

TED Talks and Tariffs



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REGENERATIVE

By Sherrell Dorsey

Bite-sized case studies and insights on disruptive climate innovators, investment trends, and the policies shaping our green future.

This week, I'm in Vancouver for the annual TED Conference (**you can watch here for a nominal fee**)—attending speaker sessions, soaking up big ideas, and recording a few live episodes for the TED Tech podcast. My guests include innovators building creator tools for an AI-driven world, engineers who've raised over \$600 million to slash food waste by nearly 80%, and linguists using technology to communicate with animals across national parks to track population growth and curb poaching. I'm here for the insights, the connections, the evening meetups—and yes, the snacks.

If you're the praying type, feel free to send up a few for my stamina. As an introvert, I hit my people quota fast, so pacing myself this week will be essential.

That pacing also extends to tracking what's happening on the economic front. I peeked at my Vanguard accounts yesterday, audibly gasped, and quickly decided to find something safe to do—as the kids say. The market's in a spiral, and **corporate leaders** are now urging President Trump to roll back his global trade war as fears mount around job losses and rising prices for small businesses.

I'm currently deep in research on how these new tariffs might **impact** the future of renewable energy. Projects already underway face serious **roadblocks**, especially with looming price hikes on steel, copper, and lithium-ion battery imports from China—key components for EV production and solar infrastructure. The consequences could stall progress just when acceleration is most needed.

Lead well,

Skirrell Dorsey

COMPANY TO CLOCK: Kind Designs Sustainable Seawalls

Kind Designs 3D-prints seawalls that not only protect coastal infrastructure but also restore marine ecosystems. Their "living seawalls" act as artificial reefs, improving water quality and attracting marine life—offering a climate-resilient alternative to traditional coastal barriers.

Headquarters

Miami, Florida

Why it matters

As climate change drives rising sea levels and coastal erosion, the demand for nature-based infrastructure solutions is surging. Kind Designs combines environmental restoration with smart construction tech, positioning itself at the intersection of climate resilience, urban development, and ecological innovation.

How big the industry is

The global coastal infrastructure market is projected to surpass **\$20 billion** by 2030, driven by increased flooding, erosion, and government mandates for resilient shoreline protection. Living infrastructure and marine restoration solutions are gaining ground within both public and private sector investment strategies.

Traction

- **\$11.5M raised** to date, including a recent \$5M "Seed 1" round
- Valuation: **\$30M**
- Secured **two government contracts**, pursuing **\$180M+** in municipal opportunities
- Active projects in **Miami and NYC**, with **DoD installations** underway
- Operates a **50,000 sq. ft. facility** with capacity to scale up to 10 3D printers
- Early data: **1,000+ oysters** attached to a single seawall, filtering **50,000 gallons/day**

Major investors

- **Overlay Capital** (lead in latest round)
- **Mark Cuban** (repeat investor)
- Strategic capital from developers and hotel groups with coastal assets

BIG BILLS, BIG DEALS

- **Schroder's Capital Secures \$100M** from Apple for investments in wind and solar assets across China. (IPE Real Assets)
- **California-based Fourier Raises \$18.5M** to launch on-site, on-demand hydrogen production system. (FCW)
- **Boston-based Northwind Climate raised \$1MM** for data platform and SaaS tool provider for the climate economy. Backers included Tom Steyer, former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and Alexander Hoffmann of Susty Ventures, among others.
- **Nashville-based Silicon Ranch lands \$500M** investment for community-focused renewable energy development in PE Expansion funding from AIP Management.

INDUSTRY EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

- **SPARK Cleantech Accelerator Cohort 4**: Apply by April 15 to join the SPARK Cleantech Accelerator's fourth cohort, a 12-week program supporting early-stage cleantech startups with mentorship, funding opportunities, and access to prototyping facilities.
- **Elemental Interactive**. Every year, Elemental invites exceptional founders and investors to highlight progress and accelerate action. April 22. [Learn more](#).
- **Climate Tech Investors Summit** at San Francisco Climate Week. April 22. [Learn more](#).
- **TOTAL IMPACT SUMMIT**: Invest in Transformative Impact. May 14-15. [Learn more](#).
- **SOCAP 25** features a day-one focus on creating capital connections for LPs and GPs. Oct 27-29. [Learn more](#).

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