



Update: 2024 IRS Filings Beg the Question, Who's Really Calling the Shots?

How National Progressive Donor Networks Are Reshaping Alaska's Development Debate

For decades, Alaska's political battles over energy, fisheries, mining, and infrastructure were fought largely within the state, between local communities, workers, industry, and elected officials who had to answer to Alaska voters. That is no longer the case.

The Alaska Influence Pipeline investigated newly filed 2024 IRS Form 990 disclosures which reveal that Alaska has continued to be a strategic target for national progressive donor networks seeking to influence state policy from the Outside. Through a web of nonprofit intermediaries, particularly those part of the Arabella Advisor ([Sunflower Services](#)) network, millions of dollars are being routed into Alaska-based organizations that specialize not in building projects, but in stopping them.

The result is a political and regulatory environment increasingly shaped by advocacy professionals, litigation specialists, and election organizers funded by Outside donors who do not live in Alaska, do not work in its industries, and do not personally suffer the effects of an increasingly poorer Alaska. As the legislature approaches the start of a new session, and with 2026 Senate races heating up, Outside influence is likely to attain new heights. Oversight and scrutiny of outside money, especially dark money, is more important than ever.

New Venture Fund: The Financier of Opposition Infrastructure

At the center of the anti-industry effort is the [New Venture Fund](#) (NVF), a Washington, D.C.–based pass-through organization that allows wealthy donors to fund state-level activism while remaining several layers removed from public scrutiny. As one of the largest entities within the Arabella network, NVF does not simply give money to charities; it finances ecosystems.

In Alaska, NVF's grantmaking reads like a map of the state's organized opposition to resource development. Large sums flow to Alaskan organizations branded as environmental or conservation groups and in some case even native tribes. In 2024, [approximately \\$625,000](#) was granted out to Alaska-based groups including: \$325,000 to the United Tribes of Bristol Bay; \$100,000 to the Alaska Wildlife Alliance; \$100,000 to Spruce Root; \$50,000 to the Sitka Conservation Society; and the \$50,000 to the Alaska Sustainability Initiative.

On paper, these grants support "environmental programs." In practice, many of these organizations are deeply involved in campaigns that shape public opinion adding well-meaning voices to [block mining](#), [constrain oil and gas production](#), [restrict fisheries](#), and [slow or halt infrastructure projects](#). These efforts are a sophisticated and vertically integrated effort that are highly effective at creating permitting challenges, populist public pressure, and litigation.

The Bristol Bay network provides a clear example – groups funded through NVF have played a central role in opposing efforts that, regardless of one's position, would have represented billions in private investment and thousands of jobs. The funding from these massive, influential groups is not episodic; it is sustained, designed to keep permanent opposition capacity in place.

NVF directs significant money toward explicitly political organizations. Alaskans for Posterity, which received \$200,000 in 2024, the AEDC Advocacy Fund, which got \$190,000, and Alaskans for Fair Courts, which was granted \$40,000, operate as (c)(4) groups that can engage directly in political messaging and policy influence. These organizations work to shape legislation, influence regulatory agencies, and intervene in ballot and judicial retention campaigns, all while benefiting from the infrastructure and resources of oftentimes confidential national donor networks. To amplify their causes and build out their platforms, NVF has also routinely invested in media and narrative shaping, including a grant of \$100,000 to The Alaska Current, helping to amplify aligned messaging around energy, climate, and development debates.

Even NVF grants to utilities and tribal entities, such as Puvurnaq Power Company, which received \$301,757 and Atmautluak Tribal Utilities, which saw \$100,000 from NVF, as well as the Chickaloon Native Village, Chilkat Indian Village, Igiugig Village, and the Village of Solomon, which all received tens of thousands of dollars from NVF, are often structured around [climate-transition frameworks](#) rather than supporting affordability or expanding industrial capacity. The effect has been a replacement of resource-based economy with private grants awarded specifically to oppose industry and resource based growth. The result has been a shift away from energy models that support large-scale economic growth toward systems that prioritize emissions goals, even when reliability is diminished and the need for public subsidies is elevated.

Tides Foundation: Scaling Political Power and Voter Turnout

If New Venture Fund finances the opposition's backbone, the [Tides Foundation](#) helps scale its reach. Tides is one of the largest progressive fiscal sponsors in the country, and its [2024 Alaska spending](#) demonstrated a heavy focus on political infrastructure and voter engagement. The foundation's grant list shows substantial investment in organizations designed to influence who votes, how they vote, and what policies are politically viable.

Groups like [Get Out the Native Vote](#), which took in took in \$150,000 are central to political turnout operations, particularly in rural and Indigenous communities. While voter participation is a legitimate civic goal, these efforts appear to be weighted in the favor one political party. As the Alaska Influence Pipeline [demonstrates](#), they are embedded within a broader network of organizations that advocate aggressively against fossil fuel development and for expansive regulatory authority. Again, increasing voter turnout is a legitimate goal but the association of voter turnout efforts with the anti-develop positions of the donor network undercuts the legitimacy of election reform efforts. Perhaps the ultimate goal is to polarize the rural voting reforms to the extent real Alaskan voices remain repressed.

The [907 Initiative](#), which received a contribution from Tides of \$75,000, is evolving its efforts from supporting local and state campaigns to targeting federal lawmakers. The targeting of Senator Dan Sullivan (see [here](#) and [here](#)) is a new focus for the organization. The [group's budget](#) has increased from approximately \$522,000 to just under \$800,000 due to support by the Tides Foundation, Arabella Advisors, and Neo Philanthropy.

Tides also directs major funding to policy advocacy organizations like Alaska Public Interest Research Group (Alaska PIRG) (\$208,000), Native Movement (\$40,000), and Takshanuk Watershed

Council (\$50,000). These groups routinely engage in campaigns opposing energy development, promoting aggressive climate mandates, and influencing regulatory outcomes.

Sixteen Thirty Fund: Direct Political Muscle

If Tides focuses on nonprofit advocacy and turnout, the Sixteen Thirty Fund provides the hard political edge. The [Sixteen Thirty Fund](#) is one of the nation's most active (c)(4) funders, and its Alaska grants make clear that it views the state as politically consequential. Its [2024 grantees](#) include: Alaska Progressive Donor Table (\$302,500); Alaskans for Posterity (\$200,000); Better Jobs for Alaska (\$100,000); The Alaska Center (\$75,000); and Alaska Jobs Coalition (\$50,000).

These organizations are explicitly designed to influence elections, legislation, and regulatory policy. Despite names suggesting economic growth, many actively oppose oil and gas leasing, mining permits, and infrastructure expansion, while promoting policies that increase energy and construction costs. Sixteen Thirty's investment ensures these groups can operate continuously and effectively, not just during election cycles.

The [Western Futures Fund](#) (WFF), which was the [initial vehicle funding the 907 Initiative](#), received \$2 million from the Sixteen Thirty Fund. In 2024, the WFF saw [\\$8.7 million in revenue](#), which was a massive increase from the year prior, in which the group took in [over \\$3.2 million](#) to target candidates.

NEO Philanthropy and Hopewell: Reinforcing the Network

While smaller in gross dollar amounts, NEO Philanthropy and Hopewell Fund play a critical role by reinforcing the same organizations funded by NVF and Tides. Their grants to Alaska PIRG, 907 Initiative, The Alaska Center Education Fund, the League of Women Voters of Anchorage, and the ACLU of Alaska Foundation help sustain legal advocacy, election messaging, criminal justice reform and policy pressure campaigns.

This layering of funding matters. When the same organizations receive money from multiple national donors, they gain stability, professional staff, legal resources, and the ability to engage in long-term campaigns rather than short-term, issue specific advocacy. The result is a permanent political presence that can outlast elections and outmaneuver local opposition. These are campaigns and initiatives not organically funded by concerned Alaskans but instead by outside, philosophically driven, politically polarized, confidential donor networks.

What This Funding Does to Alaska's Economy

What is most striking across all these filings is not just who is funded, but who is not.

There is virtually no investment in workforce training for oil, gas, mining, maritime trades, or construction. There is no emphasis on ports, roads, freight logistics, or energy cost reduction. Private-sector job creation, especially in the industries that pay for state government, receives little to no support even as supported policies require more subsidies especially in rural areas.



Instead, resources are concentrated on organizations capable of delaying projects, filing lawsuits, mobilizing voters, and shaping public narratives. Over time, this creates a chilling effect. Companies see Alaska not as a place to build, but as a place where every project will face years of opposition backed by well-funded national networks.

The irony is, of course, difficult to ignore. These groups often frame their work as resisting Outside influence and corporate power, yet the system that sustains them is itself driven by outside money, national strategy, and centralized donor control.

A Question Alaskans Can No Longer Avoid

Nonprofits are allowed to advocate, organize, and litigate. However, the scale, coordination, and intent revealed in the latest round of IRS filings raises a fundamental issue for Alaska voters and policymakers. When major decisions about economic and industrial development, as well as policy – especially in the leadup to Senate races, state campaigns, and ballot measures – are shaped by organizations funded primarily from Outside, local control becomes no more than an illusion. The people who pay the price, whether it be through lost jobs, higher energy costs, reduced investments, or unaligned policies, are Alaskans. Importantly, the donors who drive the agenda are not and the staff in the spiderweb of organizations are highly mobile professionals who are not reliant on local or even in state economic growth.

As Alaska enters another round of high-stakes elections and policy debates in 2026, and with the start of the legislative session around the corner, the question is no longer whether advocacy groups are influencing the state. The question is whether Alaska's economic future is being decided locally or outsourced to a national ideological project operating behind the veil of nonprofit philanthropy.