



Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

SSMU Office of the Speaker

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

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MOTION REGARDING A POSITION AGAINST COP-15 2022-12-01

Submitted for: 2022-12-01

Submitted to: SSMU Legislative Council **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2022-12-01-003

Moved by: Val Masny
Vice-President (External)

Current Status:

- FOR APPROVAL
- APPROVED
- POSTPONED
- COMMITTED
- NOT APPROVED

Seconded by: Amelia Whitcomb
Science Representative

Issue

The 15th World Conference on Biodiversity (COP15) will be held in Tio'tia:ke (Montreal) from 7 to 19 December 2022.

This motion has been created as a result of the stance to be taken against COP15.

Background and Rationale

Nation states and corporations are the driving forces behind the global decline in biodiversity. In Canada, federal and provincial governments finance extractive oil and gas projects on unceded Indigenous territory and offer large tax breaks to mining companies. The preservation of biodiversity requires divestment from these exploitative practices. The COP15 Summit fails to challenge extractivism. The objectives of the summit encourage growth in the private sector and permit the continued privatization of natural resources. The COP15 is not a sufficient response to the biodiversity crisis on behalf of international leaders.

Alignment with Mission

This motion and stance is in line with the Environment position in the SSMU Positions Book, the Sustainability Policy and position, SSMU position on Institutions on Public Safety, the Indigenous Equity Position, the International Solidarity Position, the Equity and Social Sustainability



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position, and the SSMU Constitution [advocacy for social justice and environmental cause].

Consultations Completed

Consultations were done with SSMU President, Governance Manager, Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, Black Affairs Commissioner, Political Campaign Coordinator, Sustainability Commissioner, Divest McGill.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Should this motion be approved, the External Affairs will have to provide financial and non-financial support to mobilize with students and members of the community against the COP15 convention. This will likely require the help of the communications' department and other departments as needed.

This convention will be held during the Fall 2022 Final Exam period at McGill University and will impact students. During the event itself, mobility around the city of Montreal¹ will be decreased. In the long-term, the conclusions reached at the summit influence global narratives about biodiversity. Based on the summit's stated objectives, it's expected that these conclusions will lack crucial perspectives of equity. Provincial, federal, and global inaction on biodiversity loss has immeasurable consequences for all students, and especially low-income and racialized students. By positioning itself against the summit, SSMU will be best able to support students navigating the impacts of this convention.

It is important to reiterate that the position against this summit furthers the SSMU's commitment towards climate justice. Indeed, by opposing this summit, the SSMU refuses to legitimize or stand by state inaction, the exploitation of Indigenous lands and disregard for their sovereignty as well as the current capitalist and imperialist models of dealing with the biodiversity crisis.

Sustainability Considerations

The SSMU's International Solidarity position recognizes that Indigenous stewardship and reconciliation are essential to environmental protection and the opposition of colonialism, imperialism, and expansionism. The Equity and Social Sustainability position mandates SSMU to support communities in combating systemic oppression. The SSMU has a mandate

¹ "Getting around during COP15: What You Need to Know." *Montréal.ca*, Ville De Montréal, 22 Nov. 2022, <https://montreal.ca/en/articles/getting-around-during-cop15-what-you-need-to-know-39236>.



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to advocate for environmental, economic, and social sustainability, not just within its campus, but also in the community, while prioritizing the needs of marginalized populations including Indigenous people, people living in the Global South, racialized people, low-income people and migrants.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

Adopting this resolution would allow the SSMU to apply its positions in the context of a political campaign.

It would further allow the SSMU to have direction when responding to requests of students and community groups.

Following the adoption of this resolution, the External Affairs team will work to publicize and mobilize around it. As well, it will work to support the new unaffiliated campaign.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that, the SSMU adopt the resolution in Appendix A.

Results of the Vote

- In favour (12)
- Opposed (2)
- Abstain (4)



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Appendix A

WHEREAS, as per its Environment and Environmental Sustainability position, the SSMU has a responsibility to encourage students to combat the climate catastrophe in a way that further combats systemic inequalities and the dominance of capitalist and colonialist paradigms in the Global North;

WHEREAS, the global rate of species extinction is hundreds of times higher than it has averaged over Earth's history;

WHEREAS, it is still possible to initiate social changes that will limit the damage that the degradation of biodiversity is causing and will cause;

WHEREAS, marginalized populations are the ones most affected by the decline of biodiversity, even though they have little responsibility in the current crisis;

WHEREAS, the SSMU's Indigenous Equity position advocates for Indigenous peoples to have a formal role in the decision-making processes taking into account local resurgence, nationhood, self-determination, and self-governance frameworks;

WHEREAS, international summits, including other United Nations summits, have clearly lacked representation of marginalized communities, and have shown us that not only is the will of Indigenous Peoples not respected, their knowledge is often misused or stolen for the gain of colonial states;

WHEREAS, the COP15 will result in the highest police presence in Montreal in 20 years, and the SSMU's position on institutions of public safety clearly advocates for the withdrawal of policing and criminalization, notably because of the disproportionate harm caused by these institutions on marginalized people;

WHEREAS, the student mobilization movement for climate justice in Quebec has grown considerably in the last few years;

WHEREAS, the inefficiency of past Biological Diversity UN Conventions show that it is urgent to have a better mechanism for preventing biodiversity loss;

WHEREAS, the COP15 is a unique opportunity to show governments that we will not let them continue to finance and promote the destruction of biodiversity with impunity, while pretending the opposite;



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Be it resolved that, the SSMU takes a stand against COP15;

Be it further resolved that, the SSMU be proactive and encourage its members to mobilize and participate in the mobilization meetings against COP15;

Be it further resolved that, the SSMU take an approach of respect for the diversity of tactics, respecting that groups have different ideologies and modes of struggle, that the SSMU can disagree with, without attacking or denouncing them, and therefore participating in the media and police narrative that pins environmentalists against one another;

Be it further resolved, the SSMU continues to support students mobilizing around biodiversity issues even after the convention, as it is clear that combating the global biodiversity crisis is a priority.

APPROVED