

## Group launches to protect gas, fight Green New Deal

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A new group is focused on fighting the Green New Deal and promoting natural gas. Ellen M. Gilmer/file/E&E News

A group launched today aimed at promoting the natural gas industry and fighting liberal policies that could hurt it, like the Green New Deal.

The Empowerment Alliance aims to frame gas as positive for the United States' economy and environment. It is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit and plans to keep its donors' identities secret.

"The Green New Deal, as a national conversation, needs to be put in context with reality and facts. And in this era of hyperpartisan atmospherics, it's important that there be a balanced approach to this subject of America's energy independence and America's future as it relates to its economy and its environment," Terry Holt, the group's spokesman and a partner at public relations firm HDMK, told E&E News.

"America's natural gas supplies are its core national security asset. And in today's political environment, our natural resources are being pulled apart by this dynamic between energy versus the environment," Holt said.

Holt also declined to disclose the group's budget. "The Empowerment Alliance got into this debate understanding that it's going to be up against some pretty big-money opposition from [George] Soros, [Tom] Steyer and [Michael] Bloomberg," he said, referring to three major liberal donors frequently targeted by conservatives.

"I doubt we'll have the resources that that troika can command, but we think with a powerful message, we can be competitive and balance this debate."

The Empowerment Alliance joins a growing field of pro-fossil-fuel nonprofits fighting the Green New Deal and other policies, like Energy 45, Power the Future and the American Energy Alliance. Some are new to the game, while others have been promoting fossil fuels and pushing policies to benefit them for years.

The group is being led by James Nathanson, a former Republican National Committee executive and GOP political operative who has been active for decades.

Holt said it's important to keep donors' names private, because revealing them would put them in danger of violence or other harm. He cited examples like an anti-pipeline demonstration last year on Duke Energy Corp. CEO Lynn Good's driveway.

"Because of violence and trespassing and other criminal behavior, the Empowerment Alliance is going to protect its donors from that kind of risk," he said. "We are offering donors this protection out of the concern that we would have should they come forward and the scrutiny of some of these eco-terrorists."