



# MOTION REGARDING SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS FUND FEE RENEWAL 2022-10-25

Submitted for: 2022-10-25

<b>Submitted to:</b>	SSMU Legislative Council	<b>Document no.:</b>	LEG-PUB-MOT-2022-10-25-002
<b>Moved by:</b>	Risann Wright <i>President</i>	<b>Current Status:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
<b>Seconded by:</b>	Amelia Whitcomb <i>Science Councillor</i>		

**Issue** The Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) is seeking to renew the SPF fee at \$0.55 per credit per student per semester until 2028.

**Background and Rationale** SSMU, MCSS, PGSS, and McGill University have made commitments to supporting a culture of sustainability, as exemplified by the co-creation and operation of the Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) in Winter 2010. SPF is co-funded by students (50%) and the University (50%) and has funded over 300 projects to date totaling over eleven million dollars. The previous SPF referendum took place in 2017-2018, and passed with the following percentage of students in favor of contributing \$0.55 per credit (up to 15 credits) to the Fund: SSMU (89%), PGSS (74%), and MCSS (98%). Maintaining the fee of \$0.55 per credit (up to 15 credits) will allow the fund to continue operating at its current level of approximately \$1 million per year over the next five years, from 2023 to 2028.

**Alignment with Mission** The fund's mandate is to build a culture of sustainability on campus through the development and seed-funding of interdisciplinary projects, and any student/staff/faculty can apply for money to fund their sustainability project. This aligns with SSMU's mission of achieving sustainable practices



by balancing and integrating economic, social, and environmental considerations in the way it acts, and by having staff and students collaborate to achieve this balance. It also provides students with real world opportunities to develop their knowledge on sustainable projects through volunteering and the ambassador program. The SPF has trained over 7,500 people and involved more than 4,500 volunteers.

---

### Consultations Completed

This question has been discussed with and reviewed by the SSMU President, the SSMU Vice-President University Affairs, the SSMU Vice-President (Finance), the SSMU Vice-President (External Affairs), and the SSMU Executive Committee, the SSMU Sustainability Commissioners, the SSMU Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, the Sustainability Manager at McGill Office of Sustainability (MOOS) and the Deputy-Provost of Student Life and Learning, ESG McGill, and a beneficiary of SPF.

---

### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Failure to renew SPF would result in the fund ceasing to exist, ending its support for current and future Sustainability Projects. Failure to renew from SSMU will also cancel the collaborative fund for MCSS and PGSS. Consultation with SSMU VP Finance revealed no financial risk from SSMU for either accepting or denying this renewal.

---

### Sustainability Considerations

Since its creation in 2010, the SPF has allocated over \$10.8 million in funding and has approved 294 projects, which have yielded dramatic and lasting improvements to the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of McGill's sustainability performance. It is also one of the largest of its kind in North America, making McGill SSMU a leader in sustainability at an international level<sup>1</sup>. Project applications are accepted from any current SSMU, MCSS, PGSS students, and McGill academic staff and administrative staff.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Projects fund annual report from 2021-2022  
[https://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/files/sustainability/fy21\\_spf\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/files/sustainability/fy21_spf_annual_report.pdf)



## Impact of Decision and Next Steps

McGill University is committed to match the student contribution dollar for dollar – between Fall 2023 and Winter 2028. Maintaining the fee of \$0.55 per credit (up to 15 credits) will allow the fund to continue operating at its current level of approximately \$1 million per year over the next five years, from 2023 to 2028.

This fee renewal would support future Sustainability initiatives but not renewing would result in the abolishment of the SPF entirely.

---

## Motion or Resolution for Approval

**Whereas**, It is acknowledged that the definition of sustainability within SSMU is not reflected by the current acting decision within the SPF Governance Council to exclude considering applications of social and economic sustainability focused-projects.

**Whereas**, it is important to recognize that the positive impacts of the projects funded by the SPF do not outweigh the harm caused by McGill's refusal to divest.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve the following question for the Fall 2022 Referendum period:

**Whereas** maintaining the fee of \$0.55 per credit (up to 15 credits) will allow the fund to continue operating at its current level of approximately \$1 million per year over the next five (5) years, from 2023 to 2028;

**Whereas** further information about the SPF is available at [www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/spf](http://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/spf), including application process and criteria, funded projects, annual reports, and other relevant documentation;

**Whereas** a “No” result for the SSMU, MCSS, and/or PGSS referendum would abolish the SPF entirely;

**Whereas** McGill University is committed to match the student contribution dollar for dollar – between Fall 2023 and Winter 2028;

*“Do you agree to renew the non-opt-outable Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) fee for the next five (5) academic years (Fall 2023 through Winter 2028) at \$0.55 per credit per student per semester (up to 15 credits), payable by all*



*members of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU), as matched in equal amount by McGill University, with a "No" vote resulting in the abolishment of the fee entirely?"*

Be it further resolved, that the SSMU Legislative Council adopts the actionable aspects of this question, and recommends the ratification of this referendum question to the Elections SSMU and Board of Directors, and that any grammatical or legal changes necessary do not need the re-approval of the Legislative Council.

Be it further resolved, a link to the SPF website outlining the disbursed funds from the previous fiscal years be directly provided on the referendum question as an Appendix.

---

Results of the  
Vote

In favour	(14)
Opposed	(0)
Abstain	(2)

---