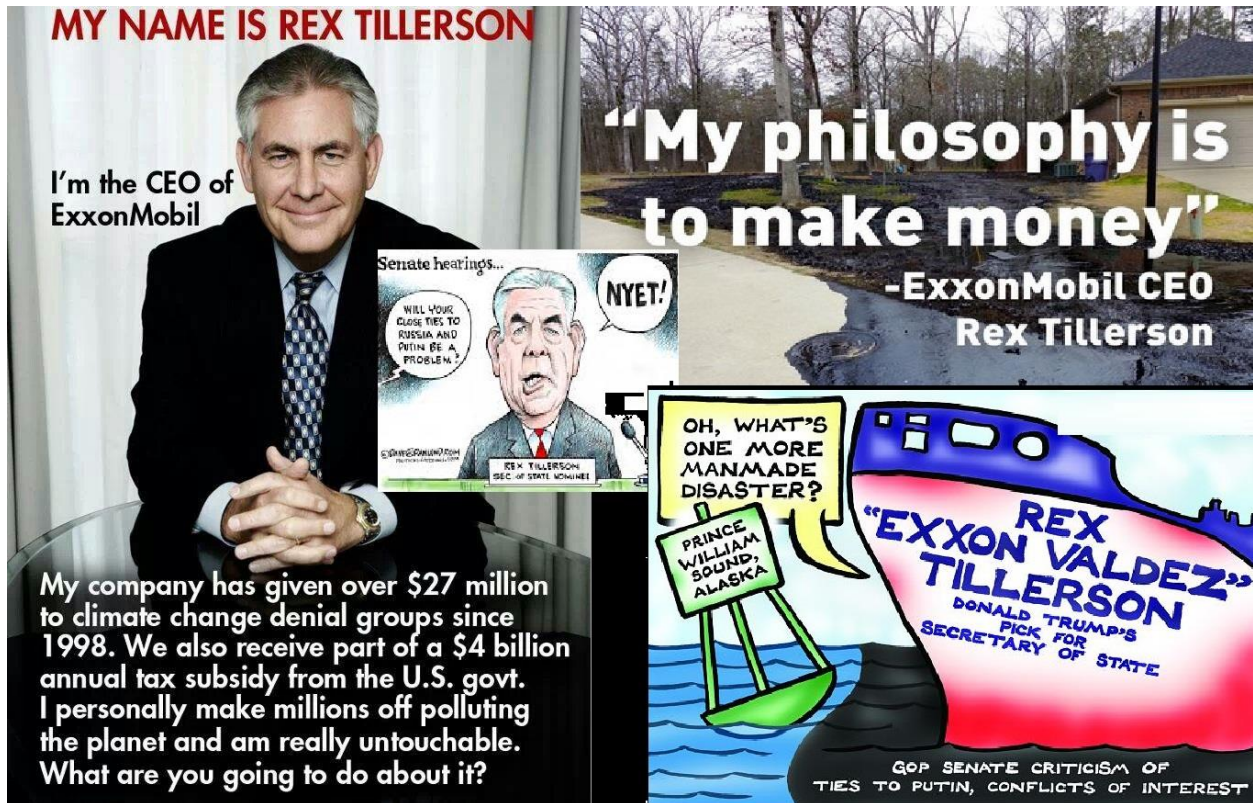


Trump picks Rex Tillerson to be Sec of State and he will receive \$180m from BIG OIL's ExxonMobil

The move is said to intensify fears of massive conflicts of interest



The former oil company chief stepped down from his role at the beginning of the year *Getty* Donald Trump's pick for US secretary of state, **Rex Tillerson**, will get a \$180m (£147m) cash payout from oil giant **ExxonMobil**, if he gets the job.

Mr Tillerson, who stepped down as Exxon's chief executive at the beginning of this year, was in line to collect 2 million shares, worth around \$182m, over the next decade as part of his pay package but that sparked fears of a colossal conflict of interest.

In his potential new role as America's top diplomat, Mr Tillerson's decisions could affect the value of those shares to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.



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Trump's Secretary of State pick was 'director of US-Russian oil firm'

In order to assuage concerns that the new secretary of state could be looking out for Exxon ahead of the American people, the company agreed late on Tuesday to pay around \$179m in cash, instead of shares. Federal ethics watchdogs have requested the \$3m (£2.4m) reduction from Exxon's current market value.

The payout will be placed in an independent trust which will make periodic payments to Mr Tillerson and cannot invest in Exxon.

Mr Tillerson has agreed not to work in oil and gas for 10 years, giving up \$4.1m (£3.3m) in cash bonuses and benefits such as medical and dental cover.

If he breaks the rules of the trust, "the money would be distributed to one or more charities involved in fighting poverty or disease in the developing world", Exxon said in a statement.

He has also committed to sell the approximately \$55m (£44.7m)-worth of Exxon stock he already owns.

Mr Tillerson's suitability for a senior government position has been questioned amid conflicts of interest and extensive **business ties to Russia and Vladimir Putin**. The two men worked together to secure energy and drilling deals while Russia was subject to US sanctions. Mr Tillerson later accepted an award from Moscow.



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In December, leaked documents revealed he was a director of Exxon's US-Russian subsidiary, which is based in the Bahamas, a tax haven. This is seemingly at odds with Trump's commitment to crack down on offshoring.

Darren Woods, a 25-year Exxon veteran who had served as the company's president, took over as Exxon chief executive at the start of the new year.

Tillerson began his career at Exxon as a production engineer straight out of the University of Texas at Austin in 1975. He replaced longtime boss Lee Raymond in 2006 and led the company during one of the most turbulent periods in its history, which included the 2008 financial crisis and a collapse in oil prices since mid-2014 that has sharply diluted Exxon's profits.