

## Green Tides

*Money Movers of the Left Advance Obama's Anti-energy Agenda*

By Gretchen Randall and Tom Randall

**Summary:** *The Tides Foundation and Center have long been known as the place where foundations and even government agencies can send their money for re-distribution to liberal activist organizations—including radical environmental organizations—with whom they would not necessarily want to be publicly linked. Tides and its allies were critical to passage of Obamacare and will use similar tactics on environmental issues like the Keystone XL pipeline.*



The flow of money into and out of the Tides Foundation and Center has turned into a virtual tsunami of cash, roughly doubling in the last decade. The Foundation reported income of over \$132,000,000 in 2010 while making over \$144,000,000 in grants and other payments. Total assets at the end of that year were just over \$153,000,000. The Tides Center, its sister organization, pulled in \$94,000,000 that same year while dispensing just \$17,000,000 and retaining about \$69,000,000 in assets, according to their filings with the IRS. Both receipts and grants awarded increased dramatically for both organizations in 2010—coincidentally, an election year that saw liberal Democrats under unusual electoral pressure.

Founded in 1976 by Drummond Pike, a political activist and self-described “social entrepreneur” from California, Tides

pioneered the practice of donor-advised funds, which allow liberal foundations and individuals to donate to Tides and earmark their money for future distribution to specific groups.

The Tides Foundation also began incubating new groups or “projects” in 1996. This service to left-wing activists became so valuable that the work was eventually spun off as a separate entity called the Tides Center. From the beginning Tides has been involved in a variety of activities, funding such radical organizations as ACORN, the Ruckus Society, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Environmental Working Group, and the California Wildlands Project with more than \$2 billion in grants since its founding.

Situated at the entrance to San Francisco Bay, Tides has especially emphasized environmental extremism in its work—indeed, the story goes that Tides was started to help New Mexico donors who wanted a way to give anonymously to environmental groups—but all of its projects and donations claim to have at their core the goal “to fundamentally change America.” Since both the Center and the Foundation have similar

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objectives, we will refer to them simply as Tides.

The reins of Tides were turned over to Melissa L. Bradley the week of the Democrats' disastrous 2010 mid-term election. Bradley, the founder and CEO of New Capitalist and a former senior strategist at Green for All, calls herself a capitalist yet goes yesterday's liberals one giant leap better, speaking around the country not just for the redistribution of income, but for the redistribution of assets as well.

As befits such a goal, in recent years Tides has turned much of its attention to a broader advancement of the liberal agenda, epitomized by Barack Obama. In doing so, it has become a major player in his election and both of his major initiatives: nationalizing health care and hobbling domestic energy production.

### **An Election to “Fundamentally Transform America”**

Of course, before you can get serious about advancing an agenda, particularly one so unpopular—pollster Scott Rasmussen has consistently found the majority of Americans disagree with the President on most issues—you have to get your guy elected.

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**Editor:** Matt Patterson

**Publisher:** Terrence Scanlon

**Address:** 1513 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036-1480

**Phone:** (202) 483-6900

**Email:** mpatterson@capitalresearch.org

**Website:** www.capitalresearch.org

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Tides, as noted, receives donations from 501(c)(3) charitable organizations and even government agencies (see nearby tables). Yet Tides is heavily involved in state and federal elections, activities their contributors could never touch. The process is similar to what political campaigns would call “bundling.” In the broader sense, Tides is both a bundler and an “unbundler.” The Tides Center and Foundation together bundled or collected over \$585 million in contributions between 2008-2010. At the same time, Tides unbundled nearly \$390,000,000 from 2008-2010 in the form of grants to various groups designed to promote liberal causes, including efforts to get out the vote, in order to promote Obama's political aims.

Much of this money was funneled directly into election efforts through Tides' Civic Engagement Initiative, whose political focus is explicit. As Tides' 2004/2005 report puts it: “In the months leading up to the 2004 presidential elections, we witnessed unprecedented support for voter mobilization and civic participation across the nation.” During the 2004 Bush/Kerry election season, Tides effort in this area amounted to just under \$9,000,000. For the Obama campaign in 2008 the program more than doubled to about \$20,000,000.

Shifts in funding to individual organizations within the program are even more revealing. For example, the National Council of La Raza, a “Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization” which had no Tides funding in 2007, received \$511,000 in 2008 while working to turn out the vote. The Center for Independent Media, a group of websites that push the liberal line especially on environmental and labor issues, went from no donations in 2007 to \$65,000 in 2008, while grants to the Working America Education Fund (a community organizing group launched by the AFL-CIO) rose from just \$200,000 in 2007 to \$1,357,000 in 2008.

Nearly 80 organizations were listed by Tides in an assessment and evaluation of its 2008 civic engagement programs. Groups participating in the Voter Action Fund (“it's not just about elections. It's a constant campaign,” as one Tides staffer exults) include the above-mentioned La Raza, Center for Independent Media, and Working America Education Fund, as well as better-known liberal activists such as the Sierra Club, Planned Parenthood, and the League of Conservation Voters.

The Center for Community Change—a pioneering community organizer group that was chaired by Cecilia Muñoz before she went to the Obama White House, where she now heads the Domestic Policy Council—appears to have been ramped up early for the campaign. It received grants from Tides of \$1,157,000 in 2007 and \$788,000 in 2008. Munoz also served on the board of George Soros's Open Society Institute that gave Tides nearly \$24,000,000 between 1997 and 2005.

Now comes 2012. No one knows how much will be spent by whom to preserve the administration until 2016. But the signs suggest a much-increased role for Tides and their minions. Tides' Voter Action Fund is just one of Tides' projects to assist and encourage donors to engage in a “constant campaign” supporting political advocacy and voting drives at the state, regional, and local levels. It spent over \$10 million from 2004-2010.

It appears progressive money will focus on the grassroots ground game for the 2012 election. For instance, Voter Action Fund grantees like Catalist, a for-profit company founded by senior Clinton White House official Harold Ickes, supply liberal groups with voter databases. (Catalist received \$1,624,000 from Tides in 2008 and 2010.) Another grantee, America Votes, whose 501(c)(3) and (c)(4) arms received \$622,000 from Tides in

## Select Nonprofit Donations to Tides

Pew Charitable Trusts 1995-2010	\$23,022,000
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation 2000-2010	\$49,194,487
David and Lucile Packard Foundation 2006-2010	\$17,464,344
Ford Foundation 2009-2012	\$18,529,628
California Endowment 2009-2011	\$39,274,112
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation 2000-2009	\$11,180,357
The Open Society Institute (est'd by George Soros) 2008-2010	\$2,060,265

Tides (i.e., the Tides Foundation, Tides Center, and Tides Canada) receives donations from many nonprofits which, though they already give millions in grants to specific causes, also give millions to Tides, where the final recipient or cause is hidden. Tides also earns income from these donations when it skims a percentage of each of these donations for its own use.

Sources: [Pewtrusts.org](http://Pewtrusts.org); [hewlett.org](http://hewlett.org); [packard.org](http://packard.org); [fordfoundation.org](http://fordfoundation.org); [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org); [gatesfoundation.org](http://gatesfoundation.org).

2009 and 2010, provides training, research, and data for left-wing groups involved in state ballot initiatives. Progress Now focuses on social media, e-mail campaigns, and organizing year-round campaigning on state and local issues. It received \$310,000 from Tides from 2008-2010.

In April 2012, Tides established a new Civic Participation Fund to “fight the fear-mongering of Voter ID laws” and “get money into the field more quickly” with “expedited grant-making in September and October” to race money from grantmakers to recipients within 72 hours. This fund’s “mission-drive[n] efforts that register, educate and protect voters across the country” began with an “invite-only round of funding for organizations that conduct coordinated voter-registration efforts.”

Tides is also helping groups with lobbying through a 501(c)(4) group, which can

engage more overtly in politicking than can the more typical 501(c)(3) charities. Originally known as the Tides Advocacy Fund (now simply, The Advocacy Fund), the group allows donors who wish to “lobby for a cause to impact legislation and ballot initiative activity.” The Advocacy Fund lists its main issues as solar power, safer chemicals, immigration reform, and rethinking media, among others. From 2008-2010 this group has annually issued between \$9,000,000 and \$13,000,000 in grants to groups such as the Sierra Club, League of Conservation Voters, National Resources Defense Council, America Votes, and Promise Arizona in Action.

### The Health Care Prototype

If you set out to fundamentally change America, and are brazen enough to have your candidate state that as his goal up front, you’d best start with a large chunk of the economy and do it early in the

administration, before public opposition gets in your way.

That is exactly what Tides and President Obama did. Their first big target was the health care industry—one-sixth of the American economy and a segment that touches nearly every citizen in a very personal way. This successful prototype of left-wing activism reveals the kind of strategy Tides will also exploit in the environmental field.

As with most Tides projects, they mobilized quickly, made the necessary affiliations, and the money started to flow as soon as Obama took office. In 2008 Tides formed its Health Care for America Education Fund (HCAEF) which immediately affiliated itself with Health Care for America Now (HCAN).

HCAN was formed in 2008 by over 1,000 activist groups, many of whom already received Tides’ largess. Its initial steering committee included ACORN, AFSCME, Americans United for Change, Campaign for America’s Future, Center for American Progress Action Fund, Center for Community Change, MoveOn, NEA, National Women’s Law Center, Planned Parenthood, SEIU, and UFCW. Then, after the 2008 presidential election, the money really began to flow from Tides. First, the HCAEF project received \$230,000 from Tides in 2009 and another \$611,146 in 2010. This may not seem like much money, and it’s not by Tides standards. But remember that the function of many Tides’ projects is to manage, coordinate, and funnel money, not to actively campaign. Management is as much a part of Tides’ strength as its money. And since Tides charges between 6-8 percent commission on all the money it handles, it can develop some fairly effective management.

In 2009, Tides gave the parent group, HCAN, \$3,606,000 and another \$1,908,000 to HCAN members as the push to pass Obamacare heated up. The largest amount went to the Campaign for Community Change. More importantly, regardless of the fact that an enduring majority of the American people oppose the law, the Left, led by Tides, will continue to fight to implement it and work against all efforts to discredit or undermine it. HCAEF describes its communications strategy and its public education model using the same vocabulary as political campaigns; for instance, the use of personal phone calls and knocking on doors to change public opinion on Obamacare.

As HCAEF put it in a recent press release, “The fight to fully implement health care reform—through 2014 and beyond—will be hard, complex and take a massive effort beyond the scale most have anticipated. With our comprehensive campaign approach and proven track record, the Health Care for America Education Fund... (with our (c)(4) partner, Health Care for America Now) is uniquely positioned to carry out key implementation activities and see that the law’s promise is kept.”

The rewards to Tides have already begun. As soon as the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, was signed into law in March 2010, implementation plans began in the administration. By that September, Tides Center was awarded a grant of \$1,459,000 from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which is in charge of administering the Act. This discretionary grant is for “nurse managed health clinics,” according to the HHS website.

### **Attacking the Keystone XL Pipeline**

Under the Obama administration new offshore oil and gas exploration is almost a thing of the past, thanks to the bans he has

put in place. Exploration on federal lands has virtually ground to a halt as well. His Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has virtually killed new coal production, which helps to explain why 40 percent of West Virginia Democrat primary voters decided to vote for an imprisoned convict rather than Obama in that state’s presidential primary. Obama’s EPA has also put in place new regulations on hydraulic fracturing, a process used safely for over sixty years in the petroleum business to get more oil or natural gas out of imbedded rock. Nuclear power, of course, is out of the question.

But wait. That’s not nearly enough for environmental extremists, determined to “fundamentally change America.”

Consider these unpublicized little secrets about the Keystone XL pipeline. Not only would it carry more Canadian oil more cheaply to U.S. refiners on the Gulf, it would also carry American light crude from the Bakken fields of North Dakota. Mixing this with the relatively heavy Canadian crude would make pumping easier. Bakken oil now is transported by rail, which is much more expensive than pipeline transport. Much of that rail transport is done by the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroads, which coincidentally happen to be owned by Obama pal, Warren Buffett, who has made multiple contributions to the President and the Democratic Party, as well as providing the President with political cover for tax hikes on the wealthy.

Bringing cheaper, more abundant oil and also lowering income for a key supporter, the Keystone XL pipeline had to be stopped. And when it appeared that the State Department would find no cause for stopping it, Tides and its cohorts stepped in. Tides donated \$8,438,000 in 2009 and 2010 to dozens of organizations to fight the pipeline and the import of Canadian tar sands oil. When 2011 and 2012 figures

become available, we expect the grants to be staggering.

Of particular interest is the organization that is playing a lead role in this effort, Corporate Ethics International (CEI), which received nearly \$2,200,000 from Tides in 2009 and 2010. CEI launched its Strategic Corporate Initiative in September 2007—just as Obama began running for the White House—with the usual liberal scares and then went on to reveal its real intentions. Consider these excerpts from the report:

“Global warming is accelerating, fossil fuels are being rapidly exhausted; critical eco-systems have been severely damaged; and the income gap between rich and poor is increasing rapidly. The root cause of most of these problems can be found in the excessive power of global corporations.”

“...we must *change the nature of the market system itself*.” (Emphasis in the original.)

“A key strategy must be to *undermine the legitimacy* of the existing order. (Emphasis in the original.)

“Roughly a third to a half of all economic activity on earth [under our plan] would be declared a ‘no-go’ zone for corporations, placed into common zones. In these zones, ownership of the commons would take the form of what Gar Alperovitz calls a ‘pluralistic commonwealth.’...”

“Other trigger events lie ahead that will create further openings of change, such as rising energy prices from peak oil, new global warming catastrophes, new corporate scandals, and countless other potential crises. We need not create opening for change. What we need is a *transformative* agenda to capitalize on these openings when they come.” (Emphasis added.)

Of course all of these statements are taken

## Federal Grants to Tides

Tides Center & Foundation federal grants received  
by agency

Housing and Urban Development	\$2,581,390
Department of Justice	450,000
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	1,908,101
Department of Education	1,630,785
Department of Defense /National Security Agency	669,960
NASA	1,008,203
Department of Interior	139,319
Department of Agriculture	386,491
Department of Transportation	50,000
Army Corps of Engineers	132,785
National Endowment for the Arts	10,000
US Institute of Peace	32,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,999,284</b>

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) responded to a request by Congress for grants given from 2005-2009 to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and its affiliates. Several Tides grants were included in this report because the GAO included any member of the ACORN “family tree” with either a shared address, phone number, bank account, employer identification number, or at least one executive or board member in common with ACORN. These grants to Tides amounted to \$2,756,230 and are included in the totals above.

The largest single grant was for \$1,459,366 from the Health and Human Services Department on September 14, 2010, described as “Affordable Care Act: Nurse Managed Health Clinics.” HHS made the grant just nine months after Congress passed the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare).

Sources: The federal government website [www.usaspending.gov](http://www.usaspending.gov); the GAO-11-484 report of June 14, 2011 (on ACORN “family tree” grants); [http://taggs.hhs.gov/AwardDetail.cfm?s\\_Award\\_Num=T56HP20656&n\\_Prog\\_Office\\_Code=71](http://taggs.hhs.gov/AwardDetail.cfm?s_Award_Num=T56HP20656&n_Prog_Office_Code=71).

out of a much larger document, and it is only fair to provide their context. That context uses cloaked rhetoric that could just as easily come from a slick politician: “Enhancing countervailing powers and restoring democracy. Separate corporation and state. Change international rules, elevate community rights. Protect the commons. Transform corporate purpose. Tame the giant corporations. Redirect capital.”

Compare those CEI statements to these quotations from Barack Obama: “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” Or, “My friends, we live in the greatest nation in the history

of the world. I hope you’ll join with me as we try to change it.”

High-sounding in their simplistic attitude. All antithetical to freedom, free markets, and an America that for centuries has been the model for enabling average men and women to improve their lives.

In the end, we are left wondering if Tides and its affiliated groups are supporting Obama’s agenda, or if he is simply advancing theirs.

*Gretchen & Tom Randall are partners in Winninggreen LLC, a consulting firm based in Chicago that specializes in messaging for public policy issues. Both have extensive corporate marketing backgrounds—Tom*

*at Sears and Gretchen at 3M. They have written on energy and environmental issues for newspapers across the country as well as the Heartland Institute’s Environment and Climate News. Their website is [www.winninggreen.com](http://www.winninggreen.com).*

**GW**

# GreenNotes

We've heard about all kinds of pollutants—from carbon dioxide, to chlorofluorocarbons, to methane—but now water is a pollutant? A northern Virginia county, along with the **Virginia Department of Transportation** (VDOT), is suing the U.S. **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) over a new regulation so stringent that, according to the *Washington Examiner*, it “define[s] water itself as a pollutant.” Under this regulation, states will be forced to spend “millions of dollars” cleaning up the flow of water through the Accotink Creek in Fairfax County, Virginia. The Clean Water Act lets local government only be responsible for regulating the flow of pollutants through their waters, but EPA is trying to make Fairfax regulate the quantity of water instead. The change, according to VDOT and Fairfax, would “make the Accotink water worse, while costing VDOT \$70 million and Fairfax between \$405 million and \$510 million.” In addition, the new regulations would force the VDOT to seize private property and build new facilities on it, infringing, of course, upon the rights of the owners.

**Abound Solar**, a Colorado company that only four months ago laid off 70 percent of its employees, filed for bankruptcy at the beginning of July. Because the company earlier received a \$400 million loan guarantee from the federal government, Abound Solar's loans will cost taxpayers from \$40 to \$60 million after the company is completely liquidated. When will greenies figure out that green technology doesn't work very well, and no amount of money from the government propping up these failing companies will fix it?

Environmentalists are at it again, fighting economic growth. The **Sierra Club**—along with 60 other environmentalist groups—is trying its hardest to prevent northwestern states from developing ports that could ship coal to China. The enviros worry that in transport, “toxic coal dust” will fly off the trains and into Americans' “mint tea.” Never mind the possibility of covering coal trains to prevent supposed coal dust flurries, has everyone forgotten that the reason we need to ship coal to China in the first place is because environmentalists are pushing the government to shut down use of coal in America? Clearly, environmentalists figure if we can't use our coal, no one can, even though the ports would create over a thousand jobs and generate over \$1.3 billion annually. Who cares about the economy? At least we can sip mint tea in peace.

Is green trendiness in decline? **Apple** seems to think it's not worth their time. The company, which once prided itself on having “eco-friendly” and “recyclable” machines, is now moving away from the EPEAT environmental standard. EPEAT, a standards group started with Environmental Protection Agency funding, was “disappointed” to hear that Apple will pull its 39 certified desktops, laptops, and monitors from the certification, in favor of creating machines that may sell better. Although this means government workers won't be getting new Apple computers anytime soon—the government requires that 95% of its electronic devices be EPEAT certified—Apple fans can rejoice: losing the certification means smaller, better technology. **Shaw Wu**, an analyst at the brokerage firm **Sterne Agee**, explains, “At the end of the day in a business it's really about what works.” Being green, apparently, just isn't cutting it anymore.