

Another day, another corruption failure... VPG

Tue, 07 May 2013 17:00:00, newstips66, [post_tag: 60-minutes-investigation, post_tag: boycott-tesla, post_tag: corruption, post_tag: dept-of-energy, post_tag: dianne-feinstein, post_tag: doe-corruption, post_tag: elon-musk, category: energy-dept-slush-fund, post_tag: gao-investigation, category: housing, post_tag: iron-man, post_tag: john-doerr, post_tag: kleiner, post_tag: kleiner-perkins, post_tag: kleiner-perkins-lawsuit, post_tag: kleiner-perkins-sex-allegations, post_tag: la-times-investigation, post_tag: solyndra, post_tag: solyndra-fisker, post_tag: solyndra-tesla, post_tag: solyndra-real-estate, post_tag: solyndra-scandal, post_tag: solyndra-tax-fraud, post_tag: solyndra-car, post_tag: solyndra-mobile, post_tag: solyndramobile, post_tag: steve-spinner, post_tag: tesla, post_tag: tesla-finnicals, post_tag: tesla-kleiner, post_tag: tesla-motors, post_tag: the-hill, post_tag: throw-them-all-out, post_tag: vehicle-production-group, post_tag: vpg, post_tag: wall-street-journal-investigation, post_tag: washington-corruption-investigation, category: worldnews]

And now!!!: VPG, Vehicle Production Group...

<http://jalopnik.com/yet-another-government-backed-car-company-has-failed-496459146>

<http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20130508/AUTO01/305080410/1121/auto0101/Michigan-auto-startup-suspends-operations>

It simply isn't possible for the largest taxpayer give-away in automobile history to have occurred which caused more relative failures in the automobile industry, or any other industry relative to a giveaway, than ever in history; unless there was corruption...There is no other possible explanation. The "odds of doing business" arguments of some simply do not possibly add-up.

Another Obama fundraiser is investor in car company that won federal loan

By Carol D. Leonnig, October 28, 2011

In this May 26, 2010, photo, President Obama, center, is given a tour of Solyndra by Executive Vice President Ben Bierman, right, as Chief Executive Officer Chris Gronet, left, walks along at Solyndra Inc. in Fremont, Calif.

In this May 26, 2010, photo, President Obama, center, is given a tour of Solyndra... (Paul Chinn/AP)

An investment firm whose vice chairman has been an adviser and fundraiser for President Obama saw one of its portfolio companies win approval this year for \$50 million in loans from the administration's clean-energy loan program.

Washington-based Perseus says its affiliation with James A. Johnson, a major fundraiser for Obama's campaign, played no role in persuading the Energy Department to award the loan to Vehicle Production Group, a Miami start-up that is manufacturing wheelchair-accessible cars and taxis.

Johnson headed Obama's vice presidential selection committee in 2008 and is the former chairman of housing mortgage giant Fannie Mae. He was listed as a campaign fundraising bundler for Obama in the 2008 race, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, and committed to raising \$200,000 to \$500,000 for the upcoming presidential race.

Johnson could not be reached for comment Thursday. Perseus Chairman Frank Pearl said in an interview that it is an "absurd idea" to think that Johnson's political connections helped the Miami company.

"I doubt there was anybody at DOE that even considered the fact that Jim was part of this firm. We went straight through the proper channels of the [loan] program," he said.

Department spokesman Damien LaVera said in a statement Thursday that "the decision to provide the Vehicle Production Group a loan was made based on the merits after more than two years of review by officials in the DOE loan program."

Republicans have criticized the administration for what they say is a pattern of loan assistance going to politically connected clean-energy companies. Recently, they expanded their investigations of loan guarantees to other companies whose investors include Democratic contributors.

Both the White House and the Energy Department have said that no such pattern exists and that all decisions were decided on merit.

A nine-month House investigation of the loan guarantee program has largely focused on the Obama administration's first clean-energy loan: \$535 million to solar start-up Solyndra, a now-shuttered company whose lead investors were funds tied to George Kaiser, an Obama fundraising bundler and Tulsa billionaire.

The Energy Department ignored numerous warnings that the company's finances were shaky and rushed to approve the Solyndra loan; now taxpayers are obligated to repay the money. The head of the loan program, Jonathan Silver, resigned this month, weeks after the head of the House investigative committee called for him to be fired.

In recent weeks, Republican lawmakers have widened their scope to more deeply probe \$1 billion in loans approved by the same program to electric auto makers Fisker Automotive and Tesla Motors.

On Wednesday, a congressional committee chairman asked the Energy Department for documents concerning its decision to offer a \$730 million loan to a U.S. subsidiary of a steel-making company run by the second-richest man in Russia.

The loan was for Severstal's North American operation to upgrade a Dearborn, Mich., plant to supply the auto industry. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, asked Energy Secretary Steven Chu to explain why the firm merited taxpayer-backed financing considering the financial mishaps and global standing of its parent company.

In the case of the Vehicle Production Group, the Energy Department conditionally offered the start-up its low-cost, government-backed financing last November. Chu announced the agency's formal approval in March.

Perseus has been the leading investor in VPG since 2008. Pearl said he became interested in the company's concept because of its reliance on compressed natural gas and its unique niche — the first vehicle designed for wheelchair accessibility. He was a longtime friend of VPG's president, Fred Drasner, a former owner of the Washington Redskins and a former co-publisher of the New York Daily News.

"It's a fabulous car," Pearl said, adding that the department was looking for a compressed natural gas project to back. "It's the only one purpose-designed and purpose-built to serve the needs of people in wheelchairs."

Pearl said he took on the role of pursuing the loan for the company while Drasner and his team focused on marketing and car production.

Another investor was Clean Energy Fuels, a firm focused on using natural gas for transportation led by longtime Republican T. Boone Pickens.

Perseus's vice chairman was Johnson, who joined the firm in 2001 but is better known as a fixture in Democratic politics for the past three decades. He served as manager of Walter Mondale's unsuccessful 1984 presidential campaign and chaired the vice presidential selection committee for John F. Kerry's White House campaign.