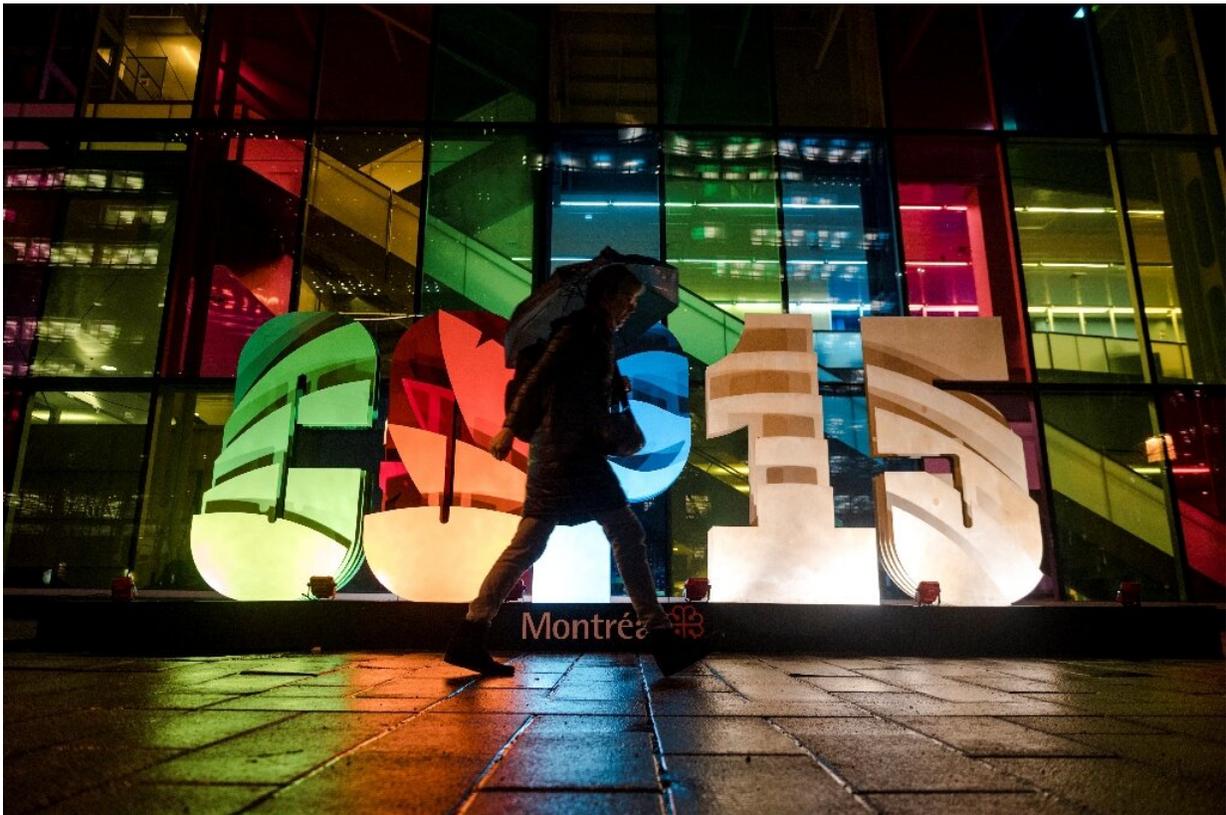


Industry lobbies against biodiversity goals: research

December 8 2022, by Roland LLOYD PARRY



'Major industry lobbyists are working behind the scenes to try to water down policy ambition' of COP15, said the report.

Lobbyists for pesticide and fertiliser producers are pushing "behind the scenes" against stronger protection for species and ecosystems at the

COP15 biodiversity conference, research showed Thursday.

Delegates in Montreal for the meeting, which started this week and runs until December 19, aim to finalise a new framework for "living in harmony with nature", with key goals to preserve Earth's forests, oceans and species.

InfluenceMap, a think tank that monitors communications by companies and industry associations, said it "tracked lobbying between 2020 and 2022 that has sought to weaken both the targets themselves and steps toward their implementation in the EU and the US.

"As COP15 gets underway to finalise new biodiversity goals, major industry lobbyists are working behind the scenes to try to water down policy ambition," said the author of the research, InfluenceMap program manager Rebecca Vaughan.

"We've tracked efforts from industry associations representing some of the world's biggest pesticide and fertiliser producers... strongly resisting global and EU targets for reducing the use of biodiversity-harming agrichemicals."

It tracked submissions they made to the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and communications obtained through Freedom of Information requests.

Examples included the International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA), which the report said opposed targets for reducing losses of nutrients linked to crop production.

'Constructive dialogues'

The director general of the IFA, Alzbeta Klein, said: "This report

misrepresents the activities of the fertiliser industry in the area of biodiversity and in particular, the adoption of global targets.

"The industry recognizes the critical importance of biodiversity protection for the well-being of people and the future of the planet, and is mindful of its role and responsibility in helping to avoid and reverse global biodiversity losses," she told AFP.

The IFA said in a separate statement that it was "actively involved" in the CBD negotiations by providing expertise and information on [agricultural practices](#) to set a "realistic, achievable" target on [sustainable resource management](#).

One of the companies named in the report, German chemicals giant BASF, said it took part in "constructive dialogues" at the request of policymakers, advising on ways to limit [environmental impact](#) and aid biodiversity.

"BASF supports the preservation of ecosystems and promotes the sustainable use of natural resources," a BASF communications executive, Christian Zeintl, told AFP.

"We believe that crop protection can go hand in hand with biodiversity in agriculture."

'Corporate capture'

The InfluenceMap report also pointed to fishery lobby groups that oppose one of COP15's headline initiatives: to protect 30 percent of the world's land and oceans by 2030.

A previous InfluenceMap study in October documented cases of oil associations lobbying against protection for [threatened species](#) such as

some bees, seals and [polar bears](#).

The head of the CBD Elizabeth Mrema said at a briefing in November that the majority of people registering for COP15 were non-government "stakeholders, including the business and [financial institutions](#).

"This clearly indicates the awareness of the private sector of their role of also contributing to actions to reduce the loss of [biodiversity](#)," she said.

Friends of the Earth issued a report on "corporate capture" at COP15, arguing that "the participation of big business in the CBD reveals a fundamental conflict of interest.

"The impact of corporate influence on the CBD COP15 can already be seen in the draft Global Biodiversity Framework," it said.

"Far from being transformative, it fails to address unsustainable production methods and allows for 'business as usual'".

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