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Occupy Milwaukee to Protest ALEC and Caterpillar Feb. 29

Occupy Milwaukee announced today that as part of a National Day of Action on Wednesday Feb. 29 they will hold a rally outside the Caterpillar Global Mining plant in South Milwaukee to protest the undue influence they feel the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) exercises over state legislation throughout the country. The rally will take place on Oak Creek Pkwy. just east of Chicago Ave at 3:00 p.m.

According to Dave Onken of Occupy Milwaukee, ALEC is a political organization comprised of and financed in part by corporate members who write "Model Legislation" favorable to their interests. State lawmakers, almost exclusively Republicans, who are also ALEC members, introduce the Model Legislation into their respective state legislatures and work for their passage, Onken cited as examples the Wisconsin voter ID law and the legislation stripping public employees of bargaining rights signed into law by Governor Scott Walker.

ALEC, a non-profit organization founded in 1973, describes itself on its website as "a non-partisan membership association for conservative state lawmakers." ALEC also claims on its website that "each year close to 1000 bills, based at least in part on ALEC Model Legislation are introduced in the states. Of these, on average, 20% become law"

Onken said that Caterpillar is being targeted locally because they are a corporate member of ALEC and manufacture mining equipment like that which would be used at the controversial open pit mine proposed for northern Wisconsin which is opposed by many people in the state.

Following the rally at Caterpillar the protesters plan to march to the nearby home of state assemblyman Mark Honadel, an ALEC member.

The local rally is part of a nationwide action initiated by Occupy Portland to raise Americans' awareness of ALEC which Onken said is "the source of much of the controversial, conservative legislation that has been passed across the country in recent years."

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