



Students' Society of McGill University
Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Office of the Speakers
Bureau de Présidents du Conseil

Motion Regarding Ethical Investments at McGill

Whereas, the overwhelming majority of scientific bodies agree that carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions are contributing to rising average global temperature and climate change across the planet;

Whereas, examples of global climate change from 2012 include severe droughts in the United States, flooding in Alberta, and the lowest-ever summer ice cover in the Arctic;

Whereas, scientists predict that if the global average temperature rises by 2°C, the planet could experience increased extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and storms, reduced agricultural output, and thus rising food prices, and increased levels of illness and disease;

Whereas, the Tar Sands represent the fastest growing source of carbon emissions in Canada;ⁱ

Whereas, SSMU was mandated by General Assembly in 2010 to discontinue owning stocks in natural resource extraction companies and financial institutions with a stake in the Tar Sands;

Whereas, the above mandate helped lead to the adoption of a Five Year Ethical Investment Plan for SSMU at Legislative Council on January 12, 2012;ⁱⁱ

Whereas, information regarding investment policies on the McGill website only mentions “social and ethical norms” and “an investment portfolio managed in a ‘socially responsible’ manner”, with no clear elaboration on what that means;ⁱⁱⁱ

Whereas, McGill University also has investments in many companies, some involved in natural resource extraction;^{iv}

Whereas, the Preamble to the SSMU Constitution states that “The Students’ Society commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection. The society shall be mindful of the direct and indirect effects corporations, businesses and organizations have on their social, political, economic and environmental surroundings;”^v

Resolved, that the SSMU adopt a position opposing the continued development of the Canadian Tar Sands,

Resolved, that the SSMU call on the federal government to undertake a full examination of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Tar Sands project,

Resolved, that the SSMU lobby McGill University to divest from and cut all ties with companies engaged in the Tar Sands and all financial institutions that invest in or give loans to companies engaged in the Tar Sands,

Moved by:
Robin Reid-Fraser, Vice-President (External)



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Zachary Rosentzveig, Clubs & Services Representative
Allison Cooper, Vice-President (Clubs and Services)
Haley Dinel, Vice-President (University Affairs)

ⁱ The Pembina Institute – OilSandsWatch.org: Climate Impacts <http://www.pembina.org/oil-sands/os101/climate>

ⁱⁱ SSMU Policy Book <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/SSMU-Policy-Book.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ McGill University Pension Plan Socially Responsible Investment Pool <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/pensions/SRI.pdf>, McGill Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility <http://www.mcgill.ca/boardofgovernors/board-governors-committees-and-terms-reference/social>, McGill Office of Investments Report on Endowment Performance 2010-11 <http://www.mcgill.ca/investments/treasury/annual-reports/report-endowment-performance-2010-11-0>

^{iv} McGill Daily: Documents on McGill Investments <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2012/04/documents-on-mcgills-investments/>, Rainforest Action Network List of Tar Sands Companies <http://ran.org/list-tar-sands-companies>

^v SSMU Constitution: <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Constitution-as-of-April-17-2012.pdf>