

Organizing for Change, The Dogwood Initiative and Groundwire

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Mr. McMillan,

I have put up a new post at my blog which mentions Tides Canada, and two of the projects with which Tides Canada is involved: Organizing for Change, and the Dogwood Initiative. For your review, I have provided this post below.

If I have presented anything here that is factually incorrect, or if I have missed any important point, please let me know.

As before, I can be reached at 604.618.8110.

Sincerely,
 Vivian Krause

Tides Canada runs a project called [Organizing for Change](#). One of the activities of this project has been to get people to [temporarily join](#) the Liberal party in order to be able to vote on Feb. 26, to determine who becomes the next Premier of British Columbia.

One of the key members of Organizing for Change is the [Dogwood Initiative](#) ("Dogwood"). Dogwood has a range of partners and supporters, including at least four U.S. foundations: Wilburforce, Brainerd, Hewlett and Tides. Tides is in turn heavily funded by the billion-dollar, U.S. foundations (eg. Hewlett and the Pew Charitable Trusts) which are funding a [multi-million dollar campaign](#) to tackle the oil and gas industries in B.C. and Alberta.

For several years, Dogwood has been running a sophisticated, well-funded campaign for a federal ban on oil tanker traffic off of the north/central coast of British Columbia. Since this ban doesn't cover the south coast of British Columbia or the coast of Vancouver Island, this isn't really a tanker ban. This is a more like a trade ban that would block Canadian oil exports to Asia - all in the name of protecting the kermode bear (AKA the Great Spirit Bear).



It the Dogwood Initiative succeeds, oil tanker traffic will be banned and along with that, Canada will be stuck with the U.S. as the only big customer for one of our single most important national exports: Alberta oil. Its easy to see how this would be great for the U.S., but it wouldn't be so great for Canada or for other countries.

I'm all for protecting the kermode bear, and more broadly, all of British Columbia. But I'm not convinced that Canada needs to give up the opportunity to export oil to Asia, in order to do so.

What has gone largely unnoticed is that the Dogwood Initiative has been receiving substantial support from deep-pocketed funders, south of the border.

The web-site of the Dogwood Initiative is run by [Groundwire](#), a high-tech, Seattle-based organization that is heavily funded by the Wilburforce Foundation. Wilburforce is funded by James & Rosanna Letwin, to the tune of [\\$80 Million](#). Mr. Letwin is one of the original group that started Microsoft.

[Groundwire: Certified Salesforce.com Consultants & MICROSOFT Veteran](#)

At least one of the people who works at Groundwire is a [certified Salesforce.com consultant](#), and Groundwire is currently [hiring another](#). Another senior staff member is a [veteran of MICROSOFT](#).

In 2009, Groundwire developed [60 web-sites and implemented 44 database projects](#), according to U.S. tax returns.

To get an idea of how high-tech and sophisticated Groundwire is, check out their report on [E-mail Service Providers](#).

Since 2000, Groundwire has been paid [\\$960,750](#) by the Wilburforce Foundation. Of that, \$460,000 was paid since 2007.

Groundwire has also been funded by the [Brainerd Foundation](#) and the [Bullitt Foundation](#). Wilburforce, Bullitt and Brainerd all fund projects that would block Canadian oil exports to Asia.

Dogwood Initiative Uses Salesforce.com Database

Groundwire describes the Dogwood Initiative's [NO TANKERS](#) campaign as "a multi-year, multi-faceted campaign largely organized online and supported by the sophisticated functionality of a Salesforce.com database." Salesforce is not only sophisticated, state-of-the-art technology, its expensive.



As of May of 2010, the Dogwood Initiative had 40,00 members, [Groundwire says](#). "A list this size for a regional nonprofit is extraordinary," [says Groundwire](#). As of Feb. 3, 2011, Dogwood reported that it has [70,000](#) members.

How exactly does Groundwire help the Dogwood Initiative?

In Groundwire's own words, "[Groundwire worked with Dogwood to set up this online petition as well as additional online actions forms, all of which integrate with their Salesforce.com database](#)".

'Sounds like they really know what they're doing. Groundwire says, "No Tankers petition signers are added to Dogwood's Salesforce.com database and receive regular communication from Dogwood Initiative; action alerts, email appeals and a monthly e-newsletter. For actions with a regional focus, the list is segmented geographically. Each online action receives a leadership level from 1-5, a measure of the level of effort and engagement it takes to complete that action, for example: signing a petition is a level 1 action, donating is level 3 and so on. In addition to leadership levels, leaders committed to the campaign are asked to identify themselves by joining the "No Tankers Action Team." The No Tankers Action Team focuses on actions that require a higher level of effort and engagement such as writing personal letters and organizing activities for the campaign," [says Groundwire](#).

Groundwire says that the Dogwood Initiative has used its on-line letter-writing tool to sent 646 letters to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), and 12,000 letters to Chinese and Korean companies that were on the verge of signing firm agreements with a Alberta oil producers and buyers, according to Groundwire. "[A total of over 12,000 letters were sent](#) to 10 recipients (1,200 letters each). It is six months later and Enbridge has yet to submit its official application to regulators largely due to its failure to secure firm commitments from suppliers and buyers," [says Groundwire](#).