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HEADLINE: An 'Honest' Look at Environmental Issues

BODY:

Staff writer Carol D. Leonnig used a loaded term, "corporate-funded," to describe the Foundation for Research on Economics & the Environment (FREE) and wrote that the organization "opposes environmental regulation" ["Judge Ends Ethics Case By Leaving Foundation," news story, May 6, and "Judges to Leave Environmental Group's Board," news story, May 7].

That parallels the position of the Community Rights Counsel, which has criticized the educational enrichment program that FREE and its partner, Montana State University, conduct for federal judges and law professors.

This program recently was praised by two former U.S. attorneys -- both appointees of President Bill Clinton. Their peer review was underwritten by a group of federal judges and law professors. In their report on our seminar programs, the two former U.S. attorneys found that our seminars for federal judges were "varied, balanced, intellectually challenging and rigorous." Other scholars agree.

As to Ms. Leonnig's claim that FREE is "corporate-funded," the bulk of FREE's income -- 78 percent in 2004 -- comes from foundations and individuals. Just 22 percent comes from corporations. Moreover, FREE accepts no corporate support for the judges' seminars nor support from any foundation with links to business or involvement in litigation.

The real story here is that FREE deals with environmental issues in an intellectually honest manner.

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