



Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

A national faith-based organization founded in support of Unitarian values

P.O. Box 40011, Ottawa, ON, K1V 0W8

President, Rev. Frances Deverell

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*“Respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.” Seventh Principle
“If it’s wrong to wreck the climate, then it’s wrong to profit from that wreckage.” Bill McKibben*

Canadian UU Congregation
Street
City, province

Dear [Name of Board President]:

On (December 12th, 2013 the board of the Canadian Unitarians For Social Justice passed a motion to recommend to congregations and to individual Unitarians to add investments in fossil fuels to their screening criteria for socially responsible investing. I am writing to request that you make our recommendation known to your congregation and to your board, as an invitation to review your investment portfolios and consider divestment from fossil fuel companies.

It is the view of CUSJ that it is problematic for our Canadian congregations to manage portfolios that include investments in large oil and gas or coal companies. In a world struggling against advancing climate change induced by burning fossil fuels, a number of universities, congregations and cities, both inside and outside the U.S. have already divested or are in the process of doing so.

Why is this important?

Unless most of the known fossil fuel reserves are left in the ground, humanity faces certain catastrophe due to climate change. Consequently, there is a risk of a “carbon bubble¹” (the overvaluation of fossil fuel corporation stocks based on reserves that cannot be exploited if we are to limit climate change (and ocean acidification)). In spite of the risk to all of us of climate change, the objective of fossil fuel companies continues to be extracting all those reserves while looking for more to exploit. This behaviour is deeply immoral.

In 2013, the UUA passed a resolution on divestment:

<http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/288863.shtml>

Also in 2013, the CUC passed a resolution calling on all congregations to take action to mitigate climate change.

<http://cuc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/CUC-Resolution-Approved-2013-Climate-Change-Mitigation.pdf>

We would urge you, your Board and your congregation to discuss fossil fuel divestment in the near future, with a view to excluding fossil fuel companies from your investment portfolio within five years. The film by 350.org entitled “Do the Math” is an excellent discussion starter. I have included a link at the bottom of this letter to an excellent presentation of the case for divestment², developed by 350 Toronto and addressed to the University of Toronto. Its arguments are widely applicable. If you choose to do this we hope you will issue a press release about your action and send appropriate letters to those investments.

Canadian Unitarians For Social Justice endorsed the ClimateFast in 2012 and again in 2013 and encourages all Unitarians to engage in actions that raise awareness about climate change and the need for immediate action to begin the transition to a renewable energy economy. We care deeply about the future of our children and life on earth, and are moved by the impact of climate change and the extreme weather events that accompany it have on so many around the world. We believe it is important that our individual and institutional investments reflect Unitarian values and principles. Please ponder deeply the impact of your decision in this matter.

Sincerely,



Rev. Frances Deverell
President
CUSJ

Encl. Fact Sheet

Footnotes:

¹ <http://www.carbontracker.org/carbonbubble>

² <http://toronto350.org/divest/fossil-fuel-divest.pdf>

Fact Sheet

US congregations divested from the 200 largest fossil fuel companies (CT-200) or pledged to do so

First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee	First Unitarian Society of Westchester,
First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City	Hastings-on-Hudson NY
First Parish Cambridge Unitarian Universalist	Mountain Vista Unitarian Universalist
South Church Unitarian Universalist,	Congregation, Tucson AZ
Portsmouth NH	First Universalist Church of Pittsfield
Unitarian Church of Los Alamos	Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst

Example Board resolution (Milwaukee) here:

<http://www.uumilwaukee.org/content/fossil-fuels-divestment-resolution>

Example sermon on divestment:

<http://firstparishcambridge.org/files/DivestfromFossilFuels.pdf>