

**Reining in the Bulls with Michael Marx**  
**Interview with Bill Weihl and Jennifer Allyn of ClimateVoice**  
**Recorded on February 3, 2023**

**Name:** Bill Weihl

**Current Title:** Founder and Chief Strategic Advisor

**Current Organization:** ClimateVoice

**Title during campaign:** Founder and Executive Director

**Organization during campaign:** ClimateVoice

**Name of campaign:** 1in5 (2020) & Go Time (2021-2022)

**Date(s) of campaign:** 2020 - ongoing

**Target companies/corporations:** Google, Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Microsoft

**Summary:** We believe that the business voice is very important in getting the legislation and regulation that is needed to address the climate crisis at scale and ClimateVoice's unique angle is we want to mobilize the workforce, to educate and empower current employees to demand climate action from their employers. ClimateVoice's mission is to get companies to use their influence to advocate for climate policy.

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**Bill Weihl**

**Founder and Executive Director**

**ClimateVoice**

**Jennifer Allyn**

**Director of Program and Campaigns**

**ClimateVoice**

**Note: Both Bill Weihl and Jennifer Allyn were on this interview, with Bill providing his input via chat, and Jennifer Allyn spoke on their behalf. Bill Weihl's vocal chords have been impacted by ALS but his voice is still louder on climate policy (in his words) "than that of the huge, mega-powerful, multi-billion-dollar global companies that claim to care so deeply about saving our planet."**

00:07 Michael Marx:

It's my pleasure to be introducing and interviewing Bill Weihl, the founder and executive director of ClimateVoice, and Jennifer Allyn, the director of program and Campaigns. It's a pleasure to have you both on this interview today. Why don't we start by just getting a sense of the mission of ClimateVoice?

00:34 Jennifer Allyn:

Absolutely. So, first of all, thank you Michael so much for having us. Bill founded ClimateVoice in 2020 after a long career as a sustainability leader in organizations such as Google and Facebook. And he had a frustration that pro-climate companies were not using their influence to advocate for policy. So, our mission at ClimateVoice is to get companies to really speak up, to step up, to be all in, as we like to say, on climate policy advocacy.

01:10 JA:

And we believe that the business voice is very important in getting the legislation and regulation that we need to really address the crisis at scale and ClimateVoice's unique angle is we want to mobilize the workforce, to educate and empower current employees to demand climate action from their employers.

01:33 MM:

Great. I was going to ask what your overall strategy or focus is, but it's clear that it's employees and getting them to really step up. Are there certain companies that you've focused on in your campaign work initially and if so, how did you choose them?

01:52 JA:

Yes. So originally in 2020 when we launched, we did a campaign focused on the five biggest US tech companies. So this is Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, and who am I forgetting? Did I do it? I didn't do it alphabetically.

02:10 MM:

Twitter?

02:12 JA:

No, it was the five big ones. It's Amazon, I forgot. So it is, you know, the big five. When the media talk about the big five tech companies, those are the five biggest in terms of revenue and reach and influence. And obviously Bill worked at two of the five so, we had standing to sort of ask them to step up and it was a continuation of the work that he had done. And we were in touch with the chief sustainability officers at all five companies and we really wanted them to prioritize climate as one of their top five policy priorities. We knew that they would have other policy priorities like taxes and antitrust and privacy, but we felt like they should elevate climate to a top five. And we called the campaign "1in5" and we wanted them to spend one in every five dollars lobbying on climate. This was to demonstrate that climate policy, of their total lobbying budget, was a top five priority.

03:13 JA:

And we started by educating employees. Why is policy important? The important fact that your company already advocates for policies in terms of trying to influence lawmakers, and what they could do to ask for this action internally, how they could be change agents if you will, from within. And Bill saying in the chat, those companies and many others are doing amazing things on climate, particularly in their operations. They're working on supply chain, they're doing innovations on their products. The big gap is around their support for public policy. So we need all that individual action, but to address climate at scale and rapidly at the speed required, we need public policy. And the biggest obstacle to public policy is obstruction from the business community, especially fossil fuel companies and big trade associations. So why we don't talk directly to the bad actors? We know why fossil fuel companies are trying to block climate policy. It's a very self-interested, greedy reason. Changing them is very hard. What we are trying

to say is there are companies who have put themselves forward as leaders on climate. Those who want to be known as green and sustainable, who really care about these issues. And if they do, they should be using their influence on the policy debate so they can match that opposition by the fossil fuel companies.

04:45 MM:

How did you formally launch the campaign?

04:53 JA:

We launched it with a digital campaign. It was Covid so we weren't able to have any in-person events, which had been our original hopes and plans. So, we launched it digitally. We had a commercial and advertisement from Well & Lighthouse who we were introduced to through you. And we had an exclusive that Fast Company did covering the campaign. We got a lot of media coverage, which was great and the reporters called the companies to ask where they stood. We tried to communicate with employees directly through LinkedIn and Twitter and we did targeted advertising to find those employees.

05:41 MM:

And what did you ask the public or the employees of those companies to do right out of the blocks?

05:47 JA:

1in5 was a petition campaign. So we asked employees to sign a petition and then as we got more interested employees who we were talking to about the campaign, we asked them to raise this issue internally. For instance, we know of a couple of companies where employees raised the topic at a town hall meeting in front of senior executives saying "How come we're not doing more around climate lobbying?" We also had analysis from InfluenceMap showing how little the tech companies were doing on public policy for climate.

06:21 JA:

InfluenceMap is one of our partners on the research side, they're a global think tank based in the UK. They monitor over 350 global companies on their climate advocacy, and they created a Big Tech scorecard. So, they looked at those five companies and when you added them all together for the year of 2021, how much did they advocate for climate of their overall lobbying? It was less than 6% overall. These companies lobbied on lots of topics and again those are publicly disclosed federal lobbying requirements where they have to report quarterly on the topics that they're lobbying for and InfluenceMap aggregated and counted and analyzed which proportion of the bills that they said that they talked to lawmakers about focused on climate.

07:12 MM:

You mentioned that in a couple instances employees raised it in a town hall meeting within the company. What are some of the more dramatic campaign highlights and maybe start with some of the moments that would indicate success or progress?

07:30 JA:

Well, so before we get to that, I just want to say that when we launched this campaign in early 2021, there was no climate policy federally on the agenda. So that's why we focused on this lobbying dollar metric, which was we want you to elevate it to a top priority. Businesses show their top priorities by the resources they invest in, the money that they allocate for things. We wanted to push that narrative. Then a few months later after launch, the Biden administration announced and introduced the Build Back Better Act and there were over \$555 billion of climate provisions in Build Back Better. So we morphed the 1in5 campaign to what we called "Go Time" and we said "It's Go time for Climate" and all of these companies that we're targeting should be supporting the climate provisions and Build Back Better. And what we did is then we extended from our 5 Big Tech companies, which we started with, to 15 more.

08:29 JA:

So we had a list of 20, we came up with those 20 companies with InfluenceMap. Again, we weren't focused on bad actors, we were focused on the big US based companies. So, Forbes 300 kind of large influential companies who had a track record with climate advocacy. They got a score of 65 or above on the InfluenceMap rating system and that generated 20 big companies, including our top five. They were automatically in there because they were so big.

09:02 JA:

But now we added Salesforce, HP, Coca-Cola, Walmart, Tesla, some other companies that automatically came in that list. And we created a scorecard and we wanted it to be very simple for employees and for the press to understand. We had three criteria for this Go Time scorecard. We said, did you as a company publicly support the climate provisions in Build Back Better? Secondly, did you support revenue provisions to pay for the climate investments? Because some companies at that point had said, we like the climate piece but we don't like the taxes but of course you can't do the climate investments without raising revenue. And then finally we said, did you as a company counter the negative lobbying by your own trade associations trying to kill Build Back Better? And there were three trade associations. We were the most interested in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable and the National Association of Manufacturers.

10:03 JA:

And when you go to the website, where we hosted this scorecard, you could hover over each company and see which trade associations they were members of. So, we were saying Apple, for instance, isn't part of the US Chamber of Commerce so therefore they don't have to say anything about them. But Apple was part of the Business Roundtable and they were not making a public statement against the fact that the Business Roundtable came out against Build Back Better. And again, the objection was around the taxes, it cost too much, we're not supporting it. So on those three criteria, we had three ratings for these 20 companies. If they were silent or against the legislation, we said they were obstructing and they got a red circle on our scorecard. If they supported something but not all three things, they got a yellow as cautious support. And to qualify as green, as a leader on climate and sustainability, you had to meet all three criteria.

11:05 JA:

Again, we wanted an inside outside strategy. We were going to share this scorecard with employees. We were going to share it with the sustainability leaders who had the decision making about where they stood on this position and their colleagues in government affairs. And then we used the press to do an exclusive and it was *Grist* first that did the scorecard.

11:26 JA:

The *Grist* reporter basically called all 20 companies and said, why are you obstructing or why are you cautiously supporting when your public statements to date would say that this is the kind of climate legislation you would support? And we know, Michael, that a highlight of the campaign, which is why I wanted to get to this, was one of the companies rushed a statement on a holiday weekend before we went live because the scorecard was embargoed. So the reporter called on a Friday, this company literally issued a statement on a holiday Monday so that by Tuesday they were yellow instead of red on our scorecard. And of course we changed it in real time. We were like, this is an ongoing scorecard, the minute you send us new statements we will put that evidence in your link and we will make sure that we give you credit for that.

12:15 JA:

Because we wanted to move people in real time. In the end, of the 20 companies, we feel like we moved seven. So we moved four from red to yellow and then we moved three who were already in cautious support to, they made stronger statements supporting the legislation. And we know that it was a direct result from our scorecard because we were in a lot of conversation with them and Bill's sort of asking, if we have the scorecard archived, we can show you the scorecard and how we framed it and we have graphics and whatnot. We were very disappointed we couldn't get anyone to green. And that's why our upcoming campaign this year is very much focused on trade associations because that was the element of the criteria that none of them met.

12:58 MM:

It seems to me that one of the things that you're demonstrating is that at the very least rating companies and also ranking them relative to other companies by that score or in this case color code, is a motivation for them to really try to clean up their act to make changes in their policies.

13:23 JA:

Absolutely. Which was Bill's key insight having sat in those seats that he knew that they were very competitive and all of them see themselves as leaders and they were quite upset that we said they weren't leading on this topic. A clear simple score as Bill said, and a clear call to action really helps, as you might remember, Build Back Better was a very complicated piece of legislation that the Democrats were trying to get it through in terms of reconciliation. It had many, many components and so there were many companies that were mixed about the childcare and the educational community college components. I mean there was so much stuff. So, we really narrowed it down in terms of the frame and we said there's \$555 billion for

climate. This is something you should be for based on what you've said in the past and it's hypocritical to not support this now.

14:16 JA:

And while none of you want taxes, we know that we can't make that amount of investment without raising additional revenue. And so, you have to say it's time to do that. As Bill also notes here, one other company had been completely silent the week before our scorecard and then they spoke up after employees pushed hard. So, our call to action, just going back to the scorecard for one minute, was in each row where the company was listed, there was a pre-populated tweet button and we asked employees, the general public and anyone else who came to our website to tweet directly at the executives at those companies who were in charge of making the decision.

14:56 JA:

So we had pre-populated messages about it's time to lead now, it's go time for climate. And they were directed towards the CEO, often the head of the board, the chief sustainability officer and any other people. We looked at each company specifically who held climate as part of their portfolio of responsibility. And those tweets we generated lots and lots of messaging and we know that it went directly and publicly to those people. So, there was a transparency about it.

15:24 MM:

Are there certain things that when you look back on it you go, ah, if it hadn't been a time of Covid there are certain other tactics we might have used that we think would've also accelerated the changes in company policies or actions or scores.

15:44 JA:

I think one of our challenges has been how do we keep in touch with employees in an ongoing meaningful way? And so how do we meet them? Mostly we've gotten into these companies through these green groups so that they're self-appointed sort of affinity groups where employees have self-selected their interest in climate in doing sustainability work. And then we try to speak to those groups. Bill was going to do an in-person campaign, a speaking tour that was cut short by Covid and that's when his voice actually was fine.

16:21 JA:

So we had a whole speaking tour arranged and unfortunately we couldn't do that. We've done lots and lots of talks like this by Zoom and when we have the chance to explain to employees why policy is such a critical lever, we feel like they really understand it and are often very motivated by this, it is like a new angle, something that they can ask for that they hadn't thought about because a lot of them are again working on the innovation side. Like how can I make the product domain of my job, whatever I'm actually working on, how can I make that more climate friendly or how can I help the company with their sustainability operational objectives? Right. I just wanted to make sure we don't lose any of the chat here... Bill is saying

one other element of the campaign in the fall of 2021 was that COP took place in Glasgow and then companies went there and touted their support for governments, right?

17:14 JA:

They were saying "We need policy, government needs to act." But back in DC they were silent and their own trade associations were working hard to kill Build Back Better. So, we hopped on Twitter and LinkedIn to respond to their posts during COP -- we called it 'Trolling for climate.' And Bill was an incredible voice on Twitter and LinkedIn to say "That's great that you're doing X, Y or Z about renewable energy, but what about policy? What about Build Back Better?" And what was nice about inserting ourselves into those conversations is it was directly with employees who followed those leaders and those executives, right? That's who their followership was. And we could see in LinkedIn people would say, "Yeah Bill, great point. You know, how come Google, you're not supporting Build Back Better when that seems to make sense." So, we got a lot of attention from executives and employees through that strategy and Bill's saying "It's the pinnacle of my career, Chief Climate Troll!" And always polite. He was always very polite. That's the thing, you know there were all these PR announcements at COP and it was like "That's awesome you're doing that. And what about policy?"

18:21 MM:

One of the phrases I hear often is "easy on the people, hard on the issue."

18:25 JA:

Yep, exactly.

18:27 MM:

Even when you're trolling! So if you step back, you've already alluded to several things, what aspect or combination of aspects of the campaign do you think have had the greatest positive effect?

18:42 JA:

Well one, our central mandate is really to educate employees. So, the average rank and file employee, even ones who really care about climate, don't understand the policy angle, right? They hear a lot of messaging from their company about all the great things that they're doing in their operations. And so we got feedback from employees that said, why are you picking on us? My company's great. Like have you seen this website? Have you seen this sustainability report? Whereas on other social issues like race or gender or LGBT equality, sometimes employees really are very critical of their companies because they're like, you're not doing enough. So, we have to educate them about why their companies are doing good things. It's not greenwashing, because we're looking at good companies, pro-climate companies and they're not using their influence in the place where it would make the biggest impact and they could.

19:34 JA:

And we have to show that hypocrisy to get employees to feel like, oh that doesn't make sense and I'm going to ask that. Then the second piece is we had to frame this issue for journalists. So,

Bill is a really trusted source for a lot of reporters and reporters came to us in our early days and said, you know, it's very hard to write a story about what a company's not doing. Like that's not news. Like we had sort of said, they're on the sidelines, they're silent. Bill often says silence is not neutrality, it's complicity when it comes to policy debates. We tried to set up this frame around the fossil fuel companies and could big tech be the sector that could take on big oil? And then reporters said the scorecard was very helpful for us to have a clear metric of what was missing and the dichotomy between their words versus their actions.

20:25 JA:

And so that educational piece and framing piece was also very important for the reporters. And by the way, so *Grist* did the exclusive where they called all 20 companies and then when the scorecard was released that Tuesday, *Fast Company* also did a piece on it and called All 20 companies again. So, we know for sure that it got their attention. Then the third lever that we did was these off the record conversations with the sustainability leaders. So, we called all those 20 companies and we said "Listen, we're going to assume since you have this job that we're on the same side of this issue and that you also want your company to do more. We'd love to talk about how you can use our work to move forward your agenda and blame us, blame us for being too harsh on your company but like how can you use it on the inside?"

21:16 JA:

And that's something where both Bill and I having been inside these big companies, had that experience. Like I had it with *Working Mother magazine*, I was always trying to get PwC to increase the parental leave and I loved when *Working Mother* would change the standard of what counted as a 'hundred best' company. And I was like, if we want to stay on this list as a best company for working mothers, we have to have this policy. And then Bill's also saying "A big success: now when many journalists cover companies' climate announcements, they often talk about whether and how the company is engaging with climate policy." Our sense was we wanted to shift that media narrative because we felt like journalists were giving companies too much credit. You know, they would make a 2050 announcement or we're doing this for clean energy or we're buying forests, you know, for carbon offsets. And suddenly, the journalists would just with no question sort of say this is great. And now we really didn't want them to take that hype, a billion dollars for direct air capture. Great, glad you're doing that, but what are you doing about policy debate right now to unlock eventually what happened with the Inflation Reduction Act, \$370 billion of investment. So that context setting has been really important. And we have a lot of clips where Bill was directly quoted as the source that could say that companies need to do more and he has incredible authority having had that role and his experience

22:41 MM:

So it sounds like in many ways campaigns have evolved over the years, I remember we originally would be boycotting a company and then it evolved more into just attacking their brand or putting their brand at risk. But as campaigns have evolved, it seems like there's much more emphasis on employees internally and also this relative standing of the company. Because companies are so competitive and it sounds like your strategy really is that combination of both

the focus on employees internally as well as that more external aspect of the ranking or the rating of the companies.

23:34 JA:

Yes, we've called it an inside outside game. You really need both. And when Build Back Better eventually evolved into the Inflation Reduction Act, we kept our scorecard but then we shifted it to IRA obviously so that it was in the moment saying this is the moment for business to speak up, please release a statement. And we do know that four of our companies out of the 20 did do that in a big way in terms of writing op-eds or publishing blogs or having their CEO say something and we thanked them publicly and gave them a lot of credit and then again tried to keep the messaging going.

24:10 JA:

When Microsoft said they supported it, we went to the other big tech companies and said how come you're not? We didn't move everyone. But again it was a way to keep the heat on, the drumbeat going. And we did feel like even after Covid, right, when everybody was very scared about employment, suddenly there was the great resignation. So the talent angle in terms of these companies competing for workers is still very, very powerful. For us, in terms of the companies we were targeting, we felt like consumers were much harder to be the angle because so many of them, particularly the tech companies are monopolies. Like you know, consumers are not giving up their iPhone over their climate policy stance. Whereas the employees themselves were a little bit easier to say, well you can ask from within you can be a change agent. And we're really trying to create this role as advocates, like you're an advocate from within and that's where the LGBT equality movement really saw that be successful. Like we love working here, we're proud of this company, we're proud of the stuff that we're doing internally for our people. We want you to take a stance on these bigger societal issues because it really matters to us.

25:26 JA:

And then Bill's just really saying that we can, you know, directly engage in a pretty small number of employees and then they can engage their peers, right? They're the cascading catalyst if you will, who connects to these broader networks of people inside. And what we also know is that it's not thousands and thousands of people you need to galvanize. If it's a strong and consistent voice, that works too. But these companies have really strong marketing machines. Unfortunately I think the sustainability function has become a marketing mechanism that the people in those roles feel like they just want to get credit for what the company's doing rather than really grapple with how hard it is even in operations to make meaningful change. But then to really use the range of their influence to do the right thing.

26:16 MM:

You've outlined a lot of the positive lessons. Are there any others that you want to add before I ask you about what are some of the negative lessons that you've learned?

26:30 JA:

Well, I would just say the other positive lesson is that the more we can build this narrative with the media, the easier it is to convince employees that it's important. So, all these levers we're trying to push at the same time because we think they're mutually reinforcing and they help us keep moving it forward. Also, you know, obviously when we launched there was no federal legislation, then there was such exciting historic legislation. So, we had some of the luck of timing literally in terms of the Inflation Reduction Act, there had been nothing that significant since 2009 with the Waxman Markey bill in terms of federal legislation. So, our timing was kind of perfect and that was like a lucky thing that we could really get people excited about it. And the media was covering IRA so much that everyone that we talked to knew that it was important.

27:24 JA:

They didn't know why their company should be talking about it or how their company could engage with it. So, there was still a connect the dots piece of that for employees and even for the press. What companies say when they don't engage on policy is we want to stay in our lane, we're only going to narrowly very transactionally talk about the things that affect us. And what Bill's insight was is that your lane should be everything because it all matters to business. And so, you don't have to be a transportation company to talk about transportation policy when your employees are using the transportation, your products are being distributed through transportation. Like, all of it matters and we want them to be more strategic in the way they engage. Bill, any other successes before we move?

28:27 JA:

And your own trade association is carrying water for the oil and gas companies to obstruct. So again that was a big lesson for us about how hard it was to get them to even make a statement against a trade association. Which is why again, this is going to be a big piece of a campaign that we're part of. And then also that if you as a company are silent and you think you're a pro climate sustainable company, you're actually supporting this obstruction and we're going to call you out for that. Bill often says there's too many carrots in this work and not enough sticks. The leaders get off a little easy because they are doing some good work, but they're not doing everything they could be doing.

29:06 MM:

Well and trade associations, as we've seen just historically, they often cater to the lowest common denominator. So, you're actually creating leaders within the trade association and kind of tension inside there to try to raise that bar. That's significant because the trade associations have oftentimes become a source of major opposition to campaigns.

29:34 JA:

Oh yes. And they spent millions to kill Build Back Better.

29:38 MM:

They have the collective resources to even do more and they're that third party that represents that collective group of companies that kind of absolves the targeted company from having to try to defend itself.

29:54 JA:

And they can kind of have it both ways, Michael, which is even more Machiavellian, right? Like one of these companies can say, oh yes we're for the Inflation Reduction Act and then they know that their own trade association is lobbying against it and they're like, well we don't really like the taxes anyway so let them try to kill it and maybe that'll work out.

30:12 MM:

Any negative lessons?

30:16 JA:

So I'd say when we looked back, first of all we've learned so much. So I don't know if they're negative lessons. They're definitely lessons. But in the very beginning when we were doing 1in5, we really wanted to frame tech as a sector and we were like, that's why we worked with InfluenceMap to do the scorecard and the ranking of how the sector was lobbying. And the feedback we got from employees after we launched that was we don't consider ourselves part of this sector. Like we think Google's fundamentally different from Amazon, we're in different areas, we're different companies and the thing we care about most is what is Google doing and what is Amazon doing? So in Go Time, that's when we got very specific about each company. That's why each company profile was like, you are part of this trade association, these are your executives who are in charge of climate, please tweet at them and you can see that you're in this list in terms of there's some competitive stuff.

31:10 JA:

But we didn't try to bundle it and I think it was much more effective. And again it was just very direct feedback from employees that it's like we don't care about the other companies, we don't even feel like we're competing with them on everything. We only care about our own company. So that's important. The second thing we learned obviously was the trade association piece was harder to move than we thought. I mean we thought it was pretty easy. We weren't saying leave the Chamber of Commerce, we were telling these companies on the list to say, just publish a statement that says the Chamber doesn't speak for us on climate or we disagree with the policy recommendation from the Business Roundtable.

31:46 JA:

And we were surprised that that was such a hard request for them to actually do, so I think we really realized that the sustainability leaders didn't have quite the political capital inside the company to move those things. And because they didn't own those relationships directly, they were trying to influence colleagues from government affairs or finance or other areas of the business to make those decisions and that they couldn't get them done. Bill is also saying, you know, I'd say we also really didn't understand how much education was required for people to

understand the vital role of policy, the role of the business voice in influencing policy and the role of trade associations. It should have been more obvious. We thought it was kind of obvious. I do think there's been a concerted effort by Republicans since Ronald Reagan to disparage government and that really worked, right? So a lot of the employees were saying to us, government doesn't solve anything. Why should we be focused on policy? We, the company should do what we can do in our lane through innovation, through products, through our own operations and buying renewable energy. Like that's where we can make the biggest difference. So that was a big dot that we had to sort of connect and we haven't persuaded everyone, right? I feel like we've done a good job of getting that argument out there and really elevating it. But there's still a lot of employees who feel like the company should only do what they actually do.

33:18 JA:

And then Bill's just saying it did take me 12 years working at Google and Facebook to get to this point. It's reasonable that others might take some time, right? That his frustration was, I'm getting you to do all these great things in operations but when I ask you to do the policy piece you keep resisting. How come it's so hard to make you see that that's the place where we can make the biggest difference?

33:39 MM:

You know, when you talk about the sustainability directors, I know that when we started campaigns a lot of times, most of the corporations we went after, they were really like third level managers. After the campaign, many of them got moved up into vice president roles or senior roles with a budget and with a staff. Are the sustainability directors in the companies that you're focusing on, are they higher now in like senior vice presidential roles? Oftentimes that also is an indication of how much power they have within the company and how much prep power or influence the company even wants them to have on its business.

34:29 JA:

I would say it varies. I feel like of our list, Lisa Jackson would be the most senior at Apple because she reports directly to Tim Cook and she owns sustainability and government affairs. So that's very integrated for Apple compared to the way that it's more siloed in other companies. I don't think they have as much influence as they should obviously and that we think that they could, if they could make that kind of difference. Which is why with Go Time we also really had the CEO be the person to tweet at for all of the companies because that was who we needed to elevate. And then it was sort of almost like a CC to the sustainability leader. The only trend that I would say that we've seen as very positive is a lot of these companies have hired more policy experts as part of the team.

35:15 JA:

So if you look at new hires at a variety of them, when we meet with them, they'll bring new people to the table and say we just hired a US policy director or a global policy director and they are building out the people who have expertise in that domain as part of their teams. But again, they tend to be reporting to the chief sustainability officer who does or does not have a lot of authority given their reporting structure. And then Bill is saying, you know, often senior

director, VP or SVP, sometimes there's the CSO title, though they are often not in the c-suite. So they're sort of like a leadership team. They still might report through government affairs or through some other leader. And when sustainability concerns and direct business concerns are in conflict, the direct business concerns will almost always win out. And that's where we see the taxes argument, right? Like, 'this is too expensive.' 'The finance team is against it.' 'We don't want you spending political capital saying the climate stuff is urgent.'

36:21 MM:

You've already given us a lot of advice for other campaigners out there. Is there anything else that you might want to just highlight or focus in terms of advice to future corporate campaigners based on your experience?

36:37 JA:

Well one last challenge that I want to raise and then Bill, I want to hear what you have to say, is that, we don't want our employees to put their careers at risk for this. So that is a unique challenge that activists who are on the outside protesting banks don't have. Our fine line that we're trying to maintain is we want you to be a change agent within your company. We want you to be respectful to the company. We want you to use the channels that are available to you to meet with the chief sustainability officer, to ask questions in town hall meetings, to have your affinity group learn things and read things and post our materials to make them available to a bigger group. And we want you to do that in a way that you can keep your career, and that is challenging.

37:28 JA:

And we have over the course of our existence seen employees be more courageous and more fearful, depending on the market. And as we know that goes up and down and up and down and up and down. So these current layoffs are a very difficult time for us now because people's jobs are at risk and speaking up about additional issues feels very risky. I do think that that's something that there's no clear answer for. We obviously have a legal team that advised us on how we do these things and trying to meet with employees after hours and make sure that this doesn't get anybody in trouble inadvertently. But I do think that fear of retaliation or of negative consequences is real.

I just think that's a unique angle on this employee organizing. And then the only second thing I'll add while Bill's typing is the turnover. You make a great connection and then that person leaves and then it's hard to build it up. So it's like how do you have a bench of people? Which is why these affinity groups I think are good organizing platforms or tools because there's already a community so you really want your contacts to have that community. Bill's saying – oh, go ahead Michael, do you have a question?

38:58 MM:

I was just going to ask, in terms of turnover, have you experienced that in these high tech companies?

39:07 JA:

I don't know if it's higher. I mean I come from PWC where the turnover was insane. People turned over constantly. So it's just that you know, you build a relationship and then that person is the person who you know, responds to your emails and will post your stuff and then when they're gone it's just hard to have that next level of leadership. Bill's saying: sometimes corporate campaigns put a bunch of demands in front of a company and my experience is that if you give a company five things that you want, they'll pick and choose if one or two are far more important than the others. I think it is important, it is often better to focus on the few that are critical, otherwise you get very slow incremental progress. They'll do the easiest thing first. Multiple demands is tricky with climate. We've seen a lot of groups push companies on their scope one, two and three emissions and then mention policy as kind of an afterthought.

39:59 JA:

So companies make regular progress on the first part and they slow roll the policy. And InfluenceMap I think has been very clever with us where they call public policy scope four impact because these companies are so focused on scope one through three, it's like a natural extension of their influence to focus on policy as scope four. However, it is the harder thing to do, right? It's challenging and they have told us they don't want to alienate any lawmakers; they don't want to spend political capital if they don't have to. And if they don't feel pressure, they are very cautious and won't take risks. So Bill's key insight was we have to change the pressure, trade off the cost benefit analysis and if employees are asking for it and reporters are asking them for it and Bill's trolling you on LinkedIn and we are publishing scorecards, then suddenly you can't ignore the silence and just kind of slip away with it.

40:58 MM:

Okay. How has this campaign influenced the evolution of your organization? You mentioned that as certain things changed in the environment, the campaign got modified, but how has it really influenced the evolution of your organization and your activist network, for example?

41:18 JA:

Bill's actually talking about our network here, which is a dozen NGOs have put forward the AAA framework for corporate climate policy leadership. But it's not front and center in their calls to action. But it was very helpful and that AAA framework was 'we want you to allocate money to this', 'we want you to advocate publicly with lawmakers for climate policy' and 'we want you to align your trade associations with what you're doing.' So we use the framework too, but a lot of those groups have corporate members and so they're very much, again, back to the carrots versus sticks, trying to encourage and urge and praise companies for doing the right thing. And then they don't have that other backup when they don't do it because they have these long-term relationships that they want to continue. We have many colleagues who are doing the carrot strategy who are happy about our scorecard and they're happy when we're criticizing them as not being leaders. And when Bill's being pointed with reporters, like they're super happy to have that balance because they can't play that role, but they want us to. So I think, we always want to praise people who are doing the right thing, but I think Bill is very committed to saying we have to criticize them when they're not and we have to do it with serious pointed

language. And I think we got more pointed over the course of our evolution. I think again, we went from that sector strategy to the individual company. I think we've built stronger relationships with employees over time and that's something that we still need to do more of. Like we can't have enough people, you know, we're very small, we're very scrappy, we're doing a lot around fundraising so that we can increase our own capacity to do that relational organizing because it's very time consuming.

43:07 JA:

I definitely feel like we had some real press wins. The fact that reporters come to Bill now and know that they can get a great quote and when they're talking about it, that there's more people covering the business angle and the policy intersection. And again, we still have maintained good relationships with the chief sustainability officers because they do want to make change. They also have been turning over. So of our 20 companies, there have been three of them recently who had new leaders. And so we're trying to build the relationship with the new leader. And so that's sort of an ongoing challenge. Bill saying 'I'm good at mangling metaphors and sometimes it lands well,' but he just has that authority from having sat in those seats, which is great.

43:59 JA:

And again, we did have the luck of a lot of legislation this year. Part of also why we're really focused on our educational campaign for trade associations is there's going to be no movement at the federal level. It's all going to be about executing the Inflation Reduction Act, you know, executive actions. And then we're actively looking at state policy and seeing the areas where it would be innovative things happening in the states where it would be helpful to have a business voice support those initiatives. So again, we work in coalition with a lot of other organizations that have more resources on the ground, who are actively lobbying and or working in states so that we try to follow where our biggest impact could be.

44:44 MM:

And you've reminded me that over the years, we have learned that corporations not only can have a huge influence at the federal level when talking about federal policy, but they definitely can be powerful and sometimes even more influential at the state level where they have headquarters or a large number of employees working for them.

45:06 JA:

Definitely.

45:07 MM:

I'm glad you raised that. Any final thoughts? This has been very comprehensive.

45:16 JA:

Oh, I'm so glad. You had so many questions, Michael! Talk about comprehensive.

45:22 MM:

Well thank you for helping focus it on the ones that really mattered. It's been an excellent interview. Thank you. And very educational. So Bill Weihl and Jennifer Allyn, ClimateVoice, thank you for your excellent work. Thanks for all the lessons learned. And the focus on high tech, it seems to me, is really important as corporate campaigns evolve and as our economy evolves as well, these are the kind of companies that we really need to know how to influence. And so you really are out there in many ways on the cutting edge of the change.

46:07 JA:

It's been our pleasure. So thank you so much and if you have any other questions or after you review this, please email us and Bill can respond directly.

46:15 MM:

Okay, will do. Thank you.

46:17 JA:

Thanks.

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