

SCOTUS rejects Exxon in climate change document dispute

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The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday cleared the way for the attorney general of Massachusetts to obtain records from Exxon Mobil Corp([XOM.N](#)) to probe whether the oil company for decades concealed its knowledge of the role fossil fuels play in climate change.

The justices declined to hear Exxon's appeal of a ruling by the top court in Massachusetts holding that state Attorney General Maura Healey, a Democrat, had jurisdiction to seek records to probe whether the company misled consumers and investors.

The high court's action marked the latest setback for Exxon in its efforts to halt the Massachusetts investigation and a similar one by New York's attorney general, who in October filed a lawsuit against the company.

New York's lawsuit accused Exxon of engaging in a systematic scheme to deceive investors about the impact that future climate change regulations could have on its business. Exxon has called the claims "meritless."

The Massachusetts and New York investigations were launched following 2015 news reports that Exxon's own scientists had determined that fossil fuel combustion must be reduced to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Those news reports, by InsideClimate News and the Los Angeles Times, were based on documents from the 1970s and 1980s. Exxon said the documents were not inconsistent with its public positions.

Healey in 2016 issued a civil investigative demand to Exxon seeking documents to investigate whether it had violated the state's consumer-protection law through its marketing and sale of fossil fuel products.

Exxon said that because it is incorporated in Texas and New Jersey, Healey had no basis to seek documents to conduct a Massachusetts-based investigation.