

# Unveiling the Double Standard - Foreign-Owned Companies Label Community Opposition as “Dark Money”

In communities across the United States, residents are finding themselves pitted against multi-million dollar, if not multi-billion dollar, foreign-owned corporations pushing large-scale renewable energy projects. These projects, while often marketed under the guise of "green energy" and "economic progress," are raising serious questions about environmental impacts, local control, and the long-term interests of the very communities they claim to serve.

A troubling very ugly and condescending narrative has emerged. When local residents—many of whom are volunteers or part of grassroots organizations—come together to oppose these developments, they are frequently accused of being funded by so-called "dark money." Meanwhile, the corporations driving these projects often remain opaque about their own funding sources, sometimes backed by foreign governments, multinational financial institutions, and public taxpayer money through tax credits and subsidies.



## **The Real Power Imbalance**

It's no secret that utility-scale renewable energy projects require significant capital investment. The companies behind these projects often have resources that dwarf those of the communities they target. They can hire teams of lobbyists, public relations experts, and lawyers to navigate regulatory hurdles and combat opposition. They often promise jobs and economic development, but these benefits frequently fail to materialize for local residents, leaving communities to deal with long-term environmental and economic consequences.

Adding to the imbalance is the lack of transparency around how these corporations leverage taxpayer money. Through federal and state tax credits, subsidies, and public grants, these developers frequently use public funds to bankroll their projects. Yet, they often fail to disclose how much taxpayer money they are using or how these subsidies inflate their profits while the local community shoulders the risks. This deliberate lack of accountability stands in stark contrast to the scrutiny placed on grassroots groups who are accused of receiving "dark money."

In stark contrast, the average community group opposing such projects operates on a shoestring budget, funded by small donations from concerned citizens. These groups consist of farmers, homeowners, and local leaders who simply want to protect their way of life. Accusing these grassroots efforts of being backed by "dark money" is not only misleading but a blatant attempt to discredit legitimate concerns and silence opposition.

## **What Is "Dark Money"?**

The term "dark money" refers to political spending where the source of funds is not disclosed. While the label carries negative connotations, it's important to distinguish between shadowy corporate lobbying and transparent grassroots fundraising.

Community groups are often transparent about their funding, relying on bake sales, local fundraising events, and individual contributions to cover the costs of legal representation or public awareness campaigns. By contrast, the financial backing of multi-national corporations is far more opaque, with layers of subsidiaries, investors, foreign interests, and public subsidies that are rarely disclosed.

## **Why Communities Speak Out**

The opposition to utility-scale renewable energy projects often stems from genuine concerns about environmental degradation, loss of property rights, and community character. For instance:

- Environmental Concerns - Solar and wind farms require vast tracts of land, disrupting ecosystems, agricultural productivity, and water resources.
- Property Rights – The lack of local control for these projects often pits private property owners against powerful corporations.
- Community Impact - Large-scale projects can lead to reduced property values, increased taxes, and the industrialization of rural landscapes.

These are not the objections of well-funded lobbyists but the heartfelt pleas of citizens defending their homes, livelihoods, and environment.

## **Turning the Tables**

By accusing local opposition groups of being influenced by “dark money,” corporations not only undermine grassroots efforts but also deepen divisions within communities. This tactic pits neighbor against neighbor, creating an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion. Friends and family members who might otherwise share common concerns about the impacts of these projects can find themselves on opposing sides, divided by the false narrative that one group is acting out of hidden, nefarious motives.

This widening gap of divisiveness erodes the very fabric of small-town and rural communities, where unity and collaboration are often the foundation of problem-solving. Instead of fostering open dialogue and mutual understanding, the “dark money” label stifles productive conversations and polarizes communities. The real beneficiaries of this strategy are not the residents, but the corporations who stand to profit while the community grapples with the aftermath of these fractures.

## **A Call to Action**

If you are reading this and find yourself wanting to learn more about the adverse effects of renewable energy developments or are seeking support in standing up to these large-scale industrial renewable energy projects, we encourage you to get involved with your local opposition group. These grassroots efforts are often the first line of defense in protecting communities and their values. Additionally, we strongly recommend reaching out to organizations like Concerned Citizens of America Org, Inc. ([www.ccoah.org](http://www.ccoah.org))—a grassroots, non-profit, IRS 501(c)(3), nationwide organization built and staffed by volunteer warriors across the US who have experienced the very struggles you are now facing. Their expertise, resources, and unwavering commitment to preserving the health, safety, and welfare of our family and community, our heritage, and the legacy we are building for our future

generations can provide the guidance and support you seek so as to make your voice heard.

## **The Path Forward**

It's time to challenge the narrative and expose the double standard. Communities have every right to demand transparency, fairness, and respect from developers—no matter how large or well-funded they may be. Efforts to label local opposition as merely an extension of the industries that compete against renewable energy developments and accusations of accepting “dark money” should be seen for what they are: a distraction from the real power imbalance at play and a sign that they are losing the argument.

To truly address the challenges of renewable energy development, decision-makers must prioritize the voices of local residents over the interests of foreign-owned corporations. Developers must also be held accountable for disclosing not only their funding sources but how they are leveraging taxpayer money to fund these projects. Communities deserve to know the true cost of these developments—not just in terms of land and resources but in how their tax dollars are being used.

By standing together and insisting on transparency, communities can continue to push back against misleading narratives and demand a seat at the table where their future is being decided.