

I've [posted](#) before about the importance of the work on climate issues coming out of law schools, often from environmental law centers. The fossil fuel industry and its conservative allies seem to have woken up to this fact. Their response is to try to repress this valuable work. This is a backhanded acknowledgement that law schools are making a difference.

This campaign has targeted some of the law schools with the most prominent environmental law programs. The Sabin Center at Columbia has long been a go-to source for information about climate litigation and legal developments. A group of right-wing state attorney generals [singled out](#) senior Sabin staff, demanding a congressional investigation. Their targets were painted as part of a nefarious effort to "bias" federal judges by instructing them accurately about climate science.

Another attack has been directed against an NYU environmental law center that assists state attorneys general by providing fellowships for new hires. This effort has raised the ire of the usual suspects, who succeeded in getting the House Oversight Committee to [open](#) an investigation.

There has also been a barrage of demands for documents of individual professors and environmental law centers at public universities, brought under the state equivalents of FOIA. The *NY Times* did a [feature story](#) about the attacks on one junior faculty member who had dared to invent legal theories for holding the fossil fuel industry responsible for its impacts. These document requests are burdensome and time-consuming, with the risk that someone will find a stray sentence or two in emails that can be made to look nefarious when taken out of context.

Climate scientists have long been the target of harassment and public attack. It appears that people who work on climate policy are now also in the crosshairs. What we're seeing lacks the drama of other attacks on free speech and academic freedom. But these attacks are capable of being no less harmful. McCarthyism writ small is still McCarthyism.