

October 10, 2024

The Honorable John G. Roberts, Jr.
Chief Justice Supreme Court of the United States
1 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20543

Dear Chief Justice Roberts:

We write to you in response to a recently exposed conflict of interest for Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, in the ***Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colo*** case, that the Court will decide this term. Justice Gorsuch's close relationship with Philip F. Anschutz, which includes having served as outside counsel to Anschutz's sprawling business empire, requires Justice Gorsuch to recuse from this case as Anschutz's businesses could financially benefit from how the case is decided.

Over the past few years, frequent reports of failures to disclose extravagant gifts, influence-peddling in elite circles, and ethical violations among justices have caused public trust in the Supreme Court to plummet to record lows. And yet, there are still too many cozy relationships between the justices and billionaires whose interests often come before the High Court. Each new ethics violation deepens the legitimacy crisis already plaguing your Supreme Court. Justice Gorsuch's recusal in the ***Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colo.*** case is paramount to a Court with high ethical standards.

This case could weaken one of the few avenues for challenging industry-backed projects with environmentally devastating consequences—likely benefiting Anschutz, whose company's drilling proposals have required Environmental Assessments at least **86 times**. Anschutz's company standing to benefit mightily from the Court striking down this regulation, Justice Gorsuch's long-standing ties with Anschutz, and his history of recusing himself from cases involving Anschutz and his companies must not be ignored. The blatant conflict of interest is clear—therefore, we urge you to take appropriate action to ensure Justice Gorsuch recuses himself from this case.

Conflicts of Interest Involving Justice Neil Gorsuch

Justice Neil Gorsuch's well-known ties to Phillip F. Anschutz, the company itself, and Anschutz's potential financial gain from the upcoming case ***Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colo.***, makes it clear that a recusal from this case is warranted.

Serving as former outside counsel to Anschutz and his companies, speaking at annual hunting retreats on Anschutz's estate, and acquiring an investment property along with Anschutz's business associates—among them, an Anschutz Exploration Corporation director—are just a few

of the concrete examples of professional and personal connections between Anschutz and Gorsuch.

A Financial Boon for Philip Anschutz and His Companies

Even more alarming are the financial benefits to the Anschutz Exploration Corporation should this case be decided in favor of the petitioners and result in a weakening of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA). The Anschutz Exploration Corporation essentially admits to this in the [amicus brief](#) filed on September 4, 2024, urging the Supreme Court to establish “appropriate limits on the scope of NEPA’s ‘effects’ analysis.”

This case would benefit Anschutz in two key ways. First, the proposed railway, in this case, will likely service Anschutz oil wells in the Uintah Basin. Greenlighting the construction will help to decrease the company’s freighting costs and thereby increase profit. Second, in rolling back NEPA, Anschutz will incur fewer regulatory costs, again driving up profits for his private oil company.

Conclusion

The cozy relationship between Philip F. Anschutz and Justice Gorsuch far surpasses the standard of “reasonably-questioned impartiality” for the federal recusal statute. This relationship that creates a conflict of interest is just the latest example of countless violations in the years-long Supreme Court ethics crisis. Lasting accountability and reform are needed to restore integrity back into the nation's highest Court.

Now is the time for action to ensure our Court is held to the highest standards of ethics and impartiality. Our democracy depends on it.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Respectfully,

Accountable.US
Action Together NEPA
Clean Elections Texas
CommonDefense.us
Courage California
DemCast USA
End Citizens United Action Fund
Free Speech For People
Greenpeace USA
Indivisible

Revolving Door Project
Stand Up America
Take Back the Court
People Power United