



Motion Regarding McGill Free from Fossil Fuels

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;ⁱ

Whereas, Canada affirmed, through the 2010 Cancun agreements of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;ⁱⁱ

that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time . . . [and] that deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are required according to science, and as documented in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, with a view to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions so as to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2 °C above preindustrial levels, and that Parties should take urgent action to meet this long-term goal, consistent with science and on the basis of equity.

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;ⁱⁱⁱ

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, storms, reduced agricultural output (thus, rising food prices) and increased levels of illness and disease;^{iv v vi}

Whereas, the Tar Sands represent the fastest growing source of carbon emissions in Canada;^{vii viii}

Whereas, McGill University has investments in 38 companies involved in producing fossil fuels and 14 in the tar sands;^{ix}

Whereas, 35 of the companies in which McGill University owns shares numbers among the largest companies in the world, and collectively hold 205.455 Gigatonnes of CO₂ beneath the ground;^x

Whereas, 80% of the world's known carbon reserves must remain underground to keep warming below 2°C, and none of the companies in which McGill invests have committed to keeping 80% of their reserves unburned;^{xi}

Resolved, that the SSMU reaffirm its position opposing the continued development of the Canadian Tar Sands as adopted by Legislative Council on 11 January 2012.

Resolved, that the SSMU adopt a position in favour of a rapid transition to a carbon-neutral society.

Resolved, that the SSMU lobby McGill University to divest its holdings in companies engaged in fossil fuel production, and from financial institutions that invest in or give loans to companies engaged in fossil fuel production.



Moved by:

Claire Stewart-Kanigan, Arts Representative
Zachary Rosentzweig, Clubs and Services Representative
Colleen Morawetz, Arts Representative
Moe Nasr, Senate Caucus Representative

ⁱ Committee on America's Climate Choices, National Resource Council. America's Climate Choices. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2011. 15.

ⁱⁱ United Nations. Framework Convention on Climate Change. (United Nations, 1992) 2-3. <<http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/background/items/1362.php>>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gore, Al. "Climate of Denial: Can the Science and the Truth Withstand the Merchants of Poison?" Rolling Stone Jun 2011 26.

^{iv} 350.org. "Science". 2012. <<<http://www.350.org/en/about/science>>>.

^v Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Synthesis Report. New York: http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/syr/en/spms3.html, 2007.

^{vi} M.L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden and C.E. Hanson (eds). Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

^{vii} United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. "Report of the individual review of the annual submission of Canada submitted in 2010" 21 April 2011. <<<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/arr/can.pdf>>>

^{viii} Schindler, David. "Tar Sands Need Solid Science" (Nature 468, 25 Nov 2010) 499-501. <<<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v468/n7323/full/468499a.html>>>

^{ix} McGilliLeaked. "2011/12 Publicly Traded Equity Holdings." <<<http://mcgillileaked.wordpress.com/2012/10/16/201112-publicly-traded-equity-holdings/>>>.

^x Divest McGill. "McGill's Investments." <<<http://divestmcgill.wordpress.com/mcgills-investments/>>>

^{xi} The Carbon Tracker Initiative. "Unburnable Carbon: Are the World's Financial Markets Carrying a Carbon Bubble" (Aug 2012). <<<http://www.carbontracker.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/08/Unburnable-Carbon-Full1.pdf>>>.