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## ENVIRONMENT

# Damning New Harvard Study Confirms Exxon Knew It Was Destroying the Planet All Along

*The world's largest publicly owned oil company has "officially run out of excuses."*

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COMMENTS

ExxonMobil misled the public on what it knew about [climate change](#) and its link to fossil fuels, according to a groundbreaking new analysis of the company's internal and external communications.



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In a [study](#) published Tuesday in the journal Environmental Research Letters, Harvard postdoctoral fellow Geoffrey Supran and professor Naomi Oreskes reviewed nearly 200 communications on climate change from the oil giant, including scientific research, internal company memos and paid editorial features in the New York Times.

The analysis showed a "quantifiable discrepancy" between internal and external communications, with 81 percent of external advertisements casting doubt on the link between human activity and climate change despite 80 percent of internal communications acknowledging climate [science](#).

"Even while Exxon Mobil scientists were contributing to climate science and writing reports that explained it to their bosses, the company was paying for advertisements that told a very different tale," Supran and Oreskes wrote in a [New York Times op-ed](#) on the study.

As reported by the [Los Angeles Times](#):

"The study may be especially timely now, because a coalition of state attorneys general and the [Securities and Exchange Commission](#) are investigating whether the company lied to the public and investors about what it knew about the dangers of climate change ...

The study also involves research and public statements issued by the company while [Rex Tillerson](#), the current secretary of state, was a senior executive. Tillerson isn't mentioned in the paper, but he became a production general manager in 1999, president and a director in 2004, and chairman and chief executive in 2006."

[Greenpeace USA](#) climate liability campaigner Naomi Ages said that "Exxon has officially run out of excuses."

She explained how "this peer-reviewed study from Harvard is just the latest piece of evidence indicating that the largest oil company in the world knew about the risks of climate change, but concealed them from the public and shareholders."

"State attorneys general dedicated to protecting people and the environment from recent assaults should act now to hold polluters accountable for the biggest crisis facing humanity," Ages continued.

"The pressure on the parties most responsible for climate change will continue, from investors who recognize the economic risks, to attorneys general in Massachusetts and New York, to the majority of the people in this country who know we need action on climate change."