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### **Portlanders march against American Legislative Exchange Council, leading nationwide protests**

Today Portlanders joined over seventy cities across the nation to target corporations and legislators involved in the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Portland's march - which included nearly 200 yellow "ALEC Exposed" umbrellas, many colorful banners and a 50 foot anti-corporate wave - visited offices of many ALEC members, including ExxonMobil, McDonalds, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Verizon, FedEx, Taco Bell, Walgreens, Shell, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America. Responding to a national call from Occupy Portland, this is the Occupy Movement's largest coordinated action this year, confronting ALEC corporations in the cities in which they do business throughout the nation.

"We took action today to challenge ALEC, a group made up of the world's largest corporations, as well as many state and federal politicians. ALEC writes legislation focused on amassing more profit for the wealthiest 1% at the expense of our communities," said Nicholas Caleb of Occupy Portland.

The final action of the day was an occupation of the law offices of Lindsay, Hart, Neil & Weigler and Paul S. Cosgrove. Cosgrove is the state corporate co-chair for the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Activists with the Animal Defense League made their way to the 34th floor of the Wells Fargo Center, chaining themselves together in Cosgrove's office. Three members of the group were arrested.

"Paul S. Cosgrove, Oregon state corporate co-chair of ALEC, facilitates the creation of laws that systematically abuse animals trapped on factory farms, caged in laboratories and surviving in the wild," says Courtney Eastman of Animal Defense League.

While the sit-in occurred on the 34th floor, members of We are Oregon and the Portland Central American Solidarity committee rallied against Wells Fargo's lead role in home foreclosures and prison privatization.

"Wells Fargo more than quadrupled its annual spending on lobbying since the Great Recession began. I can tell you that money isn't going to help struggling homeowners," said Arelys Thompson, a member of We Are Oregon, which organized the assembled marches in a phone-in flash mob to Wells Fargo's offices.

Nationally, actions against ALEC corporate members ranged from sit-ins and pickets to street theater. Some of the more creative actions included foreclosing on Citibank in Long Island, a "Corporate Debutant Ball" in Salt Lake City, UT, teach-ins in Norman, OK, Naples, FL, and Bryant Park, NY, and an Ice Cream Bloc in Oakland, CA. Three distribution centers of Wal-Mart were shut down in southern California, as well as the World Corporate Headquarters of Pfizer in Connecticut.

Portlanders gathered at 11:30 AM at SW Naito and Ankeny and marched between stops at nonviolent actions

organized by some 15 social justice, environmental, and anti-capitalist groups. Many long-standing community groups, working under the banner “Portland Action Lab,” assisted in organizing the day, including Rising Tide, the Animal Defense League, We Are Oregon, Jobs with Justice, the Portland Central American Solidarity Committee.

ALEC is comprised of state and federal government legislators and many of America’s biggest corporations. In ALEC task-forces and committees, lobbyists work directly with legislators to draft and advance cookie-cutter “model” bills. According to ALEC’s figures, nearly 10% of state laws originate from their efforts. Wisconsin Act 10, attacking public employee unions, mirrors ALEC’s anti-union agenda and was introduced by Governor Scott Walker, an ALEC member from 1993-2002. Arizona’s widely criticized anti-immigrant legislation (SB1070) also has roots in ALEC model legislation.

“The decisions affecting our communities should be made democratically, not through a corrupt system that hides the influence of the very corporations that benefit at our expense. ALEC is representative of a failed system in which profit and greed are dominant over everything else,” said Kari Koch of Portland Action Lab.

Updates on actions throughout the day are available via liveblogging at [shutdownthecorporations.org](http://shutdownthecorporations.org).

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