

Concord

RESOLUTION ON FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

WHEREAS, Global warming, caused primarily by the burning of fossil fuels and resulting increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, is a serious threat to current and future generations in Concord and around the world; and

WHEREAS, Global warming is already causing costly disruption of human and natural systems throughout the world, including the acidification of the oceans, melting of Arctic and glacial ice, rising sea levels, increasing heat waves, floods, drought, extreme weather, and corresponding food and water shortages, property damage, loss of biodiversity, and death; and

WHEREAS, The effects of global warming will further intensify with increased temperatures such that almost all governments in the world, including the United States, have agreed (through the 2009 Copenhagen Accord) that any warming above a 2°C (3.6°F) rise would be unsafe for human habitation; and

WHEREAS, Scientists estimate that humans can emit only approximately 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and still retain a reasonable hope of not exceeding 2°C of global warming; and

WHEREAS, Proven coal, oil and gas reserves counted as assets of fossil fuel companies equal roughly 2,795 gigatons of CO₂, or five times the maximum amount that can safely be released to prevent more than 2°C of global warming; and

WHEREAS, Fossil fuel companies continue to explore for even more fossil fuel deposits that cannot be burned without rendering Earth unfit for human habitation; and

WHEREAS, Fossil fuel companies operate under the imperative to create shareholder profit rather than for long term public benefit, use their considerable financial resources to create confusion on the science of global warming, and to influence the government to maintain laws and regulations favorable to the continuing sale of their product, and

WHEREAS, The Town of Concord has a moral duty to protect the lives and livelihoods of its inhabitants and of people around the world from the threat of global warming and believes that its investments should support a future without the catastrophic impacts of a warming environment; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Concord has a duty to its employees and taxpayers to maintain the value of funds invested on their behalf and to avoid risky investments; and

WHEREAS, Investments in fossil fuel companies could prove highly risky given that 80% of their proven reserves could become “stranded” and unusable assets if governments act to protect a habitable climate; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Concord Town Meeting urges its Retirement Board and Town Treasurer to review their investment portfolios in order to identify any holdings that include direct or indirect investments in Fossil Fuel Companies, defined for purposes of this Resolution as any of the two

hundred publicly-traded companies with the largest coal, oil and gas reserves (as measured by the gigatons of carbon dioxide that would be emitted if those reserves were extracted and burned) such as those companies listed in the Carbon Tracker Initiative's "Unburnable Carbon" report; and

Be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That Concord Town Meeting urges it Retirement Board and the Town Treasurer to adopt policies to divest from such existing public equities, corporate bonds, or other direct holdings in Fossil Fuel Companies within five years and to preclude any new direct investments in Fossil Fuel Companies in the future, and

Be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That, for any investments of the Town of Concord in commingled funds that are

found to include Fossil Fuel Companies, Town Meeting urges the Retirement Board and Town Treasurer to contact the fund managers and request that the Fossil Fuel Companies be removed from such funds; and

Be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Town Treasurer and Retirement Board release annual updates, that are made available to the public, which detail progress made towards full divestment in Fossil Fuel Companies within five years; and

Be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That Town Meeting urges the Board of Selectmen, Town Treasurer and Retirement Board to endorse proposed state legislation requiring divestment of statewide retirement funds (Pension Reserve Investment Trust (PRIT)) from Fossil Fuel Companies, and

Be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Town Clerk is requested to send copies of this Resolution to Concord's elected state and national officials including President Barack Obama, Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey, Representative Niki Tsongas, Governor Deval Patrick, State Senator Michael Barrett, and State Representative Cory Atkins, as well as to State Treasurer Steven Grossman, the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) and managers of the Pension Reserve Investment Trust (PRIT), or take any other action relative thereto.

PETITIONER'S EXPLANATION: Because of the urgency of the climate crisis which is caused primarily by human use of fossil fuels, this resolution urges the Town of Concord to 1) examine its portfolio to determine its holdings in fossil fuel companies 2) adopt a policy to divest from direct investment in fossil fuel companies within five years 3) send a request to managers of funds with which Concord investments are commingled to divest from fossil fuel companies 4) report annually on progress toward divestment 5) support proposed legislation for divestment of the statewide pension fund from fossil fuel companies and 6) send copies of this resolution to Concord's national and state elected officials as well as to the county and state retirement boards.