

## CAAD Briefing Note

### Electric Vehicle disinformation attracting millions of views on social media during COP27

*Electric vehicle (EV) disinformation is among the top performing disinformation content being picked up by the Climate Action Against Disinformation (CAAD) coalition's dashboard [1].*

Climate Action Against Disinformation ([CAAD](#)) - a global coalition of 50+ nonprofit organisations - has been monitoring and tracking emerging trends threatening domestic climate action and wider negotiations at COP27. Its Intelligence Unit has identified that one of the most-shared and most viewed posts out of thousands of posts from hundreds of accounts since COP27 began on 6 November, is a video from former journalist and climate denier John Stossel [2] discussing supposed "inconvenient facts" about EVs.

**In just a fortnight this video racked up 850k views / 62k likes on YouTube, 723k views / 25k interactions on FB, and 911k view / 21k like on Twitter [3].** Two more of Stossel's posts were among the 10 most widely shared Facebook posts in the CAAD Intelligence Unit's dataset for the last two weeks.

The first in a series, **the video features Mark Mills of the Manhattan Institute, who Stossel fails to disclose has received over \$1.3 million from Koch foundations since 2014** - see tax filings of [Charles Koch Foundation](#) and [Charles Koch Institute](#) for further detail. John Stossel's brother Thomas is also a former senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

The 5-minute segment is rife with already-debunked disinformation. Mills claims that it takes mining "500,000 pounds" of minerals to produce an EV battery, a point that has been comprehensively fact-checked by [AFP](#) and [USA Today](#).

He also alleges that the adoption of 500 million EVs would only "reduce world oil consumption by about 10%." However, his maths doesn't seem to add up. There are roughly [19 million zero-emission vehicles](#) on the road (nearly all battery-electric, but a few fuel cell) avoiding almost 1.7 million barrels of oil use per day in 2022. That's equivalent to 3.8% of road fuel demand, or around 1.7% of total daily oil consumption. Therefore, 500 million EVs would lower world oil consumption by much more than 10%.

Climate advocates are not arguing that EVs alone would "end the use of oil", and are well aware of oil's use outside the road transport sector. Nonetheless, strawman arguments are a well-worn disinformation technique known as setting "impossible expectations."

The video's suggestions as to the embedded carbon in an EV's construction are far higher than neutral, quality data on this topic. Argonne National Laboratory produced a model and have a whole

page set up to do exactly this calculation. They found that "EVs generally emit far less carbon over a 12-year lifespan."

Even on a coal-heavy grid, they find, EVs are better for the environment than diesel or petrol cars, because they are so much more efficient and use less total energy to travel the same distance.

IHS Markit, one of the highest-regarded independent data providers to the auto industry itself, comes out with very similar results to the Argonne National Laboratory.

The Union of Concerned Scientists found that no matter where in the US, an average EV is cleaner than an average gas car, and for 90% of Americans the average EV is better than even the most efficient gas alternative.

In addition to social media amplification, the discussions from the video are being circulated as text via the Koch-funded disinfo media system, with Reason, the Daily Caller and the Daily Signal all publishing the piece as op-eds.

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

- 1) CAAD - a global coalition of leading climate and anti-disinformation organisations - is working to minimise false, misleading, and unscientific narratives in public life and its attempts to jeopardise the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement at both the national and international levels. For the second year running, CAAD has established a real-time monitoring unit to track emerging trends threatening domestic climate action and wider negotiations at COP27 as 20,000 delegates descend on Sharm el-Sheikh from 6-18 November. **This briefing is a product of the coalition's regular bulletin - COP, LOOK, LISTEN - which you can [sign up to here](#).**
- 2) During COP26, John Stossel was one of the key spreaders of climate disinformation (as profiled on page 66 of 'Deny, Deceive, Delay'). His production company and non-profit received at least \$2m from the Charles Koch Institute between 2017 and 2019, and more recently support from the Koch's preferred dark money fund DonorsTrust - the latter provided Stossel's Center for Independent Thought with \$560,000 in 2019 (27% of the Centre's overall revenue) and \$322,000 in 2020 (19% of its revenue).
- 3) These engagement stats are correct at the time of writing (18/11/2022)
- 4) **Jennie King**, Head of Civic Action and Education at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and member of CAAD's COP27 Intelligence Unit is in Sharm El Sheikh and **is available for media requests.**

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