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BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — Vermont on Tuesday became the latest state to sue some of the country's top fossil fuel companies by alleging they misled the public about the impact their products have on climate change. The state wants the companies to tell consumers that the use of fossil fuel products harms the environment, Vermont Attorney General T.J. Donovan said after the lawsuit was filed in Vermont Superior Court in Burlington.

The warnings could be similar to those noting the danger of tobacco products or food products that include nutritional and calorie information, he said. Donovan, speaking outside the Chittenden County courthouse in downtown Burlington where the lawsuit was filed, said they are not trying to prevent the companies from selling their products in the state and that Vermonters will continue to be able to use fossil fuels.

What we are saying is that Vermonters have the right to know," Donovan said. "Give Vermonters accurate information. Put a label on the product and let Vermonters decide." The suit names ExxonMobil Corporation, Shell Oil Company, Sunoco LP, CITGO Petroleum Corporation and other corporations. In a Tuesday email, Casey Norton, a spokesperson for ExxonMobil, said the suit was baseless and without merit and they look forward to defending the company in court.

"Legal proceedings like this waste millions of dollars of taxpayer money and do nothing to advance meaningful actions that reduce the risks of climate change," he said.

Citgo declined to comment on pending litigation. The other two companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The Vermont lawsuit seeks to prevent the defendants from engaging in what the suit alleges to be further unfair or deceptive acts and practices. "They have known for decades that the Earth's climate has been changing because of emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases, and that the fossil fuels they sell are the primary source of those emissions," the lawsuit said. Despite that knowledge, the companies have continued to sell their products in Vermont without informing consumers of the effect those products have on their environment, the suit said.

"They market fossil fuel products to Vermont consumers by advertising that use of their products is supposedly better for the environment than other products, while staying silent in the ads about the continuing, significant contributions their products actually make to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change," the suit said.

A [recent report from the U.N.-appointed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) said global warming is already accelerating sea level rise and worsening extremes such as heat waves, droughts, floods and storms. The Vermont lawsuit was filed under the Vermont Consumer Protection Act, alleging the companies misled the public about their actions, not for any alleged environmental damage. The Center for Climate Integrity says Vermont is the sixth state to file a lawsuit against major oil and gas companies related to their alleged role in climate change. The District of Columbia has also filed a similar suit.