

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6216

(202) 225-6906
judiciary.house.gov

January 14, 2026

The Honorable Robert J. Conrad, Jr.
Director, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts
and Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States
Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building
One Columbus Circle NE
Washington, DC 20544

Dear Judge Conrad:

The Committee on the Judiciary is investigating allegations of improper attempts by the Environmental Law Institute (“ELI”) and its Climate Judiciary Project (“CJP”) to influence federal judges.¹ Public reports have documented concerns around apparent efforts by ELI and CJP to influence judges who potentially may be presiding over lawsuits related to alleged climate change claims.² These efforts appear to have the underlying goal of predisposing federal judges in favor of plaintiffs alleging injuries from the manufacturing, marketing, use, or sale of fossil-fuel products.³

The Judicial Conference of the United States (“JCUS”) and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (“AO”) acknowledge risks related to privately funded educational programs for judges. These risks include, for example, “[t]hat influence [over federal judges] . . . may be exerted through program content, contact between judges and those who litigate before them, and perquisites provided to program attendees.”⁴ Despite this clear acknowledgment of risks, current JCUS policies appear to focus mainly on perquisites, while leaving the door open for

¹ Letter from Representative Jim Jordan, Chairman, House Judiciary Committee, et al., to Jordan Diamond, President, Environmental Law Institute (Aug. 29, 2025), <https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-08-29-jdj-dei-wh-to-eli-diamond-re-cjp.pdf>.

² Katelynn Richardson, *Top State Judge Handling Climate Lawsuit Worked with Environmental Group Tied to Plaintiffs’ Lawyers*, DAILY CALLER (May 17, 2023), <https://dailycaller.com/2023/05/17/climate-lawsuit-lawyers-environmental-group/>; Emma Colton & Breanne Deppisch, *Unearthed Chat Sheds Light on Cozy Ties Between Judges, Climate Activists, Raising Ethical Concerns*, FOX NEWS (Jul. 17, 2025), <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/judges-climate-activists-private-forum-exposed>.

³ *Id.*; see also Douglas Kysar & Isabella Soparkar, *Climate Science and Law for Judges: Applying Attribution: Impacts of Climate Attribution Science on Tort Litigation*, ENVTL. LAW INST. (Jan. 2023), <https://cjp.eli.org/curriculum/applying-attribution-impacts-climate-attribution-science-tort-litigation>.

⁴ ADMIN. OFF. OF THE U.S. CTS., *Statement of Purpose – Privately Funded Seminars Disclosure* (Oct. 2006), <https://www.uscourts.gov/administration-policies/privately-funded-seminars-disclosure-system/statement-purpose-privately-funded-seminars-disclosure>.

groups like ELI and CJP to exert influence through program content and contact between judges and those who litigate before them.⁵

Judicial impartiality is a fundamental pillar of American jurisprudence. The activities of ELI and CJP, however, appear to be designed to bias judges in climate-related cases. Although ELI's has claimed that CJP aims to provide "neutral" information to the judiciary about "the science of climate change" as established among the expert scientific community,⁶ CJP has itself acknowledged that its mission centers on influencing judges' decision-making on "controversial" topics involving "fast moving science."⁷

The materials that ELI and CJP use at judicial seminars are generally not made public, which itself is a cause for concern.⁸ The limited portions of CJP's "Climate Science and Law for Judges Curriculum" that are publicly available seem designed to improperly influence judges in favor of plaintiffs.⁹ ELI has argued to judges that the political-question doctrine should have only "limited" relevance in climate lawsuits,¹⁰ that countervailing research should be rejected because "[n]ot every scientific argument deserves to be taken seriously,"¹¹ and that "the social cost of

⁵ See ADMIN. OFF. OF THE U.S. CTS., *FAQs: Privately Funded Seminars Disclosure*, <https://www.uscourts.gov/administration-policies/privately-funded-seminars-disclosure-system/faqs-privately-funded-seminars-disclosure> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025) (exempting the National Judicial College from disclosure obligations).

⁶ ENVTL. LAW INST., *Climate Judiciary Project*, <https://www.eli.org/climate-judiciary-project> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025).

⁷ ENVTL. LAW INST., *Spotlight on Judicial Training: Science in the Courts*, <https://www.eli.org/events/spotlight-judicial-training-science-courts> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025) ("Our panel explored the role science and research training play within judicial training process to ensure justice in the context of environmental issues").

⁸ Jason Isaac, *The Environmental Law Institute's Climate Judiciary Project (CJP) is Corruptly Influencing the Courts and Destroying the Rule of Law to Promote Questionable Climate Science*, AM. ENERGY INST. (2024) (noting that "CJP attempts to head-off the obvious ethics problems it created by sharing its 'educational materials' online and identifying expert presenters or academics who had a hand in their preparation," but "they [CJP] do not disclose which experts are connected to ongoing climate litigation, the role they played in crafting CJP curriculum, and whether they have presented at CJP conferences before judges"), <https://americanenergyinstitute.com/docs/americanenergy-eli-climate-judiciary-project.pdf>; see also ENVTL. LAW INST., *Past Judicial Education Trainings*, <https://www.eli.org/judicial-education/past-trainings> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025); ENVTL. LAW INST., *Judicial Education in Action: Americas*, <https://www.eli.org/judicial-education/judicial-education-action-americas> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025); ENVTL. LAW INST., *Curriculum*, <https://cjp.eli.org/curriculum> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025).

⁹ See, e.g., Michael Wehner, *Detection and Attribution of Climate Change*, CLIMATE JUDICIARY PROJECT, <https://cjp.eli.org/curriculum/detection-and-attribution-climate-change> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025) (alleging that "[d]evelopments in attribution science over the past two decades have made possible many robust statements about the human influence on climate. These statements extend to both long-term trends and extreme events, including heatwaves, floods, droughts, and storms. The extension of attribution science to socioeconomic damages and inequality is now underway and is likely to become an important factor in assigning responsibility in legal proceedings.").

¹⁰ Robin Craig, *Climate Science and Law for Judges: Procedural Techniques Available in Climate Litigation*, CLIMATE JUDICIARY PROJECT (Jan. 2023), <https://cjp.eli.org/curriculum/procedural-techniques-available-climate-litigation>.

¹¹ *Id.*; Paul Hanle & Michael Mastrandrea, *Climate Science and Law for Judges: How Climate Science Works*, ENVTL. LAW INST. (Jan. 2023), https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/files-pdf/HCSW_Hanle%20Mastrandrea.pdf

carbon dioxide” is a proper method for calculating damages,¹² All are positions advanced by plaintiffs. Additionally, these topics are all actively litigated issues, and ELI’s *ex parte* advocacy on them raises questions about the impartiality of the judges connected with ELI’s seminars.¹³ Despite ELI’s contention that “CJP does not participate in litigation, provide support for or coordinate with any parties in litigation, or advise judges on how they should rule on any issue or in any case,” recent evidence has come to light calling these denials into question.¹⁴

ELI and CJP’s conduct is especially concerning because ELI and CJP characterize their efforts as “neutral” and “objective,” which appears to be questionable at best.¹⁵ Based on their publicly documented affiliations and position statements, the ELI-selected experts who instruct the judges on questions of supposed climate “science” are not neutral third parties, but are known associates of organizations allied with the radical decarbonization movement.¹⁶ CJP boasts that it has educated more than 2,000 judges at the federal and state levels.¹⁷ At the same time, ELI and CJP have concealed the identities of the judges who have attended or participated in ELI and CJP training sessions or conferences, and they have not been transparent about the funding sources for these events.¹⁸

¹² Gary Yohe, *Climate Science and Law for Judges: Risks and Costs of Climate Change*, ENVTL. LAW INST. (Jan. 2023), https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/files-pdf/Risks%20and%20Costs%20of%20Climate%20Change_full%20report%20formatted.pdf.

¹³ Further, pushing judges to develop and enforce these kinds of policies in the first instance violates the Constitution’s separation of powers.

¹⁴ Kamden Mulder, *Climate Activists Are Influencing Judges to Rule In Their Favor Using this ‘Educational’ Program*, NATIONAL REVIEW (Sept. 4, 2025), <https://www.nationalreview.com/news/climate-activists-are-influencing-judges-to-rule-in-their-favor-using-this-educational-program/>; Mandi Risko, *Exposed: Plaintiff Counsel’s Fingerprints on “Independent” Climate Studies*, ENERGY IN DEPTH (Sept. 18, 2025), <https://eidclimate.org/exposed-plaintiff-counsels-fingerprints-on-independent-climate-studies/> (“the Worthington & Caron LLP website links to a draft ‘module’ used by Environmental Law Institute’s Climate Judiciary Project (CJP) to train judges about climate science”).

¹⁵ Editorial, *Judicial Ethics and Double Standards*, WALL ST. J., Aug. 30, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/climate-judiciary-project-judges-environmental-law-institute-supreme-court-dick-durbin-sheldon-whitehouse-5256997a> (Sandra Nichols Thiam, director of judicial education at ELI, stated that the Climate Judiciary Project’s goal is the “development of a body of law that supports climate action.”).

¹⁶ See, e.g., Jessica Wentz, *Government Action and Climate Science*, ENVTL. LAW INST. (Jan. 2023), https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/files-pdf/Government%20Action%20and%20Climate%20Science_full%20report%20formatted.pdf (“We are grateful to our advisors Jonathan Adler, Ann Carlson, Kristie Ebi, Chris Field, Jeremy Fogel, Inez Fung, Michael Gerrard, Geoffrey Heal, Barry Hill, Michael Oppenheimer, Stephen Pacala, Justice Ronald Robie, Judge Michael Simon, and Judge David Tatel for their contributions to the content of the whole curriculum as well as on this module.”); Thomas Catenacci, *Leonardo DiCaprio funneled grants through dark money group to fund climate nuisance lawsuits, emails show*, FOX NEWS (Aug. 15, 2022), <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/leonardo-dicaprio-funneled-grants-dark-money-group-fund-climate-nuisance-lawsuits-emails-show>; *Freedom of Information Act Request to U.S. Department of Energy*, ENERGY POLICY ADVOCATES (May 14, 2021), http://epadvocates.org/Colorado/DC-NNSA_FOIA_1.pdf; See Jeff Garberson, *Upset at Climate Denier’s Platform, Santer Set to Leave LLNL*, THE INDEPENDENT (May 26, 2021), <https://www.independentnews.com/news/upset-at-climate-deniers-platform-santer-set-to-leave-llnl/>.

¹⁷ See CLIMATE JUDICIARY PROJECT, *About CJP*, <https://cjp.eli.org/about> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025); Sandra Thiam & Paul Hanle, *Judging in a Changed Climate*, ELI Policy Brief No. 18 (July/Aug. 2022), <https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/files-pdf/Judging%20in%20a%20Changed%20Climate.pdf>.

¹⁸ Isaac, *supra* note 8 at 4.

The lack of transparency related to ELI and CJP “training” of federal judges appears to be enabled by JCUS and AO policies. Although privately funded seminars are ostensibly subject to disclosure obligations and federal judges have attended numerous programs affiliated with ELI and CJP in the past, the Report of Privately Funded Seminars discloses only a single program associated with ELI and CJP.¹⁹ This lack of complete disclosure likely stems, at least in part, to the very narrow nature of the disclosure obligations under the Privately Funded Seminars Disclosure policy in place since 2007.²⁰

Under that policy, disclosure is only required when a significant purpose of the program is education of federal or state judges, and the organizer of the program offers to reimburse more than \$480 of federal judges’ expenses associated with attending the program.²¹ If no perquisites are involved—and a judge is not reimbursed—no disclosure obligations would appear to exist.²² Even where these initial conditions are met, the disclosure rules explicitly exclude programs hosted by governmental organizations; state and local bar associations; national, state, and local subject matter bar associations; the Judicial Division of the American Bar Association; and the National Judicial College.²³ ELI and CJP appear to be leveraging these broad exceptions and carveouts to avoid disclosure requirements.

For example, ELI and CJP have partnered with the Federal Judicial Center, which does not trigger any disclosure requirements. ELI represents that “CJP began in 2018 in coordination with the [Federal Judicial Center] . . . in response to demand from the judiciary for education about climate science.”²⁴ Concerns about this coordination have drawn significant attention and rightful calls for scrutiny.²⁵

ELI and CJP have also partnered with the AO disclosure-exempt National Judicial College on programming, again sidestepping oversight. ELI and CJP boast of “numerous collaborations with the National Judicial College,” from which “we have gained invaluable knowledge from the judges participating in our programs.”²⁶ Although the full extent of this collaboration is, once again, unclear, ELI and CJP appear to have hosted various programs, including programs on “Rising Seas and Litigation: What Judges Need to Know about Warming-

¹⁹ See ADMIN. OFF. OF THE U.S. CTS., *Report of Privately Funded Seminars*, <https://psds.uscourts.gov/psdsdetail.pdf> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025); see CLIMATE JUDICIARY PROJECT, *About CJP* <https://cjp.eli.org/about>; Thiam & Hanle, *Judging in a Changed Climate*, *supra* note 17.

²⁰ ADMIN. OFF. OF THE U.S. CTS., *FAQs: Privately Funded Seminar Disclosure*, *supra* note 5; ADMIN. OFF. OF THE U.S. CTS., *Judicial Conference Policy on Judges’ Attendance at Privately Funded Educational Programs* (Jan. 1, 2007), <https://www.uscourts.gov/administration-policies/privately-funded-seminars-disclosure-system/judicial-conference-policy-judges-attendance-privately-funded-educational-programs>.

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ See ENVTL. LAW INST., *About the Climate Judiciary Project* (Sep. 2025), <https://www.eli.org/news/about-climate-judiciary-project>.

²⁵ Senator Ted Cruz, *Left-wing climate activists are trying to manipulate the justice system*, THE HILL (Sept. 26, 2024), <https://thehill.com/opinion/4898981-judicial-center-climate-judiciary-project/>; Isaac, *supra* note 8.

²⁶ ENVTL. LAW INST., *Climate Science and Law for Judges: About the Curriculum*, (Mar. 2023), <https://cjp.eli.org/curriculum/about-curriculum>.

Driven Sea-Level Rise,”²⁷ “Introducing the Climate Judiciary Project,”²⁸ a “webinar on hurricanes, their societal impacts, and associated legal considerations,”²⁹ and “Climate Change & Water: Droughts,”³⁰ among others. Yet, apparently because of the issues discussed above with respect to JCUS and AO policies, ELI and CJP avoid disclosure and oversight.³¹

The exceptionally limited disclosures related to ELI and CJP-affiliated judicial programming are even more troubling given ELI’s and CJP’s stated goal to target judges who are hearing climate-related cases. In 2022, ELI and CJP made clear that “[w]hether through dissemination of modules of the curriculum, or by delivery of seminars and webinars, in the next three years [ELI and CJP] will focus our outreach on states and federal jurisdictions where [climate-related] cases will be heard.”³² In light of this intentional targeting of judges poised to hear climate-related cases, it seems clear that the JCUS and AO disclosure rules have fallen short.

We look forward to engaging with the JCUS and AO to ensure that the Privately Funded Seminars Disclosure is updated to prevent abuse by advocacy organizations masquerading as fair and impartial educational programs, and to ensure that such programs are subjected to adequate scrutiny and oversight going forward. The publicly available Report of Privately Funded Seminars is time-limited from December 2022 to the present.³³ We ask that you provide copies of all disclosures that have been made pursuant to the Privately Funded Seminars Disclosure policy between 2018 and December 2022. Further, we ask you provide any disclosures made pursuant to the Privately Funded Seminars Disclosure policy from 2018 to the present that are not otherwise reflected in the Report of Privately Funded Seminars.

We ask that you provide these materials and information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 28, 2026.

The Supreme Court has recognized that Congress has a “broad and indispensable” power to conduct oversight, which “encompasses inquiries into the administration of existing laws, studies of proposed laws, and surveys in our social, economic, or political system for the purpose of enabling Congress to remedy them.”³⁴ The Committee is authorized to conduct oversight of “[t]he judiciary and judicial proceedings” and “[f]ederal courts and judges,” pursuant to the

²⁷ ENVTL. LAW INST., *Climate Science Leaders in Judicial Education Workshop*, <https://cjp.eli.org/events/climate-science-leaders-judicial-education-workshop> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025).

²⁸ ENVTL. LAW INST., *Introducing the Climate Judiciary Project*, <https://cjp.eli.org/events/introducing-climate-judiciary-project> (last visited Dec. 11, 2025).

²⁹ ENVTL. LAW INST., *2022 Year in Review* (Apr. 1, 2023), <https://cjp.eli.org/news/230401-2022-year-review>.

³⁰ ENVTL. LAW INST., *National Judicial College Webinar – Climate Change & Water: Droughts*, <https://cjp.eli.org/events/national-judicial-college-webinar-climate-change-water-droughts> (last visited Oct. 20, 2025).

³¹ See ADMIN. OFF. OF THE U.S. CTS., *Report of Privately Funded Seminars*, *supra* note 19.

³² Thiam & Hanle, *Judging in a Changed Climate*, *supra* note 17.

³³ See ADMIN. OFF. OF THE U.S. CTS., *Report of Privately Funded Seminars*, *supra* note 19.

³⁴ *Trump v. Mazars USA, LLP*, 591 U.S. 848, 862 (2020) (internal quotation marks omitted).

The Honorable Robert J. Conrad, Jr.

January 14, 2026

Page 6

Rules of the House of Representatives.³⁵ If you have any questions about this matter, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-6906.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jim Jordan
Chairman



Darrell Issa
Chairman
Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual
Property, Artificial Intelligence
and the Internet

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member

The Honorable Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Courts,
Intellectual Property, Artificial Intelligence, and the Internet

³⁵ Rules of the House of Representatives, R. X, 119th Cong. (2025).