

Heinz Endowments Shift on Environmental Grants

By Kevin Begos

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The Heinz Endowments has suddenly dismissed its longtime head of environmental grant making, signaling that changes are coming to one of the leading charity's priorities.

Caren Glotfelty told reporters in an email that "the board has indicated that it is moving in a different direction with regard to the Environment Program," which are a significant part of the endowments overall grants. In an email to Heinz grantees sent last week, she said her last day is Aug. 8.

... Industry groups also questioned whether Heinz could realistically support both sides in the bitter debate over gas drilling, or fracking.

Aaron Dorfman, the director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, said sudden personnel changes in charities aren't unusual.

"It always indicates a serious difference of opinion" within the organization, Dorfman said.

John Stoltz, a Duquesne University scientist who's received Heinz funding for research into possible links between Marcellus Shale gas drilling and water pollution, said in an email that he was "shocked" by the news. But he added that a conference on shale gas research scheduled for this fall was funded by Heinz, and that he hasn't heard anything specific about shifting priorities.

Heinz President Bobby Vagt will serve as the acting environmental program director in Glotfelty's absence, according to her email. Vagt is also a corporate board member of Kinder Morgan, a Houston company that owns the largest natural gas pipeline and storage network in

the nation.

While the shale gas grants have attracted the most attention, Heinz also funds many other environmental grants on issues such as storm water, pollution from coal, public parks, and general education and outreach. They also fund many other programs that focus on children, art, and education.

For example, in 2011 Heinz gave out about \$67 million in grants, and the environmental portion of that was \$7.8 million.

Dorfman added that the Heinz Endowments has no obligation to release more details on why Glotfelty was pushed out, and there's no typical timeline for handling such transitions. Yet that can place tremendous pressure on organizations that wonder if they will still be funded in the future.

"It's a horrible position that grantees get placed in all too often, waiting to see how things shake out," Dorfman said.

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