

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Washington, January 12--National environmental organizations, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Friends of the Earth, Public Citizen, Clean Water Action, and Greenpeace, along with regional energy advocacy organization Citizen Power, are sending a letter to teacher organizations throughout the United States to alert teachers to be careful when considering using the resources of the National Energy Education Development Project (NEED).

NEED conducts teacher training workshops around the US and gives participants teaching resources, including "Infobooks" that contain information about various energy sources. A review of the NEED Secondary Infobook * reveals that some of the information it contains is incomplete, unbalanced, or simply not accurate. Despite repeatedly being asked to correct the Infobooks, NEED continues to disseminate this misinformation. Some of the more egregious omissions or errors are listed in the letter to teacher organizations.

To see the letter and citations, click here:

http://www.citizenpower.com/NEED/NEED_Teacher_Orgs_letter.pdf

"It is unacceptable that teachers of future decision makers are getting information about energy sources that is misleading at best and, at worst, simply wrong," said Christopher Paine, Nuclear Program Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"The information being presented to students misleads them on very basic questions of health and safety. Fossil fuels like coal have very damaging effects on health, and schools should warn students about them, not ignore them," noted Barbara Gottlieb, Director of Environment and Health at Physicians for Social Responsibility.

In April 2009, NEED asked for and was given more than 100 citations to support the contention that the Infobooks contain misleading or inaccurate information. It was hoped that the 2010 edition of the Infobooks would be revised per this supporting documentation. Regrettably, that was not to be the case. In January 2011 a letter was sent to the 30 member NEED Teacher Advisory Board, along with the supporting citations, requesting that the TAB work to revise the 2011 Infobooks.

Unfortunately, the 2011 Infobooks still contain very misleading or inaccurate information about coal and nuclear energy. In addition, ongoing reviews reveal an additional need for revisions, including in the Petroleum and Biomass sections. Citations for these suggested revisions were also sent to NEED in January 2011.

"It is bad enough that our democracy is under assault by unregulated corporate lobbying - but now energy companies are influencing educational curriculums. Our children deserve fact-based education - not lesson plans approved by energy corporations," said Tyson Slocum, Director of Public Citizen's Energy Program.

"Now, more than ever, we need sound science and fact-based analysis to shape the energy education of young Americans. If the NEED program is determined to dispense coal and oil industry spin in their place, parents, teachers, and administrators must start taking a harder look at whether they want NEED materials in their local schools," said Dave Hamilton, Director of Global Warming and Energy Programs for the Sierra Club.

"It is obvious that NEED has made a conscious decision to continue disseminating this information despite having evidence that it is inaccurate," said David Hughes, President of Citizen Power. "We intend to continue to pressure NEED to make its Infobooks accurate and to alert teachers about NEED's misleading teaching resources."

*<http://www.need.org/needpdf/Secondary%20Energy%20Infobook.pdf>

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