

November 28, 2023

Dear Financial Conflict of Interest Committee:

We are writing today to report what we believe to be a violation of the university's Financial Conflicts of Interest and Research (FCOI) policy. According to the third governing principle of the University's [policy](#) (effective as of August 24, 2012), individuals must "disclose outside financial interests that relate to any of their research, including unfunded research, to peers and members of the public. These disclosures must be made in publications, reports, talks, or other presentations of research."

We believe that Mr. Paul M. Dabbar potentially violated the transparency requirement outlined in the third governing principle. The FOCI policy defines an individual as "any Officer of Instruction, Officer of Research, Officer of the Libraries, student, fellow, research staff member or other individual who Conducts Research at the University." Mr. Dabbar is an Adjunct Senior Research Scholar at the [Center on Global Energy Policy](#) (CGEP) housed within the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Furthermore, Mr. Dabbar has published on various subjects, including [energy and geopolitical challenges](#). Thus, given Mr. Dabbar's position as a researcher within CGEP, we believe he's subject to the FOCI policy.

On November 1st, 2023, Mr. Dabbar [testified](#) before the US Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on the "nexus between climate change and the intensification of extreme weather events." According to publicly available [financial disclosure reports](#) filed in 2017, when he was nominated to be the Under Secretary for Science at the Department of Energy, Mr. Dabbar holds between \$15,001 and \$50,000 of ConocoPhillips stock (NYSE: COP) and between \$15,001 and \$50,000 of Chevron stock (NYSE: CVX). Additionally, Mr. Dabbar reported compensation exceeding \$5,000 from Sempra Energy and TC Energy (formerly TransCanada Corp) for "advice on purchasing or selling companies."

The FOCI policy defines a "financial interest" as "anything of monetary value," including "salary or other compensation for services" and "equity interests (e.g., stock, stock options or other ownership interests)." Thus, it's evident that Mr. Dabbar's investments and outside income constitute a "financial interest."

Given the nature of Mr. Dabbar's research position with CGEP and [testimony](#) on "climate impact, and energy innovation and policy," we believe Mr. Dabbar's outside financial interests are relevant to his research on climate policy. Therefore, to comply with the University's FOCI policy, Mr. Dabbar should have disclosed his relevant financial interests to the Senate Committee on November 1st. According to the publicly available copy of his [testimony](#), Mr. Dabbar did not disclose any financial interests.

We cannot prove that Mr. Dabbar continues to hold shares of Chevron and ConocoPhillips and receive financial compensation from Sempra Energy and TC Energy in 2023, as he did in 2017. However, given Mr. Dabbar's history of financial disclosures, we cannot rule out the possibility of Mr. Dabbar's continued financial stake in the energy industry.

Therefore, we believe Mr. Dabbar's lack of disclosure should be investigated as a potential financial conflict of interest.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sunrise Columbia

We are a group of Columbia and Barnard students focused on institutional environmental issues at Columbia University.