

# Conservatives pledge 'unprecedented' support for fossil fuels after receiving almost £400,000 from oil bosses

 [independent.co.uk /news/business/news/conservatives-oil-bosses-party-donations-fossil-fuels-climate-change-ayman-asfari-petrofac-serious-a7751521.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/conservatives-oil-bosses-party-donations-fossil-fuels-climate-change-ayman-asfari-petrofac-serious-a7751521.html)

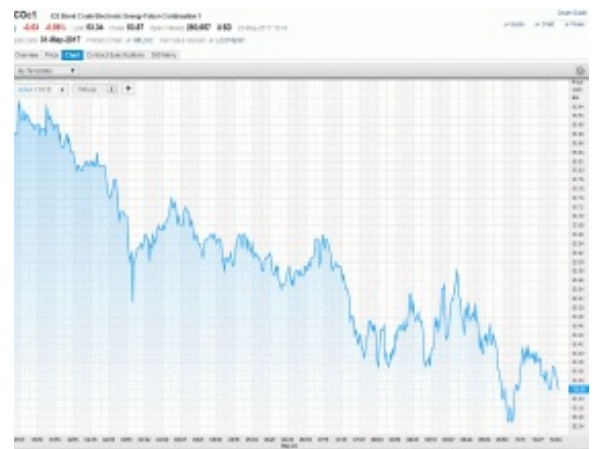
Ben Chapman Top oil executives have donated more than £390,000 to the Conservative Party since [Theresa May](#) became Prime Minister.

5/23/2017

The industry stands to benefit from the [Conservative Party manifesto](#) which pledges to build upon the Government's "unprecedented" support for the sector.

Among the high-profile donors revealed in [Electoral Commission filings](#) is Ayman Asfari, the chief executive of Jersey-registered oil and gas firm, [Petrofac](#), who gave £90,000 in December.

Mr Asfari was questioned under caution by the Serious Fraud Office earlier this month over suspected bribery, [corruption and money laundering at his company](#). The Syrian-born businessman is one of the prime minister's business ambassadors.



Another oil industry donor is Ian Taylor, chief executive of the world's largest oil trader, Vitol. He has personally given the Conservatives £47,000 since Ms May won the party leadership in July last year, adding to hundreds of thousands he had previously donated.

Vitol, which operates out of London [but is headquartered in the Netherlands](#), was fined £13m in 2007 after pleading guilty to paying money to Iraq's national oil company during Saddam Hussein's regime, undermining the United Nations oil-for-food programme.

In 2012, Vitol was accused of buying Iranian oil while the country was under sanctions. The company faced further questions last year over claims it [ripped off the people of impoverished Mozambique for critical fuel](#) by at least \$80m. A spokesperson for Vitol denied both claims.

Former Vitol partner Matthew Ferrey has also given £124,000 to the Tories since last July. He has now set up his own investment company which invests in the sector.

Other senior oil and gas figures to have bankrolled Ms May's party include [Alexander Temerko](#), a former deputy chairman of the Russian Yukos Oil Company before it was taken under the control of the Russian state, who became a British citizen in 2011. He has donated £63,800.

Amjad Bseisu, the Palestinian-born boss of energy company EnQuest who previously worked for Petrofac has given £28,500 to the Tories under Ms May, while Abdul-Majid Jafar, chief executive of United Arab Emirates-based Crescent Petroleum, gave £28,000 in December.

[The Conservative Party manifesto](#) outlines a plan to "lead international action against climate change", but also pledges to ensure oil and gas plays a "critical role" in UK energy provision.

The manifesto states: "The North Sea has provided more than £300bn in tax revenue to the UK economy and supports thousands of highly-skilled jobs across Britain.

"We will ensure that the sector continues to play a critical role in our economy and domestic energy supply, supporting further investment in the UK's natural resources.

“We will continue to support the industry and build on the unprecedented support already provided to the oil and gas sector.”

The document also strengthens support for fracking by proposing to make it unnecessary to obtain planning permission for exploratory wells.

A Conservative spokesman on Tuesday said: “All donations to the Conservative party are properly and transparently declared to the Electoral Commission, published by them, and comply fully with the law.”