

World Bank funds ExxonMobil's go-to law firm to revise Petroleum law in Guyana

\$1.2M contract funded by World Bank's Oil Development Technical Assistance Bank faces criticism over conflict of interest and undermining good governance

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According to latest research by Urgewald, the law firm Hunton Andrews Kurth has been contracted by Guyana's government for **\$1.2 million to write the country's new Petroleum laws**. The cost of the consultancy will be financed through the World Bank's Petroleum Resources Governance and Management Project. [1] It is part of a bigger plan to transform Guyana into a major oil producer after large oil fields were discovered off the country's coastline. Due to the **massive harm the drilling would cause to Guyana, the entire Caribbean and the world's climate**, it is heavily criticized by Urgewald.

While the general terms of the contract has been in the World Bank's Procurement Plan for Guyana's oil development for a while, the name of the law firm that was contracted to do the legal work was just published two weeks ago. Hunton Andrews Kurth is a Houston based law firm that specializes in "transactions involving oil and gas exploration, production, development, storage and transportation". **ExxonMobil is listed as a "regular client" of Hunton Andrews Kurth.** [2]

The actual position in the World Bank's updated Procurement Plan from February 2020 provides for a total of **\$2.2 million for a law firm to draft Guyana's new oil and gas laws.** [3]

„The World Bank claims to be striving for 'good governance' in revising Guyana's legal framework for oil development. However, they are hiring the law firm who counts among their major clients ExxonMobil - the company leading the oil field development in Guyana. **This is 'good governance' for the oil companies, not for the people of Guyana or the global climate. The World Bank is causing a conflict of interest, in effect undermining good governance,**“ says Heike Mainhardt, Senior Advisor for multilateral financial institutions at Urgewald.

For more information about the World Bank's involvement in Guyana's oil development, please read: <https://urgewald.org/medien/world-bank-paves-way-carbon-bomb-drilling-project-guyana>

Notes:

[1] Kaieteur News, US firm hired to revise decades-old Petroleum laws, Feb 11th 2020 <https://www.kaieteurnews.com/2020/02/11/us-firm-hired-to-revise-decades-old-petroleum-laws/>

[2] Legal 500, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP Offices

<https://www.legal500.com/firms/51238-hunton-andrews-kurth-llp/52332-houston-usa/lawyers/596262-robert-jewell/>

[3] The World Bank, Procurement Plan for Guyana Petroleum Resources

Governance and Management Project

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/129441582857793562/pdf/Guyana-LATIN-AMERICA-AND-CARIBBEAN-P166730-Guyana-Petroleum-Resources-Governance-and-Management-Project-Procurement-Plan.pdf>

Contact:

Heike Mainhardt | Senior Advisor for multilateral financial institutions at Urgewald
heike.mainhardt@urgewald.org

Jacey Bingler | Communications Manager at Urgewald
jacey@urgewald.org + 49 175 521 7571