desiree Koetzle, Formerly Desiree Westby.**


Desiree Koetzle, Formerly Desiree Westby, Married William Koetzle. “Wedding Montage for The Wedding of Mr. William Koetzle & Miss Desiree Anne Westby” [Youtube, 05/22/12]

**Before Joining The Public Sector, Desiree Koetzle Worked As A Federal Affairs Representative And Lobbyist For Koch Industries.**

**Desiree Koetzle Worked As A Federal Affairs Representative For Koch Industries Inc.** “Desiree Koetzle ’02, PPF ’07, is the chief of staff for U.S. Representative Pete Stauber of Minnesota, having perviously served as deputy chief of staff for U.S. Representative Erik Paulsen of Minnesota. Desiree spent six years in the private sector working as a federal affairs representative at Koch Industries and as a government relations analyst at Blank Rome Government Relations. ” [TFAS.org, 01/04/23]


Desire Westby Worked As A Lobbyist For Koch Companies, Public Sector, LLC While The Company Reported $1,490,000 In Lobbying Activities In 1st Quarter 2009. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, 01/18/11]

Desire Westby Worked As A Lobbyist For Koch Industries Inc. While The Company Reported $7,720,000 In Lobbying Activities In 4th Quarter 2008. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, 01/19/09]

Desire Westby Worked As A Lobbyist For Koch Industries Inc. While The Company Reported $3,630,000 In Lobbying Activities In 3rd Quarter 2008. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, 10/17/08]

Desire Westby Worked As A Lobbyist For Koch Industries Inc. While The Company Reported $1,930,000 In Lobbying Activities In 2nd Quarter 2008. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, 07/21/08]

Desire Westby Worked As A Lobbyist For Koch Industries Inc. While The Company Reported $1,850,000 In Lobbying Activities In 1st Quarter 2008. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, 04/21/08]

2005-2006: Desiree Westby Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Koch Industries. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, 02/13/07; 08/02/06; 02/27/06]

Desiree Koetzle Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of The Oil & Gas Industry, Among Other Polluting Groups.

2003-2006: Desiree Koetzle, Formerly Desiree Westby, Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, accessed 01/19/23]

2003-2005: Desiree Westby Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Dredging Contractors Of America. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, accessed 01/19/23]
2004-2005: Desiree Westby Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Equistar Chemicals LP. [Senate Lobbying Disclosures, 02/27/06; 02/25/05; 08/12/05]

**Desiree Koetzle’s Husband William Koetzle Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of American Petroleum Institute And Chevron USA Inc.**


- William “Bill” Koetzle Works As API’s Senior VP Of Government Affairs. “Bill Koetzle serves as senior vice president of Government Affairs, leading advocacy efforts in Congress, the Administration and federal agencies on industry priority issues. [API, accessed 01/19/23]


- William Koetzle Spent A Decade Working At Chevron In Political Affairs. “Before joining API, Koetzle spent a decade at Chevron, managing the company’s legislative, regulatory and political affairs, including the development of the company’s policy positions and advocacy strategy to achieve top priorities. “ [API, accessed 01/19/23]

**Desiree And William Koetzle Are Married.**

William Koetzle Is Married To Desiree Koetzle, Formerly Desiree Westby. “Wedding Montage for The Wedding of Mr. William Koetzle & Miss Desiree Anne Westby” [Youtube, 05/22/12]

**Tom Tiffany’s Chief Of Staff Is Former Koch-Backed Lobbyist Jason Bauknecht.**


2020-Present: Jason Bauknecht Serves As Rep. Tom Tiffany’s Chief Of Staff. [Legistorm, accessed 01/17/23]

**Before Joining Rep. Tiffany’s Office, Bauknecht Worked As A Lobbyist For Koch-Backed Americans For Prosperity.**

Americans For Prosperity Is Backed By Conservative Billionaires David And Charles Koch. “Americans for Prosperity, the political nonprofit formed with the backing of conservative billionaires David and Charles Koch, gave a $100,000 grant to another dark money group linked to the Kochs in 2012, according to tax forms filed Friday with the IRS.” [Open Secrets, 11/15/13]

**Rep. Tom Tiffany’s Legislative Director And Deputy Chief Of Staff Is Former Koch-Backed Lobbyist Mac Zimmerman.**

**Mac Zimmerman Works As Rep. Tiffany’s Deputy Chief Of Staff And Legislative Director.**

2020-Present: Mac Zimmerman Is Rep. Tom Tiffany’s Legislative Director And Deputy Chief Of Staff. [Legistorm, accessed 01/19/23]

**Mac Zimmerman Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Americans For Prosperity, A Koch-Backed Group**

2014-2020: Mac Zimmerman Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Americans For Prosperity. [Senate Lobbying Disclosure, accessed 01/19/23]

Americans For Prosperity Is Backed By Conservative Billionaires David And Charles Koch. “Americans for Prosperity, the political nonprofit formed with the backing of conservative billionaires David and Charles Koch, gave a $100,000 grant to another dark money group linked to the Kochs in 2012, according to tax forms filed Friday with the IRS.” [Open Secrets, 11/15/13]

**Rep. Paul Gosar’s Communications Director Is Former Energy Lobbyist Anthony Foti.**

**Anthony Foti Works As Rep. Paul Gosar’s Communications Director.**

Jan 2021-Present: Anthony Foti Works As Rep. Paul Gosar’s Communications Director. [Legistorm, accessed 01/18/23]

**Anthony Foti Lobbied For Oil & Gas Interests As A Congressional Lobbyist.**

Anthony Foti Lobbied The U.S. Senate On Behalf Of Americans For Affordable Electricity. [Senate Lobbying Disclosure, 02/14/01]

Shawn Rusterholz, Rep. Pete Stauber’s New Legislative Assistant, Spent The Last Seven Years Working As An Oil Lobbyist For API And Chevron.

Rep. Pete Stauber Hired Shawn Rusterholz As His New Legislative Assistant.


Rusterholz Worked On Government Affairs For API And Chevron For Seven Years.


Rusterholz Worked As An API Lobbyist.

2021-2022: Rusterholz Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of API. [House Lobbying Disclosures, accessed 01/19/23]


In 2022, Grace Bellone Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Energy Companies.

Grace Bellone Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Vistra Corporate Services Company FKA Vistra Energy Corp. [House Lobbying Report, 04/20/22]

Grace Bellone Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of Tallgrass Energy Partners LP. [House Lobbying Report, 05/04/22]
Before Serving As Steve Scalise’s Chief Of Staff, Megan Bel Miller Lobbied For An Offshore Oil & Gas Industry Association As Their VP Of Government Affairs.

Megan Bel Miller Is Steve Scalise’s Chief Of Staff.


Beginning In May 2015, Megan Bel Miller Worked As Vice President For Government And Political Affairs At NOIA. “The National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA) has promoted Megan Bel Miller to Vice President for Government and Political Affairs. She will lead NOIA's Congressional relations and Political Action Committee. Megan joined the NOIA staff in May 2013 as Senior Director, Government & Political Affairs. “Megan’s unparalleled Hill and legislative experience combined with her knowledge of the Gulf of Mexico and the offshore energy industry have greatly benefitted the NOIA membership and staff over the past two years. She has helped further our mission to promote offshore energy access,” said NOIA President Randall Luthi.” [NOIA, 05/20/15] –

Megan Bel Miller Worked As Senior Director, Government And Political Affairs For National Ocean Industries Association Beginning In 2013. “National Ocean Industries Association (May 2013-2016) Senior Director, Government and Political Affairs” [Legistorm, accessed 01/10/23]

The National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA) Serves Offshore Oil And Gas Industry Interests. “The National Ocean Industries Association – NOIA – serves the offshore oil, gas, wind and ocean minerals industries and provides tremendous value to its members by uniting and advancing the business and professional interests of its members and the industry.” [NOIA, accessed 01/10/23]

Megan Bel Miller Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of The Offshore Oil & Gas Industry On Numerous Environmental Issues, Including The Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, And Offshore Leasing.

2013-2016: Megan Bel Miller Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of NOIA. [U.S. House Of Representatives Lobbying Disclosures, accessed 01/10/23]


Ian Foley, Tom Emmer’s Policy Director, Represents Polluting And Extractive Industries As A Congressional Lobbyist.

Ian Foley Is Majority Whip Tom Emmer’s New Policy Director.

2023-Present: Ian Foley Is Rep. Tom Emmer’s Policy Director. “Ian Foley will be policy director. Foley was the legislative director for former Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.).” [PunchBowl News, 12/14/22]

Ian Foley Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of The Oil, Gas, Energy, Green Tech, And Mining Industries.

Foley Lobbied Congress On Behalf Of...


... **Cummins Inc, A Power Company.** “General description of client’s business or activities” Designer, manufacturer, distributor, and servicer of power solutions.” [U.S. House Lobbying Report, 11/14/22]

... **Total Containment, A Pipeline Leak Detection And Mitigation Company.** “Specific lobbying issues: Educate policymakers on new technology for pipeline leak detection, mitigation, and prevention.” [U.S. House Lobbying Report, 07/20/22]

... **Hudson Technologies, A Company Invested In Hydrofluorocarbon Refrigerants** “Specific lobbying issues: Educate Members of Congress and Administration officials about reclaimed refrigerants and issues related to the implementation of The American Innovation and Manufacturing Act (P.L. 116-260), including ensuring reclaimers have access to virgin HFC components.” [U.S. House Lobbying Report, 10/20/22]


... **Geothermal Exchange Organization, A Company Invested In Geothermal Energy.** “Specific Lobbying Issues: Discuss benefits of geothermal heat pumps and innovative financing models; monitor the Administrations invocation of the Defense Production Act for clean energy.” [U.S. House Lobbying Report, 10/20/22]


... Waev Inc., An EV Manufacturer. “General description of client’s business or activities: Manufacturer of low speed electric vehicles” [U.S. House Lobbying Report, 09/22/22]