



CANADIAN
UNITARIAN
COUNCIL

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PROPOSED ACTION: **Socially Responsible Investment Action - Fossil Fuel Divestment**

PROPOSERS: Environment Monitoring Group

CONTACT: Forrest Smith, environment@cuc.ca

DATE: APPROVED May 15, 2015 at the Annual General Meeting

Background:

1. The climate crisis threatens Earth systems through warming, destabilization of the climate, sea level rise, and the acidification of the oceans, of which most of the burden has fallen and will fall on the poorest people in the world, who are least responsible for the crisis.
2. In 2009, the CUC reaffirmed the Environmental Principles and Values of Canadian Unitarian Universalists and called upon the CUC and its members to provide leadership through collective and individual actions, and to be a strong voice and presence, in confronting environmental issues. Those principles and values included:
 - a. Sustainability: Ensuring sustainability of the earth and all life upon it is our first responsibility to future generations and to all the species with which we share the planet.
 - b. Ethical Action: We must adopt practices not only appropriate to our time and place but also that address needs of the future.
 - c. Natural Capital: A sustainable economy must limit consumption to the “interest” produced by the natural capital upon which it depends.
3. If all known fossil fuel reserves are burned, they will produce five times the amount of greenhouse gas emissions required to raise global temperatures beyond 2°C, the level that leaders of 167 countries, including Canada, have agreed represents a threshold beyond which there would be dangerous human-caused interference with the climate system.
4. We have a moral responsibility to Earth, to all beings, and to future generations to do

everything in our power to bring about a swift transition from fossil fuels to a sustainable energy economy.

5. A global and growing movement is calling upon universities, pension funds, public entities, and religious institutions to **divest their holdings in the 200 major fossil fuel companies ranked by the carbon content of their fossil fuel reserves as listed at FossilFreeIndexes.com which together control a significant portion of known reserves.**
6. The CUC adopted a **1997 Socially Responsible Investment Policy** (see Appendix C) resolution requiring “the CUC --- in investing the funds of the CUC --- *make all reasonable efforts to avoid the holding of securities issued by corporations and agencies involved in nuclear power, military weapons, tobacco, gambling and all corporations that persist in human rights violations or **persist in non-sustainable environmental practices***”.
7. The CUC has already divested from the top Carbon Underground 200 securities.

Therefore, in order to further fulfill the previously approved resolutions of 1997 and 2009, we propose the following actions:

1. The CUC will continue a policy of not purchasing securities of Carbon Underground 200 (latest edition) companies as investments; and
2. The CUC will continue to invest an appropriate investment share in securities that will support a swift transition to a clean energy economy, such as renewable energy and energy-efficiency-related securities; and
3. Notwithstanding the actions above:
 - a. The CUC may acquire and retain investments in Carbon Underground 200 companies, provided it engages in shareholder activism that seeks environmental justice or transition to clean and renewable energy;
 - b. The CUC may purchase the minimal shares of Carbon Underground 200 companies necessary to permit introduction of shareholder resolutions seeking environmental justice or transition to clean and renewable energy; and
 - c. The CUC shall not take any action inconsistent with its fiduciary duty or that is incompatible with the principles of sound investment.
4. That the Treasurer of the CUC report to each CUC Annual General Meeting from 2016 through 2020 on CUC’s progress on the above actions; and
5. That the CUC encourage member congregations and Unitarian Universalists generally, to review their congregational and personal investments with a view to taking action to similarly divest from Carbon Underground 200 companies and to mitigate climate change via supporting shareholder activism designed to end use of fossil fuels, and investment in renewable energy and conservation; and

6. The CUC Environmental Monitoring Group will survey member congregations in 2016 and again in 2017, tabulate the results and communicate to CUC Members reported progress.

APPROVED.

ACTION PLAN FOR PROPOSERS – FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

An Action Plan accompanies each proposed motion, outlining action steps that might be necessary to implement the motion. This is to provide delegates with a clear idea of the resources that might be involved, and how much staff and volunteer time needs to be allocated.

The Proposers suggest the following actions to support the implementation of their motion, if approved by delegates at the Annual General Meeting:

| PROPOSED ACTION | DETAILS | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE | COMPLETION DATE |
|---------------------------------|--|--|------------------------|
| Promote Action | Promote action, respond to questions, conduct surveys and tabulate and report results | Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) | May 2017 |
| Communicate | Communicate “urge” to action request to members and post this action plan on the CUC web site. | EMG and CUC staff | June 2015 |
| Report CUC Action | Annual progress reporting to AGM | CUC Treasurer | May 2020 |
| Report CUC Member Action | Voluntary participation in 2016 and 2017 surveys. | CUC members who choose to participate. | May 2017 |

**APPENDIX C
FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT**

**Canadian Unitarian Council
1997 Policy
Socially Responsible Investment Policy**

Adopted by the Annual Meeting, May 19, 1997

Whereas the UUA's Principles and Purposes to which we in the CUC subscribe as a free and democratic religious community, call of the affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of every person and respect for the interdependent web of all existence,

And whereas the by-laws of the Canadian Unitarian Council authorize the Board of Trustees to invest the funds of the CUC as the Trustees think fit,

We therefore resolve to recommend to the Board of Trustees of the CUC that in investing the funds of the CUC they make all reasonable efforts to avoid the holding of securities issued by corporations and agencies involved in nuclear power, military weapons, tobacco, gambling and all corporations that persist in human rights violations or persist in non-sustainable environmental practices.

We further resolve to recommend to the Board of Trustees of the CUC that they appoint an Investment Committee to carry out the following functions to:

1. advise the Board on investments to secure a just or reasonable return while avoiding undue risk;
2. inform the membership of our societies about investing in a socially and environmentally responsible manner by conducting workshops and submitting newsletter articles;
3. attend shareholder meetings if necessary and vote on issue in a knowledgeable manner and work with the Taskforce on Churches and Corporate Responsibility; and
4. participate at social and environment investment conferences as representatives of the CUC Investment Committee.

