

Vassar Student Association Resolution 27-7  
A Resolution in Support of Divestment From Fossil Fuel Industries  
Principal Authors: Gabriel Dunsmith, Noah Bogdonoff, Davison, Ferry, Joss, and Strong

WHEREAS, scientific research has concluded that the fossil fuel industries (i.e. oil, gas, and coal) intend to produce more carbon emissions than would be safe for sustainability of the environment, and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned industries hold responsibility for the mass pollution of public air and water, and

WHEREAS, the coal industry is responsible for over 21,000 worker deaths per year due to unsafe and dangerous working conditions, and

WHEREAS, fluid from hydraulic fracturing contains known carcinogens, mutagens, and neurotoxins harmful to human health, and the process has resulted in groundwater contamination, and

WHEREAS, this Council recognizes that Vassar College invests endowment money in fossil fuel industries, and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that a number of Vassar College students live in areas negatively affected by fossil fuel extraction and burning, and

WHEREAS, Unity College, Hampshire College, and Sterling College have divested, and

WHEREAS, over 260 colleges and universities including Middlebury, Swarthmore, Amherst, Ithaca College, Cornell, Harvard University, Tufts have similar grassroots divestment campaigns, and

WHEREAS, over 500 Vassar students have signed a petition in favor of Vassar's divestment, and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that a coalition of student groups including The Vassar Greens, The Grassroots Alliance for Alternative Politics, Vassar Animal Rights Coalition, Young Democratic Socialists, Democracy Matters, ProHealth, Slow Food, The Vassar Democrats, and Feminist Alliance have allied themselves in support of Vassar's complete and public divestment from fossil fuel industries, and

WHEREAS, the College Committee on Sustainability has written a letter encouraging the Campus Investor Responsibility Committee to divest, and

WHEREAS, the fossil fuel industry's role in the global climate crisis is recognized as an issue of "overriding social concern," and Section 15, Part C of "The Governance of Vassar College" states "the investor responsibility committee [Campus Investor Responsibility Committee and Trustee Investor Responsibility Committee] shall review issues of 'overriding social concern,'" and

WHEREAS, this Council recognizes that divestment is part of efforts to create a cleaner and more equitable world in which Vassar is not dependent on fossil fuels, and

WHEREAS, this Council supports divestment while still prioritizing important aspects of Vassar including Need Blind Admissions, comprehensive Financial Aid awards, and salaries and wages of College Staff and Faculty above divestment, and

WHEREAS, divestment over a reasonable time frame would allow the College to avoid financial risk and loss<sup>1</sup>, and

WHEREAS, this Council recognizes that divestment would *not* have major economic impacts on the fossil fuel industries, and

WHEREAS, the complex composition of our investment portfolio necessitates the need for widespread political change before divestment can be fully executed, and

WHEREAS, this Council recognizes the significant political impact of Vassar's divestment in leading a national movement towards a cleaner and more equitable energy future, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council recognizes the detrimental effects of fossil fuel industries on the environment and human health, endorses efforts of the Vassar College Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign, and the breadth of research, education, and outreach that the campaign has invested in the pursuit of a more sustainable and accountable use of endowment money, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Council strongly encourages the Campus Investor Responsibility Committee and the Board of Trustees to commit to the process of divesting by asserting a moral and political position in favor of divesting, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Council strongly encourages the aforementioned groups to execute the process of divestment as soon as possible while minimizing financial risk.

---

<sup>1</sup> Building a Carbon Free Portfolio, Aperio Group

(<http://www.aperiogroup.com/system/files/documents/building.a.carbon.free.portfolio.pdf>)