



DRIVING DENIAL

How Toyota's Unholy Alliance with Climate Deniers
Threatens Climate Progress

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KEY FINDINGS

Toyota is no longer the green darling that it was nearly three decades ago when it introduced the Prius. The Japanese auto giant has spent the past several years quietly building a powerful U.S. influence operation to weaken climate policy. Among automakers, Toyota has become the largest funder of climate deniers in Congress¹ and the most ardent opponent of climate protections.² After the 2024 election, with Toyota's climate-denying allies in power, the company is poised to dismantle climate policy.

While Toyota [bills itself as a climate leader](#), it has long failed to make the needed transition to electric vehicles, instead investing in decades-old gas-powered hybrid technology, as well as hydrogen-powered vehicles that have [failed in the marketplace](#). It is a risky strategy that has left Toyota vulnerable to an influx of competitors who [have leapfrogged](#) the auto giant to build the next generation of vehicles. Instead of innovating, Toyota has bankrolled lobbyists and climate-hostile lawmakers to help it defeat EVs³. Our analysis found:

- Over the last three electoral cycles, Toyota has become the top auto industry financier of climate deniers⁴. It has helped to finance campaigns of 207 climate-denying congressional candidates, more than twice as many as Ford and nearly 50% more than General Motors, the only other automakers with federal political action committees (PACs).⁵
- In the most recent electoral cycle, Toyota widened the gap, donating to more than four times as many climate deniers as Ford and nearly twice as many as GM. It contributed \$271,000—nine times as much in funds as Ford's \$29,500 and over twice as much as GM's \$128,500.⁶
- In recent years, Toyota has emerged as the automaker [most aggressively opposed to EVs](#). With its allies entering power in the White House and Congress, Toyota is poised to help dismantle climate policy that threatens its business model.

¹ See Chart 1 on page 6 and Chart 2 on page 7.

²See "Lobbying Against the Future" section and "We Won't Back Down" section of the Ciccone memo: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oIht01XqAbyet2cpX79ugcFpUtHiZYT5IZcDTp-v1tg/edit?tab=t.0>

³ See "Lobbying Against the Future" section.

⁴ See Chart 1 on page 6 and Chart 2 on page 7.

⁵ See Chart 2 on Page 7 and methodology and appendix on pages 18-24.

⁶ See Chart 1 on page 6 and methodology and appendix on pages 18-24.

INTRODUCTION

“If our PAC [political action committee] was a brand, what would that brand be? What would it stand for?... We never focus on making our PAC bigger. We focus on making our PAC better...A better PAC in terms of the image that we have.”

This is Stephen Ciccone, the longtime Vice President of Public Affairs for Toyota Motors North America. With an angular jaw and a tightly drawn ponytail, he looks like Terry Silver, the villain from Karate Kid III. Ciccone spoke in spring of 2015 where the Public Affairs Council had just granted Toyota its inaugural award for “Outstanding Corporate PAC.” [Ciccone was advising](#) other Public Affairs Council members on how to responsibly grow their PACs.

In hindsight, his warning sounds prescient: “Over time a PAC evolves. And that’s normally a good thing, but over time it can also evolve in strange directions and lose its way.” As this report will reveal, Toyota did not just lose its way under Ciccone’s leadership; it changed directions and is now taking a route that is dangerous for communities and the planet.

The world’s largest automaker has quietly spent the past decade building a powerful U.S. influence operation to try to delay the EV transition. It is bankrolling an army of climate denying lawmakers and lobbying aggressively against emissions and fuel economy standards. After the 2024 election, with Toyota’s allies entering power, the company is better positioned than ever to weaken auto climate policy. However, it is a risky strategy. Toyota’s failure to build EVs has left it vulnerable to competitors who have embraced the next generation of vehicles.

FUNDING CLIMATE DENIERS

By the Numbers

Over the last three electoral cycles, Toyota has become the top auto industry financier of climate deniers, with its political action committee spending \$808,500 to support climate deniers, ahead of General Motors at \$670,000 and more than double Ford’s expenditure of \$387,500. **(Chart 1)** Among those elections, dating back to the 2019-2020 cycle, Toyota was the leading supporter of climate deniers among the three automakers with federal political action committees (PACs). **(Chart 2)** Toyota backed 207 climate-denying political campaigns over the past three election cycles, compared with 137 campaigns for

General Motors and 103 campaigns for Ford (these calculations include re-election campaigns by the same candidate backed in a prior cycle).

Chart 1: Total Amount Donated to Climate Deniers by Automaker PAC, Cycle, and Congress

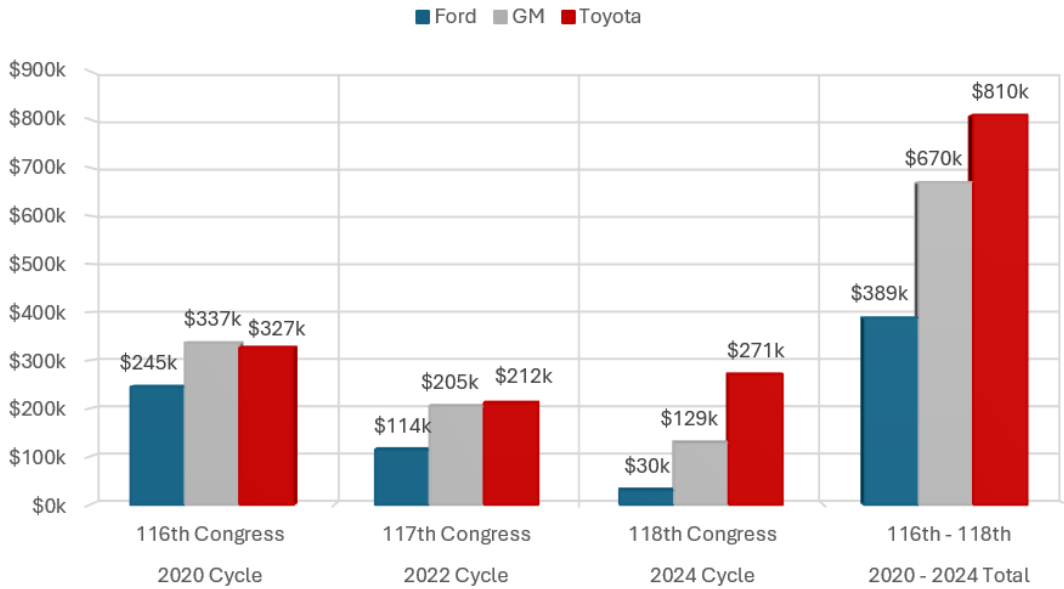
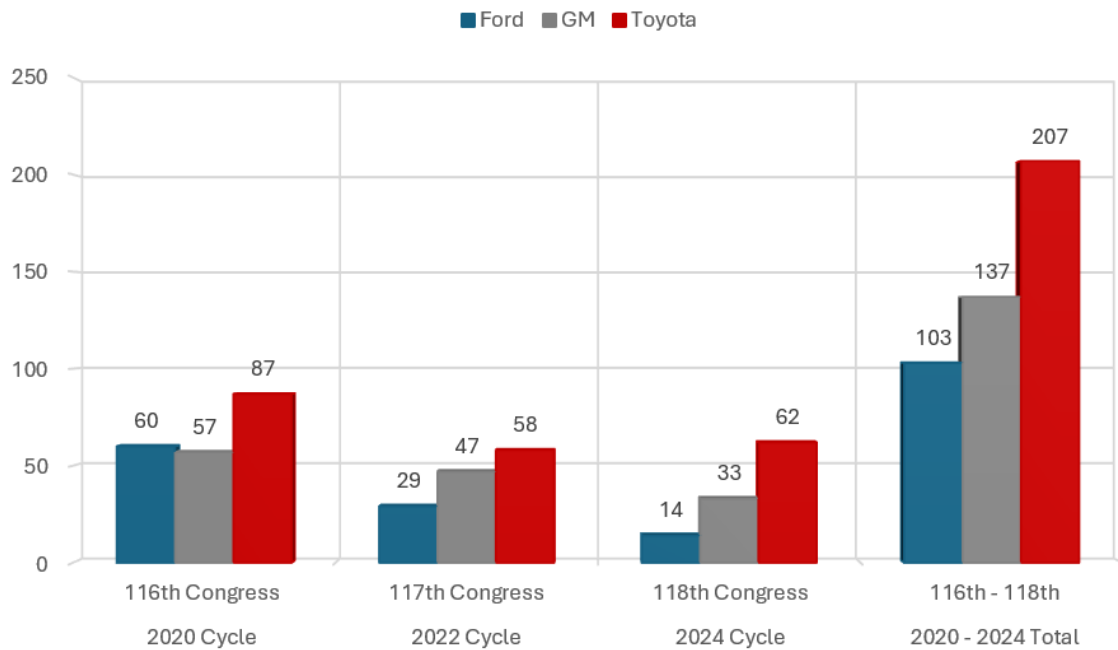


Chart 2: Number of Climate Denier Recipients by Automaker PAC, Cycle, and Congress



Toyota also [ramped up its funding to Republicans and cut funding to Democrats](#), helping to cement a Republican trifecta. While in the previous two cycles Toyota donated relatively evenly to both parties, this cycle it contributed over 60% to Republicans. In contrast, this cycle [GM](#) gave nearly 43% and [Ford](#) gave nearly 46% of its individual PAC contributions to Republicans. Toyota contributed nearly twice as much as GM and nearly nine times as much as Ford to GOP congressional candidates.⁷

⁷ Not all congressional Republicans are climate deniers. However, [all climate deniers in Congress are Republicans](#). Thus, while party affiliation is not a perfect signifier of a candidate’s support for climate action, it is a helpful reference point.

A Few of Toyota's Climate Deniers



Speaker of the House Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA)

2024 cycle donations from Toyota: \$10,000 (maximum amount allowed)

Johnson [said](#) "The climate is changing, but the question is, is it being caused by natural cycles in the atmosphere over the span of the Earth's history? Or is it changing because we drive SUVs? I don't believe in the latter. I don't think that's the primary driver." He has also [led the effort](#) to try to strip green energy funding from the IRA.



Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO)

2024 cycle donations from Toyota: \$10,000 (maximum amount allowed). Smith has called for [eliminating the EPA](#) and [introduced legislation](#) to end EV tax credits. Smith has laughed at the science behind climate change, [tweeting](#) "Saw these Missouri cows this morning. I didn't have the heart to tell them their gases are the cause of climate change..."



Rep. David Schweikert (R-AZ)

2024 cycle donations from Toyota: \$7,000. In 2020, Rep. Schweikert was ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine for [misusing official funds](#). That did not stop Toyota from donating to Rep. Schweikert, an avowed climate denier who had served as chairman of the subcommittee of the environment. “I don’t see the data,” [Rep. Schweikert said](#) in an interview. “...I think it’s incredibly arrogant, you know, for the Al Gores of the world to stand up and say the world’s coming to an end.”

Top 20 Climate Deniers Receiving PAC Contributions from Toyota, 2019-2024

Candidate	Body	State	Toyota 20-24
James Comer (R)	House	Kentucky	\$24,000
David Schweikert (R)	House	Arizona	\$23,500
Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R)	House	Washington	\$22,000
Tom McClintock (R)	House	California	\$21,000
Ann Wagner (R)	House	Missouri	\$20,000
Mike Kelly (R)	House	Pennsylvania	\$19,000
Larry Bucshon (R)	House	Indiana	\$18,500
John Moolenaar (R)	House	Michigan	\$17,500
Pete Sessions (R)	House	Texas	\$17,000
Beth Van Duyne (R)	House	Texas	\$17,000
Darrell E Issa (R)	House	California	\$17,000
Alex Mooney (R)	House	West Virginia	\$16,500
Jodey Arrington (R)	House	Texas	\$16,000
Darin LaHood (R)	House	Illinois	\$15,000
Jason Smith (R)	House	Missouri	\$15,000
Rodney Davis (R)	House	Illinois	\$15,000

Richard Hudson (R)	House	North Carolina	\$14,500
Bill Huizenga (R)	House	Michigan	\$14,000
Mitch McConnell (R)	Senate	Kentucky	\$14,000
Dan Crenshaw (R)	House	Texas	\$14,000

Source: Public Citizen analysis of OpenSecrets campaign finance data.

Toyota's Ace in the Hole

Toyota's anti-climate influence is even larger than the numbers suggest. Not included in Public Citizen's tally is Toyota's support of candidates like car dealer mogul and Senator-elect Bernie Moreno (R-Ohio), who have not publicly denied climate change, but have committed themselves to undermining and reversing climate action.

Auto dealers played an important role in Moreno's campaign, serving as major donors and validators who [defended Moreno](#) against attacks from his opponent, Senator Sherrod Brown. After his victory in one of the most high-profile senate races in the nation, [The Detroit Free Press wrote](#) that [Moreno's](#) "closest relationships now are with leaders at Toyota Motor North America, which he said helped organize the coalition of car dealers that supported his Senate run."

Noting that Toyota has been an outlier in its refusal to build electric vehicles, [Moreno said](#) that "the winner in this whole thing [eliminating the \$7,500 federal rebate for EVs] will probably be Toyota because they were the one company that said, 'We're just not going to do that.'"

LOBBYING AGAINST THE FUTURE

On the Offensive

Toyota took aim at climate policy just days after the election and has signaled that it will ramp up its lobbying even further. With a favorable incoming Congress and administration, Toyota has wasted no time cozying up to the Trump transition team and working to water down the Biden administration's fuel economy and emission standards.

Just three days after the November election, Toyota Motor North America Chief Operating Officer Jack Hollis [railed against](#) California and the EPA's tailpipe emissions standards on a call with reporters. Falsely referring to them as "EV mandates," he said,

“These EV mandates were an attempt to change the entire landscape of the industry, to remove customer choice.” Just five days after that, the Japanese news outlet Nikkei published a story detailing Japanese automakers’ plans to [ramp up lobbying in the second Trump administration](#). In late November, Hollis wrote a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed entitled “[Trump Can Get EVs Back on Track](#),” calling on the new administration to dismantle the Biden-era policies that encourage automakers to reduce emissions, complaining that “unrealistic regulations favor one carbon-reducing option over, and at the expense of, all others.” On Christmas Eve, Toyota announced it was [donating \\$1 million to Trump’s inauguration](#).

Shortly after the election, Alliance for Automotive Innovation, the main auto industry lobby in the U.S., [called on the incoming Trump administration](#) to preserve the \$7,500 EV tax credits enshrined in the Inflation Reduction Act. The credit has been key to growing EV adoption in the U.S. In 2023, the first full year of the credit, EV sales [shot up by 46%](#). The [latest data](#) from Kelley Blue Book shows EV sales reached record highs in Q3 of 2024, attributing much of this growth to “incentives and discounts.” The National Bureau of Economic Research has estimated that if the Trump administration and Congress eliminate the credit, [EV sales would drop by 27%](#).

Shortly after AAI called on Trump to preserve the credit, Toyota publicly broke with the group, [calling on the Trump team](#) to water down the credit so that its hybrids can qualify. As auto analyst Alan Baum [noted](#), “Obviously that’s somewhat self-serving.” Serving its own short-term gains at the cost of the climate has been at the core of Toyota’s strategy for the past decade.

Global Influence

Instead of embracing a green energy future, Toyota has aggressively lobbied to delay and weaken climate action. In 2022, InfluenceMap named Toyota [the third worst company in the world](#)—after Chevron and Exxon—for its anti-climate lobbying. It has routinely ranked as the [worst automaker for its anti-climate lobbying](#). As InfluenceMap notes in its May 2024 [scorecard](#), Toyota had a busy year⁸. The company once again received a D, the lowest score amongst all automakers, and was fueling opposition to climate regulations around the world. The scorecard highlights Toyota’s lobbying efforts against emissions standards in the U.S. and Australia and against EV mandates in

⁸ See pages 3, 12, and 14 of InfluenceMap scorecard.

Canada and the United Kingdom, as well as Toyota's success in weakening emissions stands in the U.S. and fuel efficiency standards in Australia.

All-powerful in Japan

Toyota is especially powerful in Japan. It is by far the nation's largest company, with [revenue](#) more than twice and [market cap](#) nearly twice that of the closest runner-up. It holds the kind of cultural cache that can only be compared to General Motors in its heyday, which has given Toyota an immense amount of political power.

No corporation gives more than Toyota to the LDP, the pro-business party that [has ruled Japan for most of the past 70 years](#). The only group to donate more in 2023 was JAMA, the Japanese auto industry trade group that Akio Toyoda chaired from 2012 to 2014 and from 2018 to 2023. Collectively, the Toyoda family has chaired the powerful trade group [for over twenty years](#).

In the summer of 2022, Japan was set to phase out the sale of polluting combustion engine vehicles by 2035—a few months before California made that historic commitment. But at the last minute, Akio Toyoda, then Toyota's CEO, met Akira Amari, a key official from Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and [intervened](#) to ensure that the government did not fully ban fossil-fueled cars.

In an LDP policy meeting the next day, [Amari shared Toyoda's message](#) with his colleagues: "I spoke with Chairman Toyoda yesterday and he said that JAMA cannot endorse a government that rejects hybrids...If we don't make that clear, JAMA will push back with all its might," Amari said, according to notes and audio of the meeting. After Toyoda's message, officials changed the document to eliminate its zero-emission goal.

An Aggressive Outlier

Toyota is attempting to exert the same kind of overpowering political influence in the U.S. as it has at home. Between 2019 and 2023 it spent [over \\$31 million](#) just on federal lobbying. That was second only to GM and is significantly more than every other automaker. Much of that lobbying focused on weakening fuel economy and pollution standards and tailpipe emissions rules, according to lobbying records.

Toyota is also the only major automaker that has [failed to set a target for 100% EVs](#). That is likely because the company has made bad business decisions on EVs for a decade or more and is simply far behind its competitors.

According to OpenSecrets, in 2023 [Toyota spent \\$6.3 million on lobbying](#) “related to greenhouse gas emissions standards” and “supply chain issues impacting the auto industry, including critical minerals for EVs.”

In [the leaked memo](#), Toyota’s chief lobbyist Stephen Ciccone emphasized how uncommonly aggressive Toyota has been in fighting climate policy: “For more than two years, Toyota and our dealer partners have stood alone in the fight against unrealistic BEV [Battery Electric Vehicle] mandates...We have taken a lot of hits from environmental activists, the media, and some politicians. But we have not—and we will not—back down.” Falsely referring to emissions standards as an “unrealistic government mandate,” Ciccone said that the regulations create an “existential crisis” for the auto industry.

Out on a Limb

As Ciccone notes, Toyota has been an outlier in opposing climate action, even among automakers. In 2020 Toyota [declined to join](#) the compromise agreement that other automakers reached with California on emissions standards that were “expected to be a model for new standards from the Biden administration.” Even the Alliance for Automotive Innovation (AAI), a powerful industry group that [regularly lobbies against climate action](#), publicly supported the deal. However, AAI “argued [in closed-door meetings](#) in Washington that the California compromise... [was] in fact not feasible for all of its members.” When AAI made that argument, its chairman was none other than Chris Reynolds, a longtime Toyota North America executive who oversees Toyota’s lobbying efforts.

Federal lobbying disclosures are opaque and do not reveal which side of an issue a company takes. However, the formal written comments that Toyota’s lobbyists submit to government agencies give insight into the company’s attempts to influence policy and regulation. One illustrative example is [this 94-page comment](#) on the EPA’s proposed light-duty and medium-duty vehicle emissions standards. Tom Stricker, Toyota’s VP for Sustainability and Regulatory Affairs, advocates for looser emissions standards and argues that including electric vehicles in the calculation of achievable emissions is illegal.

That advocacy has borne results. During the Biden administration, [lobbying](#) from Toyota and others forced the EPA to weaken an ambitious EPA plan to limit vehicle

emissions. The changes [slow the adoption](#) of more stringent vehicle pollution limits, making it easier for EV laggards like Toyota to meet regulations without building electric vehicles.

Toyota has also fought to undermine states' climate standards. Under the Clean Air Act, since the 1970s states have been allowed to set their own emissions standards. However, in 2019 then-President Trump sought to revoke that right as part of an effort to roll back Obama-era rules. While Honda, Ford, Volkswagen, and BMW all sided with California, [Toyota sued the state](#). Unlike GM, which initially sided with the Trump administration before quickly reversing itself after pledging to sell only electric vehicles by 2035, Toyota spent three years fighting California before finally acknowledging the state's long-held right to regulate its own emissions.

Now another fight is brewing. On December 13, 2024 [the Supreme Court](#) announced that it would decide whether a challenge to EPA's approval of California's emission standards could proceed, and five days later [the EPA granted California a new waiver](#) allowing it to enforce another state policy—Clean Cars II—which required EPA approval. That rule would require all new light duty vehicles to have zero emissions by 2035. With Toyota [champing at the bit](#), it is primed to play a key role in the fight to weaken emissions and fuel economy standards.

AN EV LAGGARD

Stalled out on EVs

How did we get here? Why did Toyota go from the green darling that made the Prius to aligning itself with climate deniers? In short, it adopted a deeply misguided business model, then created an aggressive influence operation to defend itself from suffering the consequences of its mistakes.

While Toyota bills itself as a climate leader, it has long failed to make the needed transition to electric vehicles, instead doubling down on decades-old gas-powered hybrid technology. Toyota was an innovator when it introduced the Prius in 1997, but in recent decades, it has fallen to the back of the pack. In this era of rapid energy transition, Toyota has "[substantially miscalculated](#)" its approach to electric vehicles. Toyota's longtime CEO Akio Toyoda, who led his grandfather's company for almost 14 years before stepping down in April 2023, is [well-known for his deep dislike of EVs](#). Even as Chairman of the Board, he is [continuing to rail against electric vehicles](#).

Under Toyota's guidance, the automaker has fallen far behind its rivals on electric vehicles. In 2023, [fewer than 1% of the 11.2 million vehicles that Toyota sold](#) were fully electric, far behind [the global average of 11.1%](#). That is also far behind the U.S. average, where in Q3 of 2024 EVs accounted for [a record high of 8.9% of all new car sales](#).

Unsurprisingly, that has made it difficult to reduce its carbon footprint. In late November, Toyota Motor North America [admitted that it is failing](#) its embarrassingly modest goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 15% from 2018 to 2026. In fact, it is emitting more than it was two years before.

But Toyota doubtless has a greater concern: EV adoption is proceeding so rapidly that it may be impossible for an automaker that makes so few EVs to remain a market-leader in sales. Hence Toyota's need to slow EV adoption by any means necessary — including by supporting aggressive climate deniers.

The Mirage of Mirai

Instead of building EVs, Toyota has invested in carbon-intensive hydrogen-powered vehicles that [have failed miserably](#) in the marketplace. Toyota [started developing hydrogen fuel cell vehicles \(HFCVs\) in 1992](#) and introduced the Mirai, its HFCV, in 2014. Since then it [has sold fewer than 25,000 units](#). It has been so hard to sell the \$66,000 vehicle that Toyota has cut the sticker price by \$40,000, adding in \$15,000 in free hydrogen, and offering a 0% loan. All in all, Toyota is offering the Mirai, which ironically [means "future" in Japanese](#), for [\\$11,000](#). Even with that sweetheart deal, Toyota can't seem to give away the Mirai, with [sales dropping by 74%](#) in Q1 of 2024. Even Toyota has admitted that its HFCV sales have ["not been successful."](#)

There are [just 60 hydrogen refueling stations](#) in all of the U.S. and Canada. Mirai drivers claim that prior to buying their vehicles, Toyota assured them that fueling with hydrogen was "seamless," but Toyota's infrastructure is so sparse and fault-ridden that they filed [a class-action lawsuit](#) against the automaker.

Toyota drivers are not the only ones up in arms. Ahead of the Paris Olympics, which Toyota sponsored, 120 scientists, engineers, and academics wrote [an open letter](#) to organizers calling on them to drop the Mirai as the official vehicle of the games. That is because over 99% of hydrogen is made with fossil fuels and [hydrogen production](#) emits about as much annually as all global aviation, making hydrogen vehicles far dirtier than

EVs. Like Toyota's broader greenwashing strategy, the Mirai presents a veneer of green energy but is actually just a mirage.

Misleading Consumers

As Public Citizen noted in [our December complaint to the Federal Trade Commission](#), Toyota has deceptively marketed its gas-powered hybrids as EVs instead of investing in electric vehicles. In the decade between 2013 and 2022—the most recent available year—Toyota spent [\\$17.2 billion on marketing](#). Much of its advertising budget has gone toward sleek campaigns that use terms like “electrified” and “beyond zero” to [deceive consumers](#) into believing that its gasoline-powered hybrids are electric. Toyota uses lightning bolts and plugs and words like “range” to describe vehicles with internal combustion engines that do not plug in.

Misleading the public appears to be Toyota's modus operandi. In 2022 Toyota subsidiary Hino Motors admitted to [cheating on up to 20 years of emissions tests](#). In 2023 Toyota subsidiary Daihatsu shut all four of its factories in Japan amidst a government probe that forced the automaker to admit that it [cheated on thirty years of crash tests](#). Last January Toyota Chairman Akio Toyoda was forced to apologize for cheating on engine testing that led the Japanese government to [raid one of its plants](#). Less than six months later, he was [forced to apologize again](#), this time for “massive cheating on certification tests for seven vehicle models” that led to Toyota suspending production on three models. Investors have not been impressed, leading Mr. Toyoda to [admit](#) that “there has never been a director at Toyota with such a low approval rate before” and “if we continue at this pace, I will no longer be able to serve as a director next year.”

The Next Kodak?

In 1975, 24-year-old Kodak engineer Steven Sasson created the first digital camera. However, Kodak saw digital as a threat to its core film and film camera business and buried the invention. [According to Sasson](#), “Every digital camera that was sold took away from a film camera and we knew how much money we made on film.” Before joining Toyota Motors North America in 2011, TMNA chief lobbyist Stephen Ciccone [spent 23 years leading Kodak's policy work](#). During his tenure, Kodak reached [an 80% market share](#) in the U.S. and [about 50% market share globally](#). However, eschewing innovation eventually caught up with Kodak. That fatal error ultimately helped lead to [the company's bankruptcy](#) in 2012, the year after Ciccone moved to Toyota. When Kodak finally embraced the digital future, it was too late.

Just two years before Sasson's invention, Toyota introduced the EV2 at the 1973 Tokyo Motor show. The EV2 was [a concept electric car](#), but the company never produced it. It would take nearly fifty years for Toyota to release its first battery-electric vehicle. By the time it produced [the Lexus UX300e in 2020](#) and the Toyota BZ4X [in 2021](#), the automaker's peers [had lapped it](#) in the EV market. And by then, its tech was behind. Lexus did not introduce an EV to the U.S. market until 2023. Consumer Reports called that debut "a disappointing first EV effort" and noted that its "meager range and EV tech are already behind the times." The popular auto site Top Speed published the article "[The 2023 Toyota bZ4X is What Happens When a Carmaker Doesn't Want to Sell EVs.](#)" Editor-at-Large William Clavey called it "a terrible EV" that "lacks an inspiring design, energy efficiency, and charging performance." He deftly notes that "while Toyota is the carmaker that makes the wildest claims about EVs, it can't seem to deliver a truly competitive electric model."

Toyota [sells more vehicles](#) than any automaker on the planet and of course will not go bankrupt overnight. However, when Kodak had 80% U.S. market share, no one would have predicted its precipitous decline. Wall Street clearly thinks that electric vehicles are the future. As of mid-December 2024, Tesla's market cap was \$1.375 trillion, [5.9 times the value of Toyota](#).

Investors appear to expect the EV market to continue its rapid growth. [The S-curve](#) is "a well-established phenomenon where a successful new technology reaches a certain catalytic tipping point (typically 5-10% market share), and then rapidly reaches a high market share (i.e. 50%+) within just a couple more years once past this tipping point." There is a self-reinforcing cycle where the technology becomes more cost-effective as it becomes more prevalent. That is certainly the case for EV batteries, which [fell by 20% in cost in 2024 alone](#).

Toyota is trailing its competitors on EVs and is at risk of falling behind even further as Chinese competitors make low-priced EVs to sell around the globe. Even Toyota's Japanese competitor, Honda, has recognized the threat. In announcing plans in December 2024 to [merge with Nissan](#), Honda CEO Toshihiro Mibe cited technological trends of electrification and autonomous driving, [saying](#), "The rise of Chinese automakers and new players has changed the car industry quite a lot... We have to build up capabilities to fight with them by 2030, otherwise we'll be beaten."

Meanwhile, the Chinese smartphone company Xiaomi launched its first EV at the end of March and [is already selling more EVs than Toyota](#). The world's largest automaker losing to a smartphone company shows that Toyota's failure is not a matter of resources or even expertise, but a matter of effort. If it truly wanted to, Toyota could marshal its massive resources to thrive in the electric future. However, instead of competing in the EV marketplace, Toyota is fighting tooth and nail to delay the inevitable electric future.

CONCLUSION

The Japanese auto giant has quietly spent the past several years building a powerful U.S. influence operation to try to delay the transition to EVs. It is funding an army of climate denying lawmakers and lobbying aggressively against emissions and fuel economy standards. After the 2024 election, with Toyota's climate-denying allies entering power, the company is poised to marshal an assault on climate policy. However, it is a risky strategy. Its failure to build EVs has left it vulnerable to an influx of competitors who have embraced the next generation of vehicles.

In twenty years, how will the world think of Toyota? Will it become the next Kodak or [Blockbuster](#)? Will it become a relic of the past, a cautionary tale for industry giants that refuse to adapt? Will Toyota continue to make dirty, polluting vehicles and align itself with climate deniers in a futile effort to hold onto the past for a bit longer? Or will it instead embrace the urgent, imminent future of electric vehicles? We shall know soon.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze automakers' political contributions, we examined OpenSecrets' campaign finance data for the three automakers with political action committees: Toyota, General Motors, and Ford. We cross-referenced those with the Center for American Progress' lists of climate deniers from the [118th](#), [117th](#), and [116th](#) sessions of Congress. We also examined statements from candidates in the 2023-2024 cycle who did not serve in any of the previous three congresses.

For its report on the 118th Congress, CAP used a slightly more expansive definition of "climate denier" than it had in its previous reports. It included members who used other rhetorical tactics like climate doomism (saying there is nothing that can be done), portraying climate activism as alarmism, and who downplayed the need to act to address climate change.

Appendix: Toyota, GM, Ford PAC Contributions to Climate Deniers 2022-2024

Candidate	Body	State	Toyota 20-24	GM 20-24	Ford 20-24	All PACs
Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R)	House	Washington	\$22,000	\$25,000	\$18,500	\$65,500
Tim Walberg (R)	House	Michigan	\$13,000	\$14,500	\$20,500	\$48,000
Bill Huizenga (R)	House	Michigan	\$14,000	\$13,500	\$19,500	\$47,000
Darin LaHood (R)	House	Illinois	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$21,000	\$46,000
John Moolenaar (R)	House	Michigan	\$17,500	\$21,000	\$7,500	\$46,000
Jason Smith (R)	House	Missouri	\$15,000	\$11,500	\$15,000	\$41,500
Rodney Davis (R)	House	Illinois	\$15,000	\$18,000	\$8,000	\$41,000
Ann Wagner (R)	House	Missouri	\$20,000	\$8,500	\$10,500	\$39,000
John Curtis (R)	Non-incumbent	Utah	\$8,000	\$15,000	\$15,500	\$38,500
James Comer (R)	House	Kentucky	\$24,000	\$3,500	\$10,500	\$38,000
Jodey Arrington (R)	House	Texas	\$16,000	\$15,000	\$4,000	\$35,000
Kevin McCarthy (R)	House	California	\$3,500	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$33,500
Richard Hudson (R)	House	North Carolina	\$14,500	\$16,500	\$2,500	\$33,500
Chuck Grassley (R)	Senate	Iowa	\$13,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$33,000
John Cornyn (R)	Senate	Texas	\$12,000	\$11,500	\$9,500	\$33,000
Steve Scalise (R)	House	Louisiana	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$0	\$32,500
Fred Upton (R)	House	Michigan	\$9,500	\$10,500	\$11,000	\$31,000
Larry Bucshon (R)	House	Indiana	\$18,500	\$12,000	\$0	\$30,500
Marsha Blackburn (R)	Both - House 115, Senate 116-118	Tennessee	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Roger Wicker (R)	Senate	Mississippi	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Blaine Luetkemeyer (R)	House	Missouri	\$12,500	\$16,000	\$1,000	\$29,500
Pete Sessions (R)	House	Texas	\$17,000	\$12,500	\$0	\$29,500
Bill Johnson (R)	House	Ohio	\$2,000	\$20,000	\$6,500	\$28,500
Mike Kelly (R)	House	Pennsylvania	\$19,000	\$8,500	\$1,000	\$28,500
Mitch McConnell (R)	Senate	Kentucky	\$14,000	\$7,500	\$7,000	\$28,500
Todd Young (R)	Senate	Indiana	\$11,500	\$7,500	\$9,000	\$28,000
Patrick McHenry (R)	House	North Carolina	\$9,000	\$7,500	\$10,500	\$27,000

Candidate	Body	State	Toyota 20-24	GM 20-24	Ford 20-24	All PACs
Tom Emmer (R)	House	Minnesota	\$11,500	\$7,500	\$8,000	\$27,000
Adrian Smith (R)	House	Nebraska	\$4,000	\$14,500	\$7,000	\$25,500
Michael C Burgess (R)	House	Texas	\$11,000	\$7,500	\$7,000	\$25,500
Beth Van Duyne (R)	House	Texas	\$17,000	\$7,000	\$1,000	\$25,000
Cory Gardner (R)	Senate	Colorado	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$7,000	\$25,000
Dan Crenshaw (R)	House	Texas	\$14,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$25,000
Dan Sullivan (R)	Senate	Alaska	\$4,500	\$11,500	\$8,000	\$24,000
Marco Rubio (R)	Senate	Florida	\$9,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$24,000
Shelley Moore Capito (R)	Senate	West Virginia	\$8,000	\$7,500	\$8,500	\$24,000
David Schweikert (R)	House	Arizona	\$23,500	\$0	\$0	\$23,500
Gary Palmer (R)	House	Alabama	\$9,000	\$14,500	\$0	\$23,500
Jake Ellzey (R)	House	Texas	\$10,000	\$13,500	\$0	\$23,500
Mike Crapo (R)	Senate	Idaho	\$8,500	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$23,500
Mike Johnson (R)	House	Louisiana	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$0	\$22,500
Mike Lee (R)	Senate	Utah	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$22,500
David Perdue (R)	Senate	Georgia	\$0	\$15,000	\$7,000	\$22,000
Lance Gooden (R)	House	Texas	\$12,500	\$3,500	\$6,000	\$22,000
Thom Tillis (R)	Senate	North Carolina	\$5,500	\$10,000	\$6,500	\$22,000
Tom McClintock (R)	House	California	\$21,000	\$0	\$0	\$21,000
John Boozman (R)	Senate	Arkansas	\$8,000	\$7,500	\$5,000	\$20,500
Jeff Duncan (R)	House	South Carolina	\$11,000	\$5,500	\$3,500	\$20,000
Joni Ernst (R)	Senate	Iowa	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$4,500	\$19,500
Kevin Brady (R)	House	Texas	\$8,500	\$10,000	\$1,000	\$19,500
Bill Cassidy (R)	Senate	Louisiana	\$10,000	\$8,500	\$0	\$18,500
Steve Daines (R)	Senate	Montana	\$8,500	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$18,500
Bruce Westerman (R)	House	Arkansas	\$3,000	\$14,500	\$0	\$17,500
Buddy Carter (R)	House	Georgia	\$3,000	\$10,000	\$4,500	\$17,500
Darrell E Issa (R)	House	California	\$17,000	\$0	\$0	\$17,000
Deb Fischer (R)	Senate	Nebraska	\$10,000	\$2,500	\$4,500	\$17,000

Candidate	Body	State	Toyota 20-24	GM 20-24	Ford 20-24	All PACs
Markwayne Mullin (R)	Both - House 115-117, Senate 118	Oklahoma	\$3,000	\$8,000	\$6,000	\$17,000
Michael McCaul (R)	House	Texas	\$12,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$17,000
Alex Mooney (R)	House	West Virginia	\$16,500	\$0	\$0	\$16,500
John Joyce (R)	House	Pennsylvania	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$3,500	\$16,500
Van Taylor (R)	House	Texas	\$13,500	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$16,500
John James (R)	House	Michigan	\$2,000	\$10,000	\$3,500	\$15,500
Rick Crawford (R)	House	Arkansas	\$10,500	\$5,000	\$0	\$15,500
Thomas Massie (R)	House	Kentucky	\$13,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$15,500
Devin Nunes (R)	House	California	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$15,000
Liz Cheney (R)	House	Wyoming	\$7,000	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$15,000
Randy Feenstra (R)	House	Iowa	\$8,500	\$1,500	\$5,000	\$15,000
Ben Cline (R)	House	Virginia	\$12,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$14,500
Mike Bost (R)	House	Illinois	\$0	\$11,000	\$3,500	\$14,500
Rand Paul (R)	Senate	Kentucky	\$9,000	\$1,000	\$4,500	\$14,500
Barry Loudermilk (R)	House	Georgia	\$11,000	\$0	\$3,000	\$14,000
Billy Long (R)	House	Missouri	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$13,500
John Barrasso (R)	Senate	Wyoming	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$2,500	\$13,500
Victoria Spartz (R)	House	Indiana	\$4,000	\$8,500	\$1,000	\$13,500
David Rouzer (R)	House	North Carolina	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$0	\$13,000
Ron Wright (R)	House	Texas	\$3,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$13,000
Jim Banks (R)	House	Indiana	\$4,000	\$8,500	\$0	\$12,500
Kevin Cramer (R)	Both - House 115, Senate 116-118	North Dakota	\$10,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$12,500
Virginia Foxx (R)	House	North Carolina	\$12,500	\$0	\$0	\$12,500
Doug LaMalfa (R)	House	California	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$12,000
Steve Womack (R)	House	Arkansas	\$1,000	\$10,000	\$1,000	\$12,000
James Lankford (R)	Senate	Oklahoma	\$0	\$7,500	\$4,000	\$11,500
Kat Cammack (R)	House	Florida	\$4,000	\$7,500	\$0	\$11,500
Roger Marshall (R)	Both - House 115-117, Senate 118	Kansas	\$3,000	\$2,500	\$6,000	\$11,500

Candidate	Body	State	Toyota 20-24	GM 20-24	Ford 20-24	All PACs
Chip Roy (R)	House	Texas	\$11,000	\$0	\$0	\$11,000
Chuck Fleischmann (R)	House	Tennessee	\$10,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$11,000
Pete Stauber (R)	House	Minnesota	\$0	\$11,000	\$0	\$11,000
Ted Budd (R)	Both - House 115-117, Senate 118	North Carolina	\$6,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$11,000
Tim Burchett (R)	House	Tennessee	\$8,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$10,500
Bob Gibbs (R)	House	Ohio	\$0	\$9,000	\$1,000	\$10,000
Guy Reschenthaler (R)	House	Pennsylvania	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$0	\$10,000
Morgan Griffith (R)	House	Virginia	\$6,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000
Cynthia M Lummis (R)	Senate	Wyoming	\$6,000	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$9,500
Andy Biggs (R)	House	Arizona	\$9,000	\$0	\$0	\$9,000
Ken Buck (R)	House	Colorado	\$8,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$9,000
Lloyd Smucker (R)	House	Pennsylvania	\$5,500	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$9,000
Tom Cotton (R)	Senate	Arkansas	\$4,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$9,000
Pete Olson (R)	House	Texas	\$2,500	\$3,500	\$2,500	\$8,500
JD Vance (R)	Senate	Ohio	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$8,000
Don Bacon (R)	House	Nebraska	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$0	\$7,000
Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R)	House	Oregon	\$7,000	\$0	\$0	\$7,000
Robert Aderholt (R)	House	Alabama	\$7,000	\$0	\$0	\$7,000
Bill Flores (R)	House	Texas	\$2,000	\$3,500	\$1,000	\$6,500
Claudia Tenney (R)	House	New York	\$5,500	\$1,000	\$0	\$6,500
Jim Inhofe (R)	Senate	Oklahoma	\$4,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$6,500
Randy Weber (R)	House	Texas	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$0	\$6,500
Barry Moore (R)	House	Alabama	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Debbie Lesko (R)	House	Arizona	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Doug Collins (R)	House	Georgia	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$6,000
Mark Walker (R)	House	North Carolina	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Mike Carey (R)	House	Ohio	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Nancy Mace (R)	House	South Carolina	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000
Scott Perry (R)	House	Pennsylvania	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$6,000

Candidate	Body	State	Toyota 20-24	GM 20-24	Ford 20-24	All PACs
John Carter (R)	House	Texas	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$5,500
Neal Dunn (R)	House	Florida	\$0	\$4,500	\$1,000	\$5,500
Chris Stewart (R)	House	Utah	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Don Young (R)	House	Alaska	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
Jim Hagedorn (R)	House	Minnesota	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Kevin Hern (R)	House	Oklahoma	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$5,000
Mark Amodei (R)	House	Nevada	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
Mark E Green (R)	House	Tennessee	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Pete Ricketts (R)	Senate	Nebraska	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Ted Cruz (R)	Senate	Texas	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
John Shimkus (R)	House	Illinois	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,000	\$4,500
Byron Donalds (R)	House	Florida	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$4,000
Eric Burlison (R)	House	Missouri	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
French Hill (R)	House	Arkansas	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
Marlin Stutzman (R)	House	Indiana	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
Rob Wittman (R)	House	Virginia	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
Vicky Hartzler (R)	House	Missouri	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
Brian Babin (R)	House	Texas	\$0	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$3,500
Daniel Webster (R)	House	Florida	\$0	\$3,500	\$0	\$3,500
John Kennedy (R)	Senate	Louisiana	\$0	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$3,500
Lee Zeldin (R)	House	New York	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$3,500
Mike Lawler (R)	House	New York	\$0	\$3,500	\$0	\$3,500
Steve Chabot (R)	House	Ohio	\$0	\$3,500	\$0	\$3,500
Steve Stivers (R)	House	Ohio	\$0	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$3,500
Mike Flood (R)	House	Nebraska	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,000
Mo Brooks (R)	House	Alabama	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,000
Rob Portman (R)	Senate	Ohio	\$0	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000
Dennis Ross (R)	House	Florida	\$2,880	\$0	\$0	\$2,880
John Hoeven (R)	Senate	North Dakota	\$0	\$0	\$2,500	\$2,500
Ken Calvert (R)	House	California	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,500

Candidate	Body	State	Toyota 20-24	GM 20-24	Ford 20-24	All PACs
Roy Blunt (R)	Senate	Missouri	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$2,500
Craig Goldman (R)	Non-incumbent	Texas	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
Johnny Isakson (R)	Senate	Georgia	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
Mark Meadows (R)	House	North Carolina	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
Matt M Rosendale Sr (R)	House	Montana	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
Ronny Jackson (R)	House	Texas	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
Ross Spano (R)	House	Florida	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$2,000
Jerry L Carl (R)	House	Alabama	\$0	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500
Andy Harris (R)	House	Maryland	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Brad Knott (R)	Non-incumbent	North Carolina	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Brandon Gill (R)	Non-incumbent	Texas	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
David Taylor (R)	Non-incumbent	Ohio	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
David Young (R)	House	Iowa	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Doug Lamborn (R)	House	Colorado	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
Glenn Grothman (R)	House	Wisconsin	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
Jake Laturner (R)	House	Kansas	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Jim Justice (R)	House	West Virginia	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Joe Wilson (R)	House	South Carolina	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Mario Diaz-Balart (R)	House	Florida	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Mary E Miller (R)	House	Illinois	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Pat Harrigan (R)	Non-incumbent	North Carolina	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Pat Toomey (R)	Senate	Pennsylvania	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Rich McCormick (R)	House	Georgia	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Ron Johnson (R)	Senate	Wisconsin	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Tommy Tuberville (R)	Senate	Alabama	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Tracey Mann (R)	House	Kansas	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000



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