*This is a sample letter – please adapt to reflect your own voice and perspective.*

*We encourage hand-written letters, whenever possible.*

Dear

I am writing as a present/future beneficiary of (Name of pension fund), and am grateful for your stewardship of its resources. I am writing you on a matter of grave significance.

Today, the balance of life on Earth is threatened by climate change. For decades, scientists have warned that our greenhouse gas emissions are heating the atmosphere and oceans. They have been joined by environmentalists, educators, religious leaders, and many from politics and business, who have warned that unchecked climate change will create devastation. Rising temperatures and sea levels, punishing storms, droughts and floods will displace and endanger billions of people, hitting the poor hardest.

In 2013, scientists calculated that humanity could afford to emit approximately 500 more gigatons of CO2 emissions before forcing the climate past the gravely dangerous threshold of a two degree temperature rise.[[1]](#footnote-1) Burning the proven reserves of the fossil fuel industry will create 3,000 gigatons of greenhouse gas emissions, six times this threshold level.[[2]](#footnote-2)

For more than two decades, talented leaders – including legislative and shareholder advocates - have implored political and industry leaders to act. Their sound reasoning and humanity’s best interests have been subverted by the vast influence of the fossil fuel industry, a massively profitable and influential collection of firms and states.

This industry has used its financial power to prevent legislation and binding agreements to reduce carbon emissions, spending over $400,000 per day to lobby the US government alone.[[3]](#footnote-3) It has secured unthinkably large government subsidies - $1.5 billion globally per day, according to the International Energy Agency.

Fossil fuels and the fossil fuel industry’s obstruction of a response to the climate crisis represent a grave danger to life. What must (name of pension fund) do? I believe it must divest from fossil fuel holdings – specifically the 200 firms with the largest fossil fuel reserves, as reported by the Carbon Tracker Initiative.[[4]](#footnote-4) I am writing to ask you to offer leadership on this.

Our religious tradition has clear values regarding the ethical use of financial resources. In the past, leaders in our tradition have decided that profiting from certain economic activities is incompatible with our faith. We have reached that point with climate change. It is no longer right for religious groups to profit from an industry whose core business is creating ecological destruction and human suffering on a titanic scale.

As a matter of life, and because I believe in a just and loving Creator, I urge (name of pension fund) to divest from its holdings of fossil fuels.

We have been given a gift, the Earth, and entrusted with its care. We are responsible for its future, and for the future of life. Climate change threatens that future.

We must act decisively, now, to choose life. Divestment embodies that choice.

Thank you again for your leadership of (name of pension fund).

In faith,

Your Name, and other information to identify yourself as a present or future beneficiary of the pension fund

1. <http://www.takepart.com/article/2013/09/27/ipcc-report-climate-change-bill-mckibben-new-math> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.takepart.com/article/2013/09/27/ipcc-report-climate-change-bill-mckibben-new-math> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?Ind=E01> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://gofossilfree.org/companies/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)