



## Bureau du président du conseil de l'AEUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

### SSMU Office of the Speaker

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# MOTION REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY ON HARMFUL MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

2025-04-03

Submitted for: 2025-04-03

|                      |   |                        |  |
|----------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| <b>Submitted to:</b> | SSMU Legislative Council  | <b>Document no.:</b>   | LEG-PUB-MOT-2025-04-03-005   |
| <b>Moved by:</b>     | Melanie Renaud<br><i>Athletics Representative</i>               | <b>Current Status:</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED<br><input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED<br><input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED<br><input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED |
| <b>Seconded by:</b>  | Hugo-Victor Solomon<br><i>Vice-President (External Affairs)</i> |                        |  |

## Issue

This motion seeks to adopt the amended Policy on Harmful Military Technology as provided in Appendix A.

Furthermore, if this motion passes, the SSMU will maintain a conditional moratorium on sending McGill's proposed ancillary fees or fee increases to referendum. This moratorium will remain in effect until McGill meets key divestment demands—including divesting from companies involved in harmful military technology (Appendix A) and pledging not to reinvest or collaborate with them.

However, exceptions to the moratorium are allowed for critical student services, such as Athletics and Recreation, provided they meet all the following criteria:

1. The fee supports an essential, underfunded, or structurally self-financed service.
2. The fee has no direct or indirect ties to military research or companies in Appendix A.
3. The proposal includes clear consultation with affected students, outlining financial needs and accountability plans.



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4. The VP External Affairs portfolio is formally consulted, and the VP External verifies compliance with all criteria.

The Society will review each exception case-by-case, and oppose any fee proposals that don't meet these standards. Meanwhile, advocacy for divestment remains a priority, whereby the amendments to this Policy advocate for a diversification of efforts.

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## Background and Rationale

The Policy on Harmful Military Technology was adopted by the Society on 2021-01-28. Most recently, this Policy was amended on 2024-04-18<sup>1</sup> to include Section 7, which “[establishes] a Moratorium on considering Referendum questions for new Ancillary Fees, increases to Ancillary Fees<sup>2</sup>, or any other new fees or increases to existing fees that McGill University wishes the Society to send to referendum for approval by the Membership until McGill University: 7.1.1. Divests from its investments in companies whose business includes harmful military technology, per Appendix A; [...]”<sup>3</sup>

This section imports a previous Moratorium clause within the Climate Justice Policy<sup>4</sup> with the purpose of pressuring the University to divest from fossil fuel investments. This tactic was in effect from Fall 2019 to Winter 2024, meaning Members have not been able to vote on questions concerning Ancillary Fees in over five years. Pursuant to Part II, section 5.1 of the Internal Regulations of the Society's Finances-06: Fees, “[the] Society shall not authorize any increases of, renewals of, or the creation of Ancillary Fees until such a time that students have voted in favour for, or against, by way of a Referendum.”<sup>5</sup>

On 2024-07-08, the Board of Governors (BoG) mandated the Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility (CSSR) to “explore the question of divestment from direct investments in companies that derive a dominant portion of their direct revenues from production of military weapons [...]”<sup>6</sup>

On 2025-02-06, the CSSR presented the report arising from its mandate to the BoG, which failed to recommend divestments.<sup>7</sup> This outcome sheds light

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<sup>1</sup> [Minutes-Legislative Council-Public-Approved 2024-04-18.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Society, services and administrative fees 2024-25 | Student Accounts - McGill University](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Policy on Harmful Military Technology 2024-05-02 to 2029-05-01](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Climate Justice Policy](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Internal-Regulations-of-the-Societys-Finances-2024-04-11.pdf?x74610>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.mcgill.ca/boardofgovernors/files/boardofgovernors/gd24-29\\_cssr\\_report\\_updated.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/boardofgovernors/files/boardofgovernors/gd24-29_cssr_report_updated.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.mcgill.ca/boardofgovernors/sites/boardofgovernors/files/09\\_gd24-36\\_cssr\\_report.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/boardofgovernors/sites/boardofgovernors/files/09_gd24-36_cssr_report.pdf)



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on the limited influence of the Moratorium in shaping divestment decisions and highlights the necessity for alternative strategies. Organized advocacy, including sustained student mobilization, coordinated campaigns, and direct engagement with administration, has shown to be a more effective means of compelling the BoG.

In light of this decision by the BoG, this motion seeks to amend, but not remove, the Moratorium section of the policy, which currently prevents the University from submitting Referendum questions concerning Ancillary Fees to the Legislative Council for approval. These amendments outline a more targeted approach on divestment advocacy while simultaneously attempting to diminish its collateral consequences on student groups. Notably, the amended policy implements a consultation protocol which requires McGill Administration to directly engage with students in conversations pertaining to its relationship to harmful military technology.

Athletics and Recreation (A&R), a self-funded unit of the University, relies primarily on Ancillary Fees for its operations and services.<sup>8</sup> Between 2004 and 2019, the \$10/semester Athletics Facility Improvement Fee (ATHL)<sup>9</sup> allowed A&R to carry out vast infrastructure projects, such as resurfacing Forbes Field, implementing a gender-neutral washroom in the Currie Gymnasium, expanding the Fitness Centre, renovating Memorial Pool, and collaborating with the City of Montreal to build Rutherford Park.<sup>10</sup> The Society rejected the renewal of this fee during the Change the Name<sup>11</sup> campaign in 2018; despite this grievance being rectified by A&R in 2020, the Legislative Council has been unable to reconsider the fee since the Moratorium was imposed the following year.

Athletics and Recreation—a constituency of the SSMU mainly composed of the Currie Gymnasium's recreational student-members and McGill's Varsity student-athletes—is standalone in suffering from the collateral consequences of the SSMU Legislative Council's imposition of this pressure tactic on the University and BoG. The loss of this funding has created significant financial hurdles for A&R, and in some cases has contributed to the delay or prevention of critical renovation projects. The longer A&R is deprived of these funds, the greater the existential crisis the unit as a whole faces.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d22-41\\_annual\\_report\\_on\\_student\\_life\\_and\\_learning.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d22-41_annual_report_on_student_life_and_learning.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [Fee descriptions | Student Accounts - McGill University](#)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/04a\\_senate\\_question\\_re\\_athletics\\_facility\\_improvement.pdf#:~:text=PREAMBLE:%20Athletics%20and%20Recreation%20are%20one%20of,handful%20of%20largely%20self%20funded%20units%20at%20McGill.](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/04a_senate_question_re_athletics_facility_improvement.pdf#:~:text=PREAMBLE:%20Athletics%20and%20Recreation%20are%20one%20of,handful%20of%20largely%20self%20funded%20units%20at%20McGill.)

<sup>11</sup> [The McGill Redbirds: new name for a new era to wear, and cheer for with pride.](#)



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Considering that the BoG's behaviour raises questions on the effectiveness of the current Moratorium as a pressure tactic, and further recognizing the damages its existence causes to A&R and the Society's Members, the Legislative Council of the SSMU has ample reason to approve an amended version of the Policy.

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### Alignment with Mission

This motion is consistent with the SSMU's practice of regularly updating its governing documents to maintain relevance. Additionally, it supports the Society's core purpose as a representational body by enabling its Membership to indicate the areas where they would like their funds to be allocated.

The proposed amendments conform to the Divest for Human Rights Policy.<sup>12</sup>

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### Consultations Completed

SSMU President: *"The motion reflects the present conditions, before the University was placed into such dire straits. Passing this motion would allow for there to be additional support to A&R or other similar high-value support services to students and avoid additional cuts by the university, whether that be athletics or otherwise. While the original moratorium had its heart in the right place, the only ones that will be negatively impacted by it at this rate will be students. This motion allows for the SSMU to ensure that student services get the necessary financial support they need."*

Vice-President (University Affairs): *"I spoke with the Athletics Rep about the needs of athletics and what she believes was a rushed original motion. However, the fact that this motion was written regardless of McGill's reaction, and because of the ongoing war in Gaza, I am sympathetic with the representative's perspective but I'm against this motion. I'd be more comfortable if the text included specific, written pressure-tactics. Any compromise on this front will erode my ability to advocate for divestment. For the past 5 years, SSMU has established principles that, over my term, I have seen disintegrate whenever they become inconvenient."*

Vice-President (External Affairs): seconded this motion, is in favour of the modification; however, they insist that other means of advocacy must be ensured to achieve the fundamental objectives of the Policy on Harmful Military Technology

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<sup>12</sup><https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Divest-for-Human-Rights-Policy-2021-02-27.pdf?x74610&x77765>



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Student Athletic Council Chair & Varsity Council President: *“The state of our athletic facilities makes it clear that our buildings require more attention. Just last summer and fall, missing lights on Forbes Field created barriers for intramural sports and varsity practices, and the closure of the McConnell Arena resulted in decreased attendance at varsity hockey games. A&R is at the heart of student well-being, fostering both physical and mental health while creating spaces for students to connect, support one another, and fully enjoy their university experience. Each year, the need to promote physical activity becomes more pressing, as it plays a crucial role in improving mental health and overall student success. The reality is that these changes have the potential of yielding enormous returns: more smiles, better facilities, and a healthier, more vibrant campus community. These changes would make McGill a better place, strengthening a service that already enriches the lives of thousands of students. The financial barriers imposed on A&R have hindered its ability to maintain and improve its facilities, but we now have the chance to correct this. Let’s take this step forward--for the students, for the community, and for the future of McGill Athletics & Recreation.”*

Stakeholders were reached out to via [consultation form](#)

Policy and Advocacy Coordinator: consulted on formatting and structure.

- I have read and completed the requirements outlined in the Consultation Policy.

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### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Implementing a conditional Moratorium means that the University may approach SSMU for the creation of or increases to Ancillary Fees, which would increase the amount of fees students have to pay every year. These proposed increases, however, would have to be approved by the Membership by way of referenda, per the IRs of Finance.

One concern this motion may bring is that the student members of A&R do not endorse the Policy on Harmful Military Technology and other political campaigns, divestment efforts, and activism on campus. This is false; several Varsity student-athletes were directly involved with the Divest McGill campaign<sup>13</sup> and continue to mobilize on matters relating to sustainability, human rights, equity, and peacebuilding.

It is possible that these amendments may produce confused messaging regarding the SSMU’s commitment towards divestment advocacy. These

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<sup>13</sup> [McGill must stop resisting before Athletics ceases existing - The Tribune](#)



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changes, however, would compel McGill Administration to approach SSMU Officers on Ancillary Fee Questions which would bring about a mandatory consultation process involving discussions on harmful military technologies. The conditional Moratorium, therefore, figures as part of a diversified approach to divestment advocacy, squaring with the Divest for Human Rights Policy and the mandates imposed on the Society's Officers.

If this motion is not approved, A&R—an integral part of Student Life and major hub for student health and wellness—will continue to suffer consequences to the sustainability of its operations. A&R will have to implement further restrictions to the services it provides to the SSMU Membership, and limits may be placed on the resources available to Varsity teams.

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### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If this motion is passed, section 7 of the Policy on Harmful Military Technology will be amended. This amendment will conditionally allow the University to submit questions on the increase, creation, and renewal of Ancillary Fees. In accordance with the IRs of the Society's Finances, the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) shall approach the Vice-President (Finance) with any questions relating to Ancillary Fees to be compiled and presented to the Legislative Council for approval.<sup>14</sup>

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### Motion or Resolution for Approval

**Be it resolved** that the Policy on Harmful Military Technology, as outlined in Appendix A, be adopted as a Policy of the Students' Society of McGill University.

**Be it further resolved** that this Policy expires on 2030-05-01.

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### Results of the Vote

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| In favour | (16) |
| Opposed   | (3)  |
| Abstain   | (2)  |

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<sup>14</sup><https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Internal-Regulations-of-the-Societys-Finances-2024-04-11.pdf?x74610>



# Appendix A : Amended Policy on Harmful Military Technology

[Policy on Harmful Military Technology 2024-05-02 to 2029-05-01](#)

## 7. Moratorium 7. Moratorium and Advocacy

**7.1.** The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall be responsible for reviewing McGill's investment data twice per year and determining whether the University continues to invest in companies whose business includes harmful military technology per Appendix A.

**7.2** Pending the conclusions of 7.1, the Society will maintain a conditional Moratorium on considering Referendum questions for new Ancillary Fees, increases to Ancillary Fees, or any other new fees or increases to existing fees that McGill University wishes the Society to send to Referendum for approval by the Membership, except in the case of proposals that meet all of the following criteria:

**7.2.1** The proposed fee supports an essential student service (e.g., Athletics and Recreation) that is demonstrably underfunded, self-financed, OR structurally unable to receive central University funding due to its independent budgetary framework;

**7.2.2** The proposed fee does not directly or indirectly fund military research, military technology development, or collaborations with companies identified in Appendix A;

**7.2.3** The proposed fee is accompanied by a documented consultation process with the affected student body, including clear articulation of financial need, allocation plans, and accountability mechanisms;

**7.2.4** The portfolio of the Vice-President (External Affairs)—notably the Policy and Mobilization Researcher, the Political Campaign Coordinator(s), and the Vice-President (External Affairs)—shall be a mandatory consultation on the proposed fee. The Vice-President (External Affairs) must verify that the proposed fee meets the above criteria.

**7.3** Until McGill University:

**7.3.1** Divests from its investments in companies whose business includes harmful military technology, per Appendix A;





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**7.3.2** Pledges to refrain from investing in all companies whose business includes harmful military technology, and from all mutual funds that invest in such companies in the future;

**7.3.3** Pledges to refrain from signing contracts with companies listed in Appendix A that involve the funding of research and/or use of research facilities at McGill in the future;

— the Society shall maintain this conditional Moratorium and evaluate ancillary fee proposals on a case-by-case basis per the above exceptions.

**7.4** The Officers of the Society shall be mandated to oppose any attempt by McGill University to initiate procedures leading to a vote on new Ancillary Fees, increases to Ancillary Fees, or any other new fees or increases to existing fees that do not meet the criteria outlined in 7.1.

**7.5** The Society shall prioritize divestment advocacy through coordinated faculty-level organizing, grassroots campaigns, and public pressure tactics, in collaboration with student groups and faculty associations, in order to influence the Board of Governors and University administration.

**7.6** The Vice-President (University Affairs) shall communicate this Policy and any relevant positions or developments to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, the Chair of the Board of Governors, all members of the Board of Governors, the Chair of the Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility (CSSR), and SSMU Members.

~~**7.1** The Society will establish a Moratorium on considering Referendum questions for new Ancillary Fees, increases to Ancillary Fees, or any other new fees or increases to existing fees that McGill University wishes the Society to send to referendum for approval by the Membership until McGill University:~~

~~**7.1.1** Divests from its investments in companies whose business includes harmful military technology, per Appendix A; and~~

~~**7.1.2** Pledges to refrain from investing in all companies whose business includes harmful military technology, and from all mutual funds that invest in such companies in the future.~~

~~**7.1.3** Pledges to refrain from signing contracts with companies listed in Appendix A that involve the funding of research and/or use of research facilities at McGill in the future.~~

~~**7.1.4** The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall be responsible for reviewing McGill's investment data twice per year and determining whether the university continues to 44 invest in companies whose business includes harmful military technology.~~





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~~7.2 The Officers of the Society will be mandated to form a “No” Referendum committee should McGill University force a vote on new Ancillary Fees, increases to Ancillary Fees, or any other new fees or increases to existing fees upon the student body.~~

~~7.3 The Vice-President (University Affairs) will communicate this position immediately to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, the Chair of the Board of Governors, the members of the Board of Governors, the Chair of CSSR, and the members of CSSR.~~

APPROVED