



Is This What It Takes To Get The President's Attention?

After Receiving Questions At "Political Events" From Energy Loan Applicants, Obama Takes An Interest In A Program His Economic Team Had Warned Was Providing "Unjust Enrichment"

OBAMA REQUESTED PERSONAL BRIEFINGS ON THE SOLYNDRA LOAN PROGRAM AFTER RECEIVING QUESTIONS AT "POLITICAL EVENTS"

White House Staff Arranged For Obama To Be Briefed On The 1705 Loan Program Two Months Before The Collapse Of Solyndra. "President Obama's staff arranged for him to be personally briefed last summer on a loan program to help clean-energy companies, two months before the program was thrust into headlines by the collapse of its flagship, the solar company Solyndra, records show." (Carol D. Leonnig and Joe Stephens, "E-Mails About Clean-Energy Loans Provide New Details On White House Involvement," [The Washington Post](#), 8/8/12)

Obama Requested The Briefing Because The Program Came Up At "Political Events." "An Energy staffer explained that the president 'wants to know its status' so he could be prepared when the loan program came up 'at official events and political events where he interacts with [the] business community and Congressional members.'" (Carol D. Leonnig and Joe Stephens, "E-Mails About Clean-Energy Loans Provide New Details On White House Involvement," [The Washington Post](#), 8/8/12)

- **The Email Noted That "Many People Attending Such Gatherings 'Have Some Affiliation Or Interest In The Numerous Applications Received That Involve Substantial Funds.'"** "The e-mail from the department's chief of staff, Brandon Hurlbut, went on to say that many people attending such gatherings 'have some affiliation or interest in the numerous applications received that involve substantial funds.'" (Carol D. Leonnig and Joe Stephens, "E-Mails About Clean-Energy Loans Provide New Details On White House Involvement," [The Washington Post](#), 8/8/12)

Solyndra Investor George Kaiser's Fundraising For The Obama Campaign Gave Him Insider Access To The President And White House Staff

"The Leading Investors In Solyndra Were Two Investment Funds With Ties To George B. Kaiser, A Major Campaign Fundraising 'Bundler' For Obama." (Carol D. Leonnig And Joe Stephens, "Solyndra Employees: Company Suffered From Mismanagement, Heavy Spending," [The Washington Post](#), 9/21/11)

- **Kaiser In July 2009: “There’s Never Been More Money Shoved Out Of The Government’s Door In World History ...”** “There’s never been more money shoved out of the government’s door in world history, and probably never will be again, than in the last few months and the next 18 months, and our selfish parochial goal is to get as much of it for Tulsa and Oklahoma as we possibly can.” (David Milenberg and Peter Robison, “Kaiser Charity Sought Solyndra Plant After Billionaire Founder Aided Obama,” [Bloomberg](#), 9/26/11)

In An Email With George Kaiser, Solyndra Investor Steve Mitchell Said “We Do Have A Contact Within The WH That We Are Working With” Concerning Government Contracts. “Understood. The WH meeting is more about assistance in selling panels to the government than it is about getting the DOE loan revised. The WH has offered to help in the past and we do have a contact within the WH that we are working with. I think the company is hoping that we have some unnatural relationship that can open bigger doors—I’ve cautioned them that no one really has those relationships anymore.” (Steve Mitchell, [Email To Ken Levit And George Kaiser](#), ft. 437, 10/6/10)

- **During His June 2010 Visit, A Solyndra Investor Heard Obama Promise Solyndra’s CEO That He Would Look Into Putting Their Panels On Government Buildings.** “When Obama visited Solyndra in June 2010, Chris Gronet spoke very openly about the need for installation of Solyndra’s rooftop solar on U.S. government buildings. I heard Obama actually promise Chris that he would look into it when he returned to Washington.” (Tom Baruch, [Email From Tom Baruch To Steve Mitchell And Brian Harrison](#), 8/10/10)

Kaiser Had The Ear Of Obama For Two Hours At An October 2010 Fundraiser. “One email shows Mr. Kaiser did raise the issue of Chinese subsidies for Chinese solar-panel makers—an issue of interest to Solyndra—when he sat next to Mr. Obama at an October 2010 dinner.” (Ryan Tracy and Deborah Soloman, “Solyndra Supporter Spoke To President,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 11/10/11)

- **Emails From George Kaiser Contradict The Obama Administration’s “Repeated Assurance” That Kaiser Played No Role In The Solyndra Loan Guarantee.** “Emails released by a House committee appear to show that a major donor to President Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign discussed with White House officials a federal loan to a failed California solar company. That’s despite repeated assurances by Obama administration officials that the donor, George Kaiser, didn’t discuss the loan with the White House.” (Matthew Daly, “Obama Donor Discussed Solar Loan With White House,” [The Associated Press](#), 11/9/11)
- **Emails Revealed That Kaiser Discussed How To Best Use “Contacts Inside The White House” To Secure The Solyndra Loan.** “A key investor in the failed solar power company Solyndra, who was also a political donor to Barack Obama, strategized with his top executives about whether and how they should use their contacts inside the White House to help their failing business venture, according to emails surfaced by Congressional investigators Wednesday.” (Matthew Mosk, Emails: Obama Donor Weighed Asking White House To Save Solyndra, [ABC News](#), 11/9/11)

BILL DALEY SIDED WITH THE ENERGY DEPARTMENT AGAINST WARNINGS FROM THE ECONOMIC TEAM THAT RECIPIENTS WERE RECEIVING “UNJUST ENRICHMENT”

Then-Chief Of Staff Bill Daley Resolved A Dispute Between The Economic Team And The Energy Department Over The Generous Subsidies In The Loan Program. “About the same time, then-White House Chief of Staff William Daley resolved a dispute among administration officials over another project in the program, clearing the way for a \$1.4 billion loan, according to documents and sources familiar with the situation.” (Carol D. Leonnig and Joe Stephens, “E-Mails About Clean-Energy Loans Provide New Details On White House Involvement,” [The Washington Post](#), 8/8/12)

After Winning An Argument Over The Program's Subsidies With The President's Economic Team, DOE Loan Program Director Jonathan Silver Wrote That "The Energy Department's Victory Was Cause To 'Do Some Serious Gloating.'" "After the June 2011 meeting with Daley, Jonathan Silver, the director of the Energy Department's loan office, celebrated 'total victory' over administration opponents. He described in an e-mail to a colleague how Chu came as 'close to an annihilation of the economic team's position as you could possibly hope for.' Silver speculated that Daley had given the economic team 'a fig leaf' and that the Energy Department's victory was cause to 'do some serious gloating.'" (Carol D. Leonnig and Joe Stephens, "E-Mails About Clean-Energy Loans Provide New Details On White House Involvement," [The Washington Post](#), 8/8/12)

- **Officials At The Treasury Department And OMB Felt That The Loan Program's Subsidies Were Too Generous And Offered Private Investors "Unjust Enrichment."** "Officials at the Treasury Department and the White House Office of Management and Budget often argued that government subsidies to clean-energy companies gave them too great of a return on investment, or an 'unjust enrichment,' Chu wrote." (Carol D. Leonnig and Joe Stephens, "E-Mails About Clean-Energy Loans Provide New Details On White House Involvement," [The Washington Post](#), 8/8/12)

In October 2010, OMB And Treasury Raised Concerns Over The Program Allowing Companies To Double Dip In Government Subsidies That They Didn't Need

A Major Battle Took Place In The Administration, With OMB And Treasury Objecting To Allowing Loan Recipient "Double-Dipping" In Assistance From DOE And Treasury. "One major battle took place over Caithness Energy's Shepherds Flat wind farm in Oregon. The OMB and Treasury believed the project was 'double-dipping' by tapping the cash grants from a Treasury program while seeking a loan guarantee from the Energy Department. They also believed that the project would go ahead without additional government support." (Steven Mufson and Carol D. Leonnig, "Some Clean-Energy Firms Found U.S. Loan-Guarantee Program A Bad Bet," [The Washington Post](#), 9/26/11)

- **Larry Summers, Carol Browner And Ron Klain Argued In A Memo To The President That The Project's Developers Had Too Little "Skin In The Game."** "When Summers, Browner and Klain wrote their memo later that month, they made Shepherds Flat a case study of what was wrong with the loan guarantees. It said that federal and state subsidies totaled \$1.2 billion, more than 65 percent of the project's cost. The sponsor had 'little skin in the game' — about 10 percent — the memo said." (Steven Mufson and Carol D. Leonnig, "Some Clean-Energy Firms Found U.S. Loan-Guarantee Program A Bad Bet," [The Washington Post](#), 9/26/11)
- **"The Memo Said The Project Was 'Double-Dipping,' Gorging On A \$1.2 Billion Smorgasbord Of Federal And State Subsidies."** "The memo said the project was 'double-dipping,' gorging on a \$1.2 billion smorgasbord of federal and state subsidies. The incentives --all within existing law -- include a \$500 million federal grant, \$200 million in federal and state tax benefits from accelerated depreciation, \$220 million in premium power prices attributed to state renewable energy mandates, and a \$1.3 billion loan guarantee with a value of \$300 million." (Ted Sickinger, "Green Energy Soaks Up Tax Dollars," [The Oregonian](#), 3/13/11)

The Memo Highlighted The Guarantees Awarded To One Project That Would Produce A Windfall 30 Percent Return On Their Meager 11 Percent Equity In The Project. "The Shepherds Flat loan guarantee illustrates some of the economic and public policy issues raised by OMB and Treasury. Shepherds Flat is an 845-megawatt wind farm proposed for Oregon. This \$1.9 billion project would consist of 338 GE wind turbines manufactured in South Carolina and Florida and, upon completion; it would represent the largest wind farm in the country. The sponsor's equity is about 11% of the wind

project costs, and would generate an estimate return on equity of 30%.” (Larry Summers, Carol Browner and Ron Klain, “Memorandum For The President: Renewable Energy Loan Guarantees And Grants,” [The White House](#), 10/25/10)

- **The Memo Noted That “This Project Would Likely Move Without The Loan Guarantee.”** “This project would likely move without the loan guarantee. The economics are favorable for wind investment given tax credits and state renewable energy standards.” (Larry Summers, Carol Browner and Ron Klain, “Memorandum For The President: Renewable Energy Loan Guarantees And Grants,” [The White House](#), 10/25/10)