



1 **Sample Language for Analysis, Study and Discussion on Divestment and Reinvestment**

2 Whereas the scientific consensus is overwhelmingly clear that the burning of fossil fuels causes climate
3 change which will, in the coming century, displace and impoverish hundreds of millions of people
4 globally and will increase illness, injury and death rates due to the spread of infectious diseases, heat
5 waves and severe weather-related disasters, and

6 Whereas climate change also creates grave damage to the ecological systems on which human
7 civilization and all forms of life depend, and

8 Whereas (name of denomination/religion) has advocated through the shareholder and legislative
9 processes since (year in which denomination’s advocacy began) and collaborated with other religious
10 and environmental organizations to press for legislation to address climate change, and

11 Whereas the fossil fuel industry consistently invests large amounts of resources seeking to minimize or
12 create doubt about the effects of climate change and seeks to prevent Congress from adopting climate
13 change legislation, and

14 Whereas fossil fuel companies currently control oil and gas reserves that, if burned, will produce more
15 than five times the amount of greenhouse gas emissions required to raise global temperatures beyond 2
16 degrees Centigrade, the level which leaders of 167 countries, including the United States, have agreed
17 represents a threshold beyond which civilization cannot survive without enormous suffering , and

18 Whereas (name of religious institution/tradition) has consistently affirmed that its financial investments
19 should reflect (name of religion) values and teachings, and

20 Whereas most religious institutions can reduce their own energy use and carbon footprint by 15-20%
21 with modest effort and little to no capital investment, and

22 Whereas (name of denomination or religious tradition) has, in the past, debated divesting from (name
23 industry or company) due to (provide brief description of the issue at stake),

24 Be it resolved that this (name of convention/meeting/authoritative body)

- 25
- 26 • Directs the leadership of all (congregational/judicatory/denominational) endowments and
27 investment accounts to analyze the impact of implementing a plan to divest within 5 years from
28 direct ownership and ownership of any commingled funds that include public equities and
29 corporate bonds of the world’s leading 200 fossil fuel companies as identified by the Carbon
30 Tracker Initiative and reinvesting the divested amount, or a portion thereof, in companies or
31 commingled funds whose primary focus is renewable energy development and to report its
32 findings to the (date and name of official meeting at which findings are to be presented);
33

- 34 • Directs (name of congregational/denominational educational arm) to create or adapt
35 educational materials to foster moral discussion and discernment
36
- 37 • (Applicable if the resolution is from a local/regional branch of a national denomination) Call on
38 the (national denomination) to direct its Corporate Social Responsibility Committee (or
39 equivalent) to complete a similar analysis by (deadline for analysis) and to present its
40 recommendations to the (name of denominational body) by (deadline for reporting);
41
- 42 • Urges all congregations, and agencies affiliated with the (name of denomination or judicatory)
43 to reduce their annual energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by at least 10% by (one year
44 anniversary of adoption of resolution), reporting the results of their efforts to the (name of
45 convention/gathering at which reports would be presented).
46

47 **Supporting Information**

48 Our communities, environment and future are threatened by rising global temperatures caused by the
49 burning of fossil fuels. Projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,¹ whose scientific
50 integrity have been affirmed repeatedly through rigorous peer-reviewed processes, show unequivocally
51 that the earth's temperature is warning, that the burning of fossil fuel is responsible, and that climate
52 change will cause grave humanitarian, ecological and financial damage on a global scale.

53 Religious institutions are, by their mission, pledged to the protection and care of God's people and God's
54 creation. (Name of religious institution) has in the past called on political and economic leaders to
55 address climate change. Tragically, this advocacy, together with two decades of advocacy by many
56 other scientific, religious and environmental groups, has produced no national legislation.

57 Divestment, and vigorous debate of it, by many religious and educational institutions was a vital part of
58 the ending of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Traditionally, religious groups have used three
59 criteria to determine whether divestment in a specific industry or company is warranted.

- 60 • Does the industry in question create grave and large-scale injury and harm?
61 • Is the industry responsive to calls for change in its behavior?
62 • Does divestment represent an action that can have wider influence?

63 The fossil fuel industry, sadly, meets all three of these criteria.

64 Given the mission and history of (name of religious institution), it is morally self-contradictory for (name
65 of religious institution) to invest in fossil fuel companies whose operations and products cause such
66 grave harm to humanity and to Creation.

67 The top 200 fossil fuel companies, referenced in the resolution, have been identified by the UK-based
68 Carbon Tracker Initiative control over 80% of all known fossil fuel reserves globally.²

¹ <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

² <http://www.carbontracker.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/08/Unburnable-Carbon-Full1.pdf> accessed 11.23.12