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Dr. John L. Hennessy  
Office of the President  
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Stanford University  
Stanford, CA 94305-2061  
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Dear Dr. Hennessy:

I am writing to express our deep concern about Stanford University's research deal with ExxonMobil Corp. that enables the oil giant to take advantage of its "partnership" and place advertisements greenwashing its image. As outlined in Sunday's San Jose Mercury News, the situation has prompted one of your major benefactors, Steve Bing, to cancel a \$2.5 million gift to the university.

Under the research deal, Stanford receives \$225 million from four companies to fund research to develop global energy systems with significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions. Exxon is providing \$100 million. In return the sponsors get exclusive rights for five years to any discoveries made by the project's researchers.

Collaborating with ExxonMobil on alternative energy research is akin to working with a tobacco company to find a cure for cancer.

Stanford's deal with ExxonMobil gives sponsors exclusive rights for five years to any discoveries made by the project's researchers. Moreover, under the terms of the deal, the Global Climate and Energy Project is governed by a Management Committee composed of the sponsors. The university doesn't even have a vote. ExxonMobil and the other sponsors can set the entire research agenda.

To ensure that the public benefits from this partnership – not just ExxonMobil and the other sponsors – we call on you to make the research immediately and publicly available. Furthermore, the project must be controlled independently by scientists and not be subject to ultimate control by corporate sponsors with their own agendas.

Based on its history of exploiting oil regardless of the societal impact, it is likely that ExxonMobil will manipulate any research to maximize its continuing profits from oil. Even if it does not, the research – and Stanford -- will be indelibly stained by its association with ExxonMobil.

ExxonMobil, as a matter of deliberate corporate policy, has actively worked to discredit scientists who have demonstrated that greenhouse gases are responsible for the climate changes now threatening the globe. ExxonMobil's grant is nothing more than greenwashing: Now the very company that has led efforts to undermine research against global warming is wrapping itself in the mantle of a respected research university. Clearly, ExxonMobil hopes to burnish its image with an advertising campaign capitalizing on its association with Stanford. And if there are any commercial benefits from the fruits of Stanford's research, ExxonMobil will control them.

Your former dean for research, Arthur Bienenstock, was a driving force behind a white paper issued last week by the nation's top research universities meant to protect the public interest when universities grant the rights to their latest scientific advances to companies.

The Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights calls upon you to live up to the spirit of that document. The paper says: "Universities have a social compact with society. As educational and research institutions, it is our responsibility to generate and transmit knowledge, both to our students and the wider society. We have a specific and central role in helping advance knowledge in many fields and to manage the deployment of resulting innovations for the public benefit."

Giving exclusive rights to alternative energy technology to a company that has led the way in causing – and denying -- global warming cannot possibly benefit the public. We call on you to ensure that the results of Stanford's Global Climate and Energy Project be available to all comers immediately and that the project be independent from corporate control.

Yours truly,

Jamie Court

John M. Simpson

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