

Behind the Carbon Curtain: The Energy Industry, Political Censorship, and Free Speech

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An exploration of censorship in a rarefied economic situation, *Behind the Carbon Curtain* examines a number of instances in Wyoming where the energy industry suppressed artistic, social, or academic protest to environmentally detrimental practices. The book is written in an accessible style that nonetheless pulls no punches when either excoriating the energy industry or calling for action by grassroots and established parties alike.

Thorough research, including dozens of interviews, make this book a good candidate for further exploration and potentially classroom use. The book does a fine job exploring how money and economic influence may be used to effectively stop conversations before they start, examining censorship and self-censorship in political and social contexts.

Behind the Carbon Curtain also provides a good description of the history and character of the energy industry in Wyoming, which gives the situation a certain amount of perspective. The willingness of well-known fuel businesses to crush scientists, businesses, citizen activists, and even, potentially, entire communities using their economic influence is nearly as chilling as the efforts of brave individuals to stand up to these strong-arm tactics is inspirational. Among all the reasons to read this book, that might be the most important. Here is an excellent illustration of what activists are up against, a good piece of context for people who are serious about making their voices on this subject heard effectively.

The book makes it clear that censorship is a particular problem in places where a lack of economic diversity produces corporate structures upon which communities or regions may over-rely, as with Wyoming and the energy industry. This makes *Behind the Carbon Curtain* a particularly valuable resource for communities that find themselves in similar positions, regardless of whether or not the censored issue is environmental in nature.

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