

Pennsylvania County Sues Oil Companies over Climate Change

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On March 25, 2024, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, filed a complaint in the Bucks County Court of Common Pleas against BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Phillips 66, ExxonMobil, Shell, and the American Petroleum Institute, alleging that the companies deceived the public about the dangers of fossil fuel pollution and the role it has played in increasingly severe, damaging weather. *Bucks Cnty. v. BP P.L.C.*, No. 2024-01836-0000 (Pa. Ct. Common Pleas filed Mar. 25, 2024).

Bucks County Commissioner Vice Chair, Bob Harvie, said in a press release that the complaint, the first of its kind in Pennsylvania, “seeks to shift the financial burden of the climate crisis from the taxpayers of Bucks County to the companies responsible for creating the crisis.” See [Press Release](#), Bucks Cnty., “Bucks County Takes on Big Oil in Climate Crisis Lawsuit” (Mar. 25, 2024). The complaint makes many allegations against the defendants, including a claim that the companies knew about the harmful effects of fossil fuels, but did nothing to mitigate the danger, comparing them to tobacco companies that advertised low-tar and light cigarettes as healthy alternatives to regular cigarettes. The County claims that the companies affirmatively concealed those harms by engaging in a campaign of deception to increase the use of those products.

The County also claims that the companies could have chosen to facilitate a lower-carbon future, but chose corporate profits and continued deceit. The complaint also includes claims regarding misleading advertisements that portrayed the defendants as climate-friendly energy companies and accuses the companies of exacerbating the cost of adapting to and mitigating the effects of the climate crisis. As of the time of this report, the defendant companies have not filed a response.

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