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Solyndra: Did Secretary Chu Lie Under Oath?

By Guy Benson

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As you [already know](#), President Obama's Energy Secretary testified before a House subcommittee about his role in the Solyndra scandal. The *Washington Post's* factcheckers wonder if he told the truth, the whole truth, and [nothing but the truth](#):

In his defense of the Energy Department's handling of the \$535 million loan guarantee to the now bankrupt Solyndra, Energy Secretary Steven Chu made some **bold claims about the overall effectiveness of the department's clean-energy loan programs**. He also made the case that **the collapse in solar panel prices — which helped sink Solyndra — was “totally unexpected” by most financial analysts at the time** when the department went forward with the loan in 2009.

There are a number of issues in dispute concerning Solyndra, but these two statements by Chu appear to be the most ripe for a fact check because they get to the heart of the issue about whether

the clean-energy program is creating many jobs and whether the Energy Department should have seen the red flags concerning the Solyndra investment.

After reviewing the evidence, the *Post's* Glenn Kessler concludes:

Given the high stakes involved in Chu's testimony, **it seems strange he would repeat talking points about the jobs that had already been called into question by a major news organization.** Granted, DOE disputed that article, but we don't think their rebuttal makes much sense. In any case, the job number and the fuel number are greatly inflated by the inclusion of the loan to Ford. As we have demonstrated, these are not new jobs or even saved jobs — just people who might, just maybe, have a little more job security, in part because of the loan.

Chu's comments on the unexpected "tsunami" that hit Solyndra are also troubling. **The OMB e-mail shows that at least one arm of the government was aware that Wall Street was quickly souring on solar energy and that the tsunami that swept the industry should not have been such a surprise.**

Is this verdict tantamount to definitive proof that Chu perjured himself? Perhaps not, but it further calls into question the overall veracity of his testimony. Another interesting question about the Energy Secretary's truthfulness (beyond much of [this information](#)): Chu stated under oath that he had "never" spoken with *any* Obama campaign donor about the Solyndra loan. "No Obama campaign donor ever did [contact me]," he told the committee. Really? One major Obama campaign donor named Steve Spinner was one of the [DOE's point men](#) on the green energy program:

Government officials were pressured into approving a \$533 million loan guarantee for now-bankrupt Solyndra by an elite Barack Obama fundraiser whose lawyer wife worked for a firm representing the California solar company, leaked emails have shown. **Steven Spinner, hired to help oversee the Obama administration's energy loan program, told officials from the Department of Energy to move faster to rubber stamp a loan guarantee for the company. Mr Spinner, an energy investor and high-tech consultant, raised at least \$500,000 for the President's campaign** before he was given a crucial job helping to oversee the energy loan guarantee program, it has been reported.

Setting aside Spinner's conflict of interest, are we to believe that Chu never spoke to his subordinate (Spinner) about Solyndra? The *Examiner's* Phil Klein [posed that question](#) to Chu after yesterday's hearing:

EXAMINER: Secretary Chu, did you have any contact with Steve Spinner with regard to the Solyndra loan?

CHU: No, **Steve Spinner was not allowed to part of any approval of the Solyndra loan process**, and he was not really part of any decision regarding the terms of the loan, or whether we should make the loan or not.

EXAMINER: So you had no contact with him?

CHU: **I've had contact with him, very brief contact with him.** I recall he was in the room a few times when I was talking with Matt Rodgers.

That's not a sworn statement, I realize, but his assertion appears to be false. Klein fleshes out the details:

"How hard is this? What is he waiting for?" Spinner, who raised at least \$500,000 for Obama and was appointed to help run the loan guarantee program, wrote of Solyndra in one email. **"I have OVP [the Office of the Vice President] and WH [the White House] breathing down my neck on this."** Spinner also pushed for, **a "big event" with "golden shovels, bulldozers, hardhats, etc." to mark the Solyndra loan.** *The Los Angeles Times* reported that on June 15, 2009, **Spinner "wrote to his boss, Matt Rogers, a senior advisor at the Energy Department who oversees stimulus spending: 'here's the Solyndra checklist of all of the 60-70 items that need to be done for closing.'"**

Chu told the *Examiner* that Spinner had no role in the Solyndra loan process. That's simply not true, as the emails quoted above prove. The Energy Secretary also told the committee that he had zero contact with any Obama donors, which according to his response to Klein's questions, also seems to be false.

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