

# JOHN MCCAIN'S "GREEN" CREDENTIALS WERE DEVELOPED BY AN ACTIVE ENERGY LOBBYIST

Of the dozens of lobbyists that work on John McCain's campaign, one already got nabbed in McCain's recent "conflict of interest vetting for everyone but my wife" initiative: Eric Burgeson (though the NYT also reports that Tom Loeffler, Fundraising Chair, "was expected to give up his position to comply with the new rules"—presumably that'll happen once Loeffler has finalized the next round of \$30,000 a person fundraising dinners).

One lobbyist out of dozens. Why was Eric Burgeson, an advisor on energy and environmental issues, so much more of a problem for McCain than all the other lobbyists working on his campaign?

Burgeson's recent job history looks like a wildly revolving door taking him from the White House, to the Department of Energy, and then into lobbying (I'm still trying to figure out whether Burgeson played a part in Dick's Energy Task Force):

October 2006 to present: Barbour Griffith & Rogers, Vice President, Energy and Environment

April 2005 to October 2006: Chief of Staff, Department of Energy

November 2004 to April 2005: Special Assistant to the President and Associate Director of the Office of Presidential Personnel, White House

May 2004 to November 2004: Deputy Chief of Staff and White House Liaison, DOE

January 2001 to May 2004: Associate Director in the Office of Cabinet Affairs in the White House, Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary of Energy and Senior Legislative Advisor in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

1999 to 2001: Lobbyist for Mercury group, representing (among others) BP Amoco, Lockheed Martin, and the NRA

His 2008 first quarter lobbying for BGR offers more insight into the conflicts Burgeson represented for McCain:

Breakthrough Fuel, energy and environment, new client (no quarterly reports)

Coal 2 Liquid, liquid coal, includes Senate lobbying

Contractors International Group on Nuclear Liability, IAEA Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, includes Senate lobbying

Deloitte Consulting, procurement of technology and systems management, includes Senate lobbying

Energy Enterprise Solutions, IT Management, includes Senate lobbying (more background)

Flambeau River Biorefinery, energy and budget, includes Senate lobbying (more background)

Forest County Potawatami Community, tribal affairs, includes Senate lobbying (more background)

Kurdistan Regional Government, foreign relations, includes Senate lobbying (and Presidential and NSC lobbying)

MLBA Services, insurance reform, includes Senate lobbying

MPI Corporate Holdings, business development, US Mint

Materials Processing Corporation, electronics recycling, includes Senate lobbying (more background)

02 Diesel Company, renewable energy, includes Senate lobbying (more background)

Qioptiq, defense issues, includes Senate lobbying (more background)

Southern Company Services, climate change, energy independence, includes Senate lobbying (more background)

WE Energies, climate change, electric utilities, and energy independence, includes Senate lobbying (more background)

In other words, one of the campaign advisors who has cultivated McCain's "green" image has, at the same time, been representing companies from the renewable energy, nuclear energy, and liquid coal industries. Though lobbyist declaration forms don't specify which Senators Burgeson has been lobbying, it would have been hard for Burgeson to avoid the former Chair of the Commerce Committee—especially since he was sitting with him on the Straight Talk for Lobbyists Express. Which is why I find Burgeson's answer on the influence of special interests—speaking as McCain's advisor—to be so amusing:

**Renville, Minn.:** While I support ethanol and believe that it is a valuable first step, I do not believe that the criticism of subsidies for ethanol is fair. I gladly would support no subsidies or tax breaks for ethanol if the same were done for the oil industry. I cannot believe anyone is strong enough to stand up to the oil industry. Does Sen. McCain believe that this is

possible?

**Eric Burgeson:** You are right, powerful interests in Washington, DC are difficult to stand up to. **But if there is anyone in Washington who can do it, it is Senator McCain who has built his career and reputation standing up to special interests.** As for subsidies, Senator McCain has a clear position that he opposes subsidies, not just ethanol subsidies, but all subsidies. [my emphasis]

That's right. McCain stands up to all the special interests—unless they work on his campaign staff.

As an added bonus, I like that McCain, until he decided the lobbyist schtick was ruining his image, had a lobbyist for a Potawatami tribe working for him who, with one other person, billed \$80,000 in the first quarter of this year. It seems John McCain's energy policy was being run by the second coming of Jack Abramoff.