# Attorney General Adam Laxalt

Republican Adam Laxalt (DOB: 8/31/78) is the outgoing Attorney General of Nevada, a position he has held since 2014. Laxalt repeatedly used his position as Attorney General to challenge Obama administration environmental protections, including the Clean Power Plan and the designation of National Monuments. Laxalt initially supported the Bundys in their armed dispute with the Bureau of Land Management, referring to the family as “friends” in a 2014 press release; he later backtracked and said he would never support law breaking activity. Laxalt was heavily supported by the Koch brothers and other energy interests in his unsuccessful 2018 campaign for governor.

Key findings include:

**Laxalt Filed A Friend Of The Court Brief In Support Of More Road Building On Public Land.** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced the filing of a ‘friend of the court brief’ in a federal court dispute between environmental groups and Elko County. The AG's brief, supporting Elko County, addresses the historical understanding of what constitutes a public road under Nevada law. In a lawsuit against the rural county, environmental groups claim that the only way a public road could be created under Nevada law in the 19th century was by a county commission's affirmative action. The Attorney General's Office filed a brief explaining that this interpretation of the law is incorrect. ‘This public land access issue before the federal court is one of tremendous importance to all of Nevada, given that most of our state is federal public land,’ said Laxalt. ‘Public access is vital for many different important activities in Nevada, including recreation, ranching, mining and a host of other activities. On behalf of Nevada, I am committed to fighting for our access to public lands.’” [Attorney General Adam Laxalt Press Release, 3/17/15]

**Laxalt On The Endangered Species Act: “It’s Not Working For America, And It’s Not Working For Nevada.”** “Republican attorney general candidate Adam Laxalt said Wednesday that if he wins the Nov. 4 election, one of the first acts will be to sue the federal government over its management of the Endangered Species Act. While campaigning, Laxalt said he has traveled across the state three times ,and ranchers, farmers and others have told him that if the sage grouse is listed as an endangered species, it could devastate the state. Such a listing could set aside up to 1.5 million acres as protected habitat. He said he believes the federal government has overreached in enforcing the act and has stepped on the rights of Nevada and other states in dictating how to deal with various species. ‘It’s not working for America, and it’s not working for Nevada,’ Laxalt told the Review-Journal’s editorial board. ‘People are terrified.’” [Las Vegas Review-Journal, 9/4/14]

**Laxalt: “I Want To Work To File Some Lawsuits And Challenge The Authority To Designate The Sage Grouse As A Protected Species.”** “On public lands, Laxalt said there’s a growing consensus among attorneys general in western states they need to regain public land, like a state task force commissioned at the last state legislative session. As a former naval officer, Laxalt said he’ll look for solutions already out there and not reinvent the wheel, like following Utah’s lead on that issue. ‘Another good idea along those lines is the sage grouse. We have a delegation right now that is pretty united that we need to fight against this designation of the sage grouse, since it will take over huge sectors of our economy and as attorney general I want to work to file some lawsuits and challenge the authority to designate the sage grouse as a protected species,’ he said.” [Pahrump Valley Times, 7/30/14]

**Laxalt Opposed The Creation Of Gold Butte And Bears Ears National Monuments, Calling It A “Unilateral Land Grab.”** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt issued the following statement after the designation of two new national monuments: ‘Today, President Obama created two new national monuments in Nevada and Utah, setting aside a total of 1.65 million acres of land, without the support of Congress. This unilateral land grab is the latest attempt for the outgoing president to add another layer of unnecessary federal control to our State. Although I am not surprised by the president's actions, I am deeply disappointed at his last minute attempt to cement his environmental legacy by undermining local control of Nevada's communities, and damaging our jobs and economy.’” [Attorney General Adam Laxalt Press Release, 12/28/16]

## Endangered Species

**Laxalt: “I Want To Work To File Some Lawsuits And Challenge The Authority To Designate The Sage Grouse As A Protected Species.”** “On public lands, Laxalt said there’s a growing consensus among attorneys general in western states they need to regain public land, like a state task force commissioned at the last state legislative session. As a former naval officer, Laxalt said he’ll look for solutions already out there and not reinvent the wheel, like following Utah’s lead on that issue. ‘Another good idea along those lines is the sage grouse. We have a delegation right now that is pretty united that we need to fight against this designation of the sage grouse, since it will take over huge sectors of our economy and as attorney general I want to work to file some lawsuits and challenge the authority to designate the sage grouse as a protected species,’ he said.” [Pahrump Valley Times, 7/30/14]

* **Laxalt Promised To “Aggressively File Lawsuits Against Fish And Wildlife And The EPA Regarding The Sage Grouse.”** “On the issue of federal public lands that affect the economy of rural Nevada, Laxalt has promised to ‘aggressively file lawsuits against Fish and Wildlife and the EPA regarding the sage grouse.’ He noted that the Oklahoma attorney general has a filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the sage grouse listing effort.” [Mineral County Independent-News, 10/23/14]

**Laxalt On The Endangered Species Act: “It’s Not Working For America, And It’s Not Working For Nevada.”** “Republican attorney general candidate Adam Laxalt said Wednesday that if he wins the Nov. 4 election, one of the first acts will be to sue the federal government over its management of the Endangered Species Act. While campaigning, Laxalt said he has traveled across the state three times ,and ranchers, farmers and others have told him that if the sage grouse is listed as an endangered species, it could devastate the state. Such a listing could set aside up to 1.5 million acres as protected habitat. He said he believes the federal government has overreached in enforcing the act and has stepped on the rights of Nevada and other states in dictating how to deal with various species. ‘It’s not working for America, and it’s not working for Nevada,’ Laxalt told the Review-Journal’s editorial board. ‘People are terrified.’” [Las Vegas Review-Journal, 9/4/14]

* **Laxalt Said The Original Intent Of The ESA Was For States “To Fix Their Own Problems.”** “Laxalt said he probably would have Nevada join Oklahoma’s pending challenge of the government’s enforcement of the Endangered Species Act related to the prairie chicken and other animals but also file a separate, state-specific lawsuit. The intent of the act, which is more than four decades old, was to allow states ‘to fix their own problems,’ Laxalt contended, when a species is becoming endangered because of shrinking habitat or other issues. He said the lawsuit could question methods used in deciding if sage grouse should be listed as an endangered species. ‘These agencies oftentimes don’t have the answers,’ Laxalt said, adding the Environmental Protection Agency may have ‘gone too far’ in dictating to states. ‘Have they stepped beyond the statute?’” [Las Vegas Review-Journal, 9/4/14]

**Laxalt Filed A Friend Of The Court Brief In Support Of More Road Building On Public Land.** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced the filing of a ‘friend of the court brief’ in a federal court dispute between environmental groups and Elko County. The AG's brief, supporting Elko County, addresses the historical understanding of what constitutes a public road under Nevada law. In a lawsuit against the rural county, environmental groups claim that the only way a public road could be created under Nevada law in the 19th century was by a county commission's affirmative action. The Attorney General's Office filed a brief explaining that this interpretation of the law is incorrect. ‘This public land access issue before the federal court is one of tremendous importance to all of Nevada, given that most of our state is federal public land,’ said Laxalt. ‘Public access is vital for many different important activities in Nevada, including recreation, ranching, mining and a host of other activities. On behalf of Nevada, I am committed to fighting for our access to public lands.’” [Attorney General Adam Laxalt Press Release, 3/17/15]

**Months After Taking Office, Laxalt Filed Suit Challenging The Federal Government’s Sage Grouse Land Use Plan.** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt joined a suit on behalf of the state of Nevada challenging the federal government's greater sage-grouse land-use plan. In ten western states including Nevada, the federal plan withdraws more than ten million acres of federal land from public use. In Nevada alone, mineral exploration and development is barred on nearly three million acres. Additionally, the plan may result in significant restrictions on livestock grazing, resource development and public access on over sixteen million acres of public land in Nevada. ‘The federal government's one-size-fits-all sage-grouse plan will greatly hinder Nevada's growth and success, and have an adverse impact on Nevada's economy, affecting ranchers, mining exploration, new energy source development, recreation and everyone who works in these industries,’ said Laxalt. ‘While I appreciate and applaud all of the efforts that have been made to negotiate a favorable outcome for Nevada, and continue to hope that ongoing negotiations may result in a better plan for Nevada, my office, after careful legal analysis, has concluded that this suit is necessary to fully protect the interest of the state.’” [Rep. Mark Amodei Press Release, [10/22/15](http://amodei.house.gov/news-releases/attorney-general-laxalt-joins-broad-nevada-coalition-challenging-federal-sage-grouse-landuse-restrictions/)]

* **Laxalt Was Criticized By Republican Governor Brian Sandoval For Filing The Suit.** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt joined a federal lawsuit Thursday challenging new land use regulations to protect sage grouse, drawing a terse response from Gov. Brian Sandoval who said the state's top attorney was acting in his own ‘personal capacity’ and does not represent the state in the matter. Laxalt was quick to respond to the slap, calling the governor's statement ‘troubling’ and ‘wrong.’ ‘The state of Nevada has joined this lawsuit,’ Laxalt said, adding ‘the attorney general is the only constitutional officer authorized by Nevada to intervene or to appear in litigation about public lands in the name of the state.’ ‘The attorney general's office has done so,’ he said.” [Las Vegas Review-Journal, 10/22/15]
* **Laxalt Said He Filed Suit As A Way to Gain “A Lot More Leverage” Over The Federal Government.** “Laxalt noted he ran on the importance of the attorney general and realigning the balance of power between the federal government and state governments. He also pointed out he's not going at it alone, noting that nine counties determined that a lawsuit was necessary. ‘It's important that we use that litigation tool to make sure the federal government takes the states seriously,’ Laxalt said, adding that the states that sue have a ‘lot more leverage.’” [Las Vegas Review-Jounral, 10/23/15]

**Laxalt Alleged That Department Of Interior Employees Violated The Law By Meeting With Environmental Groups About The Sage Grouse.** “Attorney General Adam Laxalt is asking a federal court to rule in favor of the state’s and Elko County’s lawsuit over sage grouse, claiming that Department of Interior officials who called themselves “Grouseketeers” illegally met with environmental groups after the agency’s public comment period ended. In a release Tuesday afternoon, Laxalt’s office announced that the plaintiffs, which include nine counties as well as mining and ranching interests, had requested a summary judgment in the case involving land-use restrictions. ‘The state’s motion explains how the federal government has disregarded public involvement and other requirements in violation of federal law,’ stated the release. ‘For example, internal documents released by the federal agencies as part of the administrative record in the case have revealed that three U.S. Department of the Interior officials — who dubbed themselves the ‘Grouseketeers’ in internal correspondence — met with environmental groups after the public comment period had ended to gauge how those groups would agree to amendments created under the land-use plan.’” [Elko Daily Free Press, 4/5/16]

* **Laxalt Accused The Federal Government Of Catering to “Special Interest Environmental Groups.”** “The motion accuses unidentified officials of ignoring the concerns of staff who wanted a supplemental environmental impact statement, socioeconomic impact analysis and further scientific data to support the proposed land-use restrictions. ‘The federal government’s plan withdraws almost 3 million acres that Nevadans depend on for their economic livelihood,’ said Laxalt. ‘Before such a momentous decision is made, federal law clearly requires that the agencies carefully consider the concerns raised by the state and by the citizens of Nevada — not just special interest environmental groups. As we have shown in our briefing, the record demonstrates this was not done. The self-appointed federal ‘Grouseketeers’ mock all Nevadans and show their true agenda.’” [Elko Daily Free Press, 4/5/16]

**Laxalt Intervened In A Lawsuit To Oppose Listing The Bi-State Sage Grouse As Endangered** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt, with the backing of Gov. Brian Sandoval, filed a motion Friday to intervene in a lawsuit challenging the federal government’s decision not to list a population of sage grouse found along the Nevada-California border under the Endangered Species Act. Laxalt and Sandoval last year clashed over a different lawsuit involving the greater sage grouse, but agreed legal action was proper to fight the suit filed by environmental groups over the bistate sage grouse, which is a distinct population. In April 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined the bistate grouse did not need protection because coordinated conservation efforts between federal, state and local governments, as well as ranchers and others, had stabilized populations along the eastern Sierra front. Four environmental groups sued the federal government in U.S. District Court in San Francisco, challenging its decision not to list the bird. ‘Nevada has always made an effort to preserve, protect, manage and restore its diverse wildlife, and the state has moved to intervene in this suit to ensure the concerns and interests unique to Nevada are heard,’ Laxalt said in a statement.” [Las Vegas Review-Journal, 11/5/16]

**Laxalt Sued to Challenge Federal Rules Expanding The Definition Of “Critical Habitat.”** “Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt joined 17 other states in a lawsuit challenging new federal rules that broadly expand the definition of ‘critical habitat’ for endangered and threatened species. The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama against the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Secretary of Commerce and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. […] ‘As we have seen countless times, this Administration's novel rules reach well beyond anything Congress could have ever intended and will have adverse effects on individual states, businesses and families,’ said Laxalt. ‘In practice, these latest rules expand federal oversight to the point that the federal government could potentially designate an entire state or even multiple states as critical habitat for certain species. I will continue to protect our state from this type of unwarranted and burdensome federal overreach.’” [Attorney General Adam Laxalt Press Release, 11/29/16]

**Laxalt Supported Ryan Zinke’s Review Of The Sage Grouse Protection Plan.** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt, who had filed a lawsuit attempting to overturn the Interior Department's 2015 land use plan to protect greater sage grouse, is praising the recent decision by the Trump administration to review those plans. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke signed an order establishing an internal review team to evaluate federal and state sage grouse plans and report back to him in 60 days. He specifically called on the review team to consider local economic growth and job creation, as well as protection of the birds. […] Laxalt was quoted in a press release as saying, ‘My office remains dedicated to protecting the interests of Nevada and ensuring that federal agencies take our unique needs and concerns into account. We look forward to working with Secretary Zinke to develop a plan that protects the greater sage grouse in ways that recognize Nevada's expertise and commitment to this important issue, and that also preserves and expands Nevada jobs in sectors like mining and ranching. An intelligent sage grouse plan can do both successfully.’” [Elko Daily Free Press, 6/14/17]

* **Laxalt Applauded Zinke’s Decision To Reverse The 2015 Land Use Plan.** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt issued the following statement applauding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Decision to formally begin the process of revising its harmful and ill-considered 2015 sage grouse land-use plan amendments in Nevada. As the BLM explained in a press release, its review was necessitated by the outcome of the lawsuit in which the Attorney General's Office represented Nevada in challenging the BLM's 2015 plans: ‘I am gratified that the BLM has accepted our basic argument, which is that we can balance conservation of the sage grouse without injuring the economic lifeblood of Nevada's local communities. In our suit, we consistently urged that the BLM failed to properly take into account Governor Sandoval's well-supported and convincing comments about the many shortcomings of the 2015 plan. I am hopeful that the BLM is now ready to listen." Attorney General Laxalt also applauded the Bureau of Land Management's decision to cancel its Sagebrush Focal Area withdrawal application and the Interior Department's proposed withdrawal of 10 million acres of federal lands from mining activity in greater sage-grouse habitat in six states, including Nevada. The BLM's reason, consistent with the Attorney General Office's arguments in litigation, is that mining is not a significant threat to sage grouse habitat.” [Attorney General Adam Laxalt Press Release, 10/10/17]

## Mining

**Laxalt Filed A Motion Defending The Trump EPA’s Decision Not To Regulate Hardrock Mines.** “After the Environmental Protection Agency announced in December that it would not move forward on regulations for hardrock mines, six environmental groups took the agency to court last month, arguing that the decision could harm cleanups for mines throughout the U.S. On Friday, 14 states, including Nevada, entered the legal fray, filing a motion to intervene in the case over whether the environmental agency was meeting its congressional mandate to require financial assurances from mining operators to clean up pollution. The case is the latest in more than a decade of wrangling over the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, or CERCLA. In its decision last December, the EPA argued that the move would leave more power to states, like Nevada, which has bonding requirements for miners. Attorney General Adam Laxalt, the Republican candidate for governor, said that Nevada and the other states, led by Arizona and New Mexico, sought to defend ‘the EPA's deference.’ ‘The EPA's deference to Nevada's exiting regulations is a great example of cooperative federalism in action, which is why Nevada, along with so many other hardrock mining states, is intervening to defend the EPA's imminently [sic] reasonable decision,’ Laxalt said in a statement.” [Elko Daily Free Press, 6/19/18]

**Laxalt Claimed To Have “Mining In My Bones.”** “Republican candidate for governor Adam Laxalt cautioned against allowing one party to dominate the state's leadership. Statistics indicate that the Democratic Party will have a majority in the Assembly and Senate, and he urged the audience to elect a Republican governor to protect the mining industry. ‘I'm concerned that if we don't elect a Republican governor that we will see tax increases, regulatory increases, and I think you can particularly see that heading towards this industry,’ Laxalt said. ‘ … [I]f we do not have a check on that, I cannot imagine what happens to our economy. I can't imagine what a target this industry will be.’ He said the Democrats have a long list of proposals for the state that would be ‘incredibly expensive.’ ‘Where is this money going to come from?’ he asked. ‘I think mining is really legitimately a target, and I know mining has always felt like it could be a target. It's something that we should be concerned about.’ The candidate said he has ‘mining in his bones,’ with ancestors who mined, and turned to his record as attorney general for a history of support for mining.” [Mining Quarterly, September 2018]

## Public Lands

**April 2014: Laxalt Called the Bundys And Their Supporters “Friends” And Accused The BLM Of “Launching A Military-Style Invasion Against A Small Gold Butte Area Rancher.”** ““Like many Nevadans, I am disturbed by events that have transpired near Bunkerville. The men and women involved are ranchers, friends and fellow church-going residents of our state. These individuals appear to be peacefully asserting the fundamental truth that there are, in fact, Constitutional limits to the power of our federal government. In response, the BLM over-reached, launching a military-style invasion against a small Golden Butte area rancher. Meanwhile, the BLM simultaneously designated "First Amendment Areas" nearby. Our federal government derives its power through the liberty that each of us yield to it. Therefore, it should not unnecessarily use force to intimidate its citizens while simultaneously playing lip service to their right to free speech. It is my hope that cooler heads will prevail, that our laws and our Constitutional protections will be fully respected. I urge the BLM to reconsider its approach.” [Adam Laxalt Press Release, [4/11/14](https://www.ralstonreports.com/blog/dissecting-ags-debate-one-more-contentious-nevada-campaign-history)]

**April 2014: Laxalt Said The Bundy Standoff Was “Yet Another Example Of Why It’s Important For Nevadans to Gain More Control Over Our Lands.”** “And finally, this is yet another example of why it's important for Nevadans to gain more control over our lands and the decision-making process in how it is managed. When the federal government owns and regulates seven of every eight acres of our state, confrontations on bad policy, regulation and management are going to continue. It's how we ended up in the Jarbidge dispute, the fight over Yucca Mountain, numerous debates over endangered species protections and countless other battles. It is my hope that this matter before us today is resolved peacefully, while renewing Nevada's commitment to take further control over our lands and our state's destiny.” [Adam Laxalt Press Release, [4/11/14](https://www.ralstonreports.com/blog/dissecting-ags-debate-one-more-contentious-nevada-campaign-history)]

**October 2014: Laxalt Claimed That He Never Called Bundy A “Friend” And That He “Wouldn’t Support Someone That Broke The Law.”** “Ross Miller has flat-out lied about Bundy. I have never even mentioned once that I support Cliven Bundy. I’ve certainly never said that he’s my friend. I don’t know Cliven Bundy, and he’s trying to make this, take advantage of a hot button political situation and somehow try to stick me with this, and it’s just grossly irresponsible of him. I’ve issued one statement on that, and it was exactly what the Governor said which is the Federal Government should not create free speech zones and the Federal Government should not use force to retrieve cattle. Cliven Bundy broke the law. As the Attorney General, of course I wouldn’t support someone that broke the law. That’s the job of law enforcement to make sure, we make sure the law is enforced and people can’t break the law.” [Ralston Reports, [10/13/14](https://www.ralstonreports.com/blog/dissecting-ags-debate-one-more-contentious-nevada-campaign-history)]

**Laxalt Was The Only Dissent On A Conference Of Western Attorneys General Report Casting Doubt On A Utah Suit To Gain Control Of Millions Of Acres Of Federal Land.** “Nevada is the lone dissent on a report that cast doubt on Utah's push to gain control of millions of acres of federal land through the courts. Republican Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt says his office will continue to look for creative ways to fight against federal overreach, including on the public lands issue. The report from the Conference of Western Attorneys General points out that decisions by the Supreme Court and other federal courts put Utah's potential case on shaky legal ground. The conference is made up of attorneys general in 15 western states and three U.S. territories. Members voted 11-1 this summer to approve the report.” [Associated Press, 10/3/16]

**Laxalt Opposed The Creation Of Gold Butte And Bears Ears National Monuments, Calling It A “Unilateral Land Grab.”** “Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt issued the following statement after the designation of two new national monuments: ‘Today, President Obama created two new national monuments in Nevada and Utah, setting aside a total of 1.65 million acres of land, without the support of Congress. This unilateral land grab is the latest attempt for the outgoing president to add another layer of unnecessary federal control to our State. Although I am not surprised by the president's actions, I am deeply disappointed at his last minute attempt to cement his environmental legacy by undermining local control of Nevada's communities, and damaging our jobs and economy.’” [Attorney General Adam Laxalt Press Release, 12/28/16]

**Laxalt Called The BLM “An Enemy In Our State.”** “Even so, Laxalt has been supportive of much of the Bundys’ agenda. In a March appearance, he said that the BLM is ‘an enemy in our state.’ As attorney general, he joined in a federal lawsuit in 2015 over plans to protect the endangered sage grouse. His campaign website echoes calls from the Bundys to return control of federal land to the state. ‘I’ll also work with the federal government to ease restrictions on land use and access, and to push for the transfer of ownership of more of the lands within our borders,’ he writes.” [Mother Jones, [11/5/18](https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/11/will-ryan-bundy-elect-democrat-nevada-governor-steve-sisolak-adam-laxalt/)]

## Yucca Mountain

**Laxalt Opposed Building A Nuclear Waste Repostitory At Yucca Mountain.** “Nevadans have often been frustrated over the years by the federal government’s ownership of vast tracts of land, at least 85 percent of the state. The congressional delegation has been working on land deals that would allow swaps to protect some lands while developing others. Laxalt said he doesn’t know at this point whether there’s any legal remedy to pursue on public lands, especially because federal ownership was established in Nevada’s Constitution. When it comes to how land is used, however, that’s another matter. He said he is opposed to the federal government building a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain over the objections of most Nevadans and officials. He said he would back any state lawsuit to block its development. ‘I’m opposed to Yucca, and I plan on continuing the defense of the state,’ Laxalt said, adding there’s ‘no daylight’ between his position and other Nevada officials who have long fought the repository.” [Las Vegas Review-Journal, 12/8/14]

## Climate Change

**Laxalt Filed A Friend Of the Court Brief To Block The Clean Power Plan.** “Nevada's attorney general is endorsing a multi-state legal fight against President Barack Obama's plan to curtail greenhouse gas emissions with an opinion that says states have a right to decide pollution emission standards for themselves. Attorney General Adam Laxalt's friend-of-the-court filing in the case involving the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan was characterized by Gov. Brian Sandoval's office as a fellow Republican ‘simply offering his legal opinion.’ […] Laxalt said he believes the EPA is exceeding its statutory authority in efforts to implement Obama's plan. ‘We are repeatedly seeing more federal regulation that is less tied to the actual text of the laws that federal agencies claim is the basis for their rules,’ he said in a statement.” [Associated Press, 2/28/16]

**Laxalt Joined The Koch Brothers And Other Campaign Donors In An Attempt To Block An Investigation Into ExxonMobil’s Role In Denying Climate Change.** “Two years ago, Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt quietly enlisted the Silver State in a ferocious fight to keep fraud investigators from scrutinizing groups connected to some of his largest future campaign backers. Laxalt, the Republican nominee for Nevada governor, entered the fray after a 2015 investigative series by InsideClimate News prompted a multi-state investigation into ExxonMobil’s alleged role in downplaying climate change. A subpoena issued to the Irving, Tex.-based oil company also named several organizations funded by oil industry billionaires Charles and David Koch — the GOP megadonors behind groups that have since spent $2.5 million to support Laxalt’s governor campaign. Letters and legal briefs signed by Laxalt in 2016 condemned the inquiry as a political probe meant to stifle an ‘ongoing public policy debate’ over human-caused global warming.” [Reno Gazette Journal, [9/10/18](https://www.rgj.com/story/news/politics/2018/09/10/adam-laxalt-nevada-republican-nominee-exxon-mobil-koch-brothers-donor-foil/1203690002/)]

* **Laxalt Claimed He Opposed The Exxon Probe On Free Speech Grounds.** “Laxalt's office said in a statement that he objected to the Exxon probe on free speech grounds. The statement did not directly address questions about whether Laxalt's opposition to the investigation played any role in the campaign backing he has since received from Koch-funded organizations. ‘Attorney General Laxalt has a strong record of protecting Nevada’s natural resources and zealously protecting the integrity and public perception of the Office of the Attorney General,’ wrote office spokeswoman Monica Moazez. ‘The brief and the letter that Attorney General Laxalt joined expressly disavowed taking any position on global warming; they took a strong position against chilling speech.’” [Reno Gazette Journal, [9/10/18](https://www.rgj.com/story/news/politics/2018/09/10/adam-laxalt-nevada-republican-nominee-exxon-mobil-koch-brothers-donor-foil/1203690002/)]

**A Laxalt Spokesperson Aid He Believed Humans Play A Role In Climate Change, But Policymakers Must Take A “Reasonable Approach To These Things.”** “Laxalt said through a campaign spokesman that he believed humans play a role in climate change. It's important, he added, for policymakers to take a ‘reasonable approach to these things while protecting our jobs and the economy.’” [Reno Gazette Journal, [9/10/18](https://www.rgj.com/story/news/politics/2018/09/10/adam-laxalt-nevada-republican-nominee-exxon-mobil-koch-brothers-donor-foil/1203690002/)]

## Campaign Finance

**The Koch Brothers Spent $2.5 Million Supporting Laxalt’s 2018 Gubernatorial Campaign.** According to the Reno Gazette Journal, Koch-funded groups spent $2.5 million to support Laxalt’s governor campaign. [Reno Gazette Journal, 9/10/18]

**Laxalt Received $49,000 In Campaign Contributions From Energy Companies.** According to data from the National Institute on Money in Politics, Laxalt has received $49,000 from oil and gas and other energy companies since 2014. [Follow The Money, [accessed 12/18/18](https://www.followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=23597412)]

**Laxalt Received $21,800 In Campaign Contributions From Electric Utilities.** According to data from the National Institute on Money in Politics, Laxalt has received $21,800 from electric utilities since 2014. [Follow The Money, [accessed 12/18/18](https://www.followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=23597412)]

**Laxalt Received $17,550 In Campaign Contributions From Mining Companies.** According to data from the National Institute on Money in Politics, Laxalt has received $17,550 from mining interests since 2014. [Follow The Money, [accessed 12/18/18](https://www.followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=23597412)]