

Policy Matters



Your weekly digest of policy reports that **matter**.
Edited by [Toby Green](#) and [Gary Price](#) of *Policy Commons*.

Big Oil and the lie of plastic recycling

Just as Big Tobacco lied about cigarettes, so a campaign of fraud and deception underpins the crisis of managing plastic waste, according to [this hard-hitting report](#) from Center for Climate Integrity. It shows how Big Oil and the plastics industry have deceptively promoted recycling as a solution to plastic waste for more than fifty years, despite their longstanding knowledge that plastic recycling is not technically or economically viable at scale.

Meanwhile, a [new report from Public Accountability Initiative](#) finds that top lobbyists seem to be working as “double agents” when it comes to New York’s climate issues, because they simultaneously work for Big Oil and environmental groups, hospitals, and leading cultural institutions.

Online influencers conceal when advertising

The European Union regularly sweeps social media channels to check that influencers come clean when they’re advertising products, as consumer law requires. [Their latest sweep](#) showed that one in five does not.

Official audits

We’re starting to index more content from official audits and oversight committees. Here are three no-holds-barred reports that caught our eye from last week:

- **ArriveCAN—an expensive failure during COVID-19.** A [report on ArriveCAN](#) from the Auditor General of Canada is uncomfortable reading for the Canada Border Services Agency stating, among other criticisms, that “controls were so poor that we were unable to determine the precise cost of the ArriveCAN application...” and that “disregard for policies, controls, and transparency in the contracting process restricted opportunities for competition and undermined value for money.”
- **HS2 railway.** UK Parliament’s Committee of Public Accounts ran their slide rule over the Department of Transport’s huge HS2 programme to construct a new high-speed, high-capacity railway between London and the north of England. Despite being ten years into a project that is now projected to cost £67 billion, [they concluded](#) “that the Department does not yet understand how HS2 will operate as a functioning railway following recent changes.”
- **Sales-tax fraud.** There’s slightly better news from Australia’s audit office, which has found that [fraud control arrangements for the administration of their sales tax](#) is “partly effective,” but that “the framework for assessing and managing GST fraud risk is not fit for purpose.”

Transparency in democracy

A new [annotated bibliography for guiding researchers in transparency in policymaking](#) got us thinking. It comprises forty-six items, of which twenty-five are gleaned from journals and books and just twenty-one from NGOs. But what if the authors had used *Policy Commons*? How many more items might they have found? We turned their parameters into this search string: *transparency AND accountability AND “policy-making” AND “good governance”* and found... [well, see for yourself](#). A great deal more!

Speaking of democracy, the **Economist Intelligence Unit** released its latest [State of Democracy](#) report, calling it *Age of Conflict*.

Other reports that caught our eye last week:

- **Climate.** [Integrating Climate Security into Policies: Roadmap for Yemen](#)
- **Urban transport.** [How Parking Reform Is Helping Transform American Cities](#)
- **New weather patterns.** [New Census data show that 27% of those moving house in USA’s Island Areas did so because of the risk of future weather-related natural disasters. In the US Virgin Islands it was 41%.](#)

Call for contributions

We’re aiming to develop our coverage in **Public Health and Social Care**. If you know of organizations, hospital systems, health care providers, think tanks, charities, archives, databases, or repositories that we should include, [please drop us a line](#).

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