

## **\$375B EPA slush fund handled by John Podesta gave billions to charities founded only months earlier**

By

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groups, most of which had only recently been founded, The Post has discovered.

In one case, former Vice President Kamala Harris handed over a check for nearly \$7 billion to Bethesda, Maryland, based group Climate United Fund, which does not appear in the IRS's charities database, and has no federal filings.

The non-profit fund had only been incorporated in Delaware on November 30, 2023, according to public records, five months before Harris handed over the cash in April 2024.



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The Climate United Fund then announced “the historic investment” in a press release, noting the group’s work “delivers benefits like cleaner air...and increased energy security.”

However, because the company is so new, there is no publicly published accounting of how it plans to spend the \$7 billion.

Projects have been announced including a \$10.8 million “pre-development loan” solar project on Tribal lands in eastern Oregon and Idaho and a \$32m solar energy project at

the University of Arkansas, but they represent only a drop in the bucket of the grant's amount.

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“Ethically speaking, it’s concerning,” said Laurie Styron, CEO of Charity Watch, an independent charity watchdog group.

“What was the purpose of creating middlemen entities when there are so many established groups in the climate space with good track records? What was the value-added in [by] doing it this way, especially with such large sums of taxpayer funds?”

The cash for the charity came from a huge \$370 billion climate slush fund of taxpayer money overseen by John Podesta, a political consultant who was chair of Hillary Clinton’s failed 2016 bid for president and White House chief of staff to Bill Clinton.



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In 2022, President Joe Biden named Podesta to helm the climate fund, which resulted from the Inflation Reduction Act, a 2022 law that was aimed at combatting climate change and creating clean energy.

Last year, EPA advisor Brent Efron was caught on video describing how the agency hastily parceled out a related \$20 billion climate fund that was held by Citibank before the end of the Biden administration.

“Get the money out as fast as possible before they [Trump Administration] come in ... it’s like we’re on the Titanic and we’re throwing gold bars off the edge,” he said in video posted online by activist group Project Veritas.



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Efron “was acting in his private capacity,” when he made the comments, which “expressed [his] personal views,” an attorney representing him, Mark S. Zaid, told The Post. He also claimed the comments “had nothing to do with” the funds which had been administered.

Now Lee Zeldin, the new EPA chief said he wants to claw back the cash doled out by the climate fund. On Monday, he called on the agency's inspector general to investigate. "The Biden EPA 'gold bar' scheme was designed to limit government oversight while doling out funds to far-left organizations pushing DEI and Environmental Justice," Zeldin told The Post in a statement.

"Of the eight pass-through entities that received funding from the pot of \$20 billion in tax dollars, various recipients have shown very little qualification to handle a single dollar, let alone several billions of dollars. I have zero tolerance for waste and abuse at the EPA."

A spokeswoman for the Climate United Fund told The Post the Biden-controlled EPA "encouraged groups to work with coalitions" to receive the cash.

She said that the EPA cash sent to Climate United Fund is parked with Calvert Impact, a related non-profit.



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The Post found three entities called Calvert Impact, all of them based in Bethesda — making it more difficult to track the flow of money.

In another example, the similarly named Justice Climate Fund is a Washington DC-based non-profit which was set up in 2023, has yet to submit a tax filing to the IRS and has no information about its principals on its web site.

The group received \$940 million from the EPA. It lists its aims as working with “community partners” to “drive transformative investments, focused on reducing pollution,” among other goals.



Another third group — Power Forward Communities Inc. — was registered in 2023 and shows a total of just \$100 in revenue in its tax filing for that year, according to public filings.



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Yet the Columbia, Maryland, based nonprofit somehow received \$2 billion from the EPA fund, according to public records.

The group said it is part of a coalition of five other charities, including United Way World Wide and Rewiring America, a Washington DC-based nonprofit which announced former Democratic Rep Stacey Abrams would work as its corporate counsel in 2023.

However, Rewiring America only registered as a corporate entity a year later in Delaware in December 2024, according to public records.

A Feb. 24 press release from Power Forward Communities says the group has already committed \$539 million to “expand and preserve affordable housing, improve air quality, and create good-paying jobs by ramping up energy efficiency” across the country.

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Tim Mayopoulos, the former CEO of housing financial company Fannie Mae and a Democratic donor is listed as the group’s interim president and CEO, according to public filings.

He contributed \$5,600 to Joe Biden’s presidential campaign in 2020, federal filings show. Power Forward Communities has no list of board members on its website but does list job openings for a Government Affairs VP, Communications VP and a Special Assistant. Justice Climate Fund and Power Forward Communities Inc. did not return The Post’s calls requesting comment.

The FBI and the Department of Justice have both launched investigations into the grants, and bank accounts holding billions of dollars have been frozen as the EPA attempts to get it back, the New York Times reported Tuesday.