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**RE: Statement of Support for University of Toronto Divestment Campaign  
Statement of Dr. David Suzuki, dated January 7, 2014**

Dear President Gertler:

I am writing in support of the University of Toronto Divestment Campaign. I understand the drive to maximize returns on investments made for the university but as you well know, there are moral and ethical issues to be considered as well as the economic.

For over twenty years, climatologists and leading scientists have declared that climate change represents a threat to human survival second only to all out nuclear war. And politicians heard the warnings. Upon re-election in 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney appointed Lucien Bouchard as Minister of the Environment. I interviewed Mr. Bouchard a few months later and asked what he thought was the most important environmental issue Canadians faced and his immediate reply was "Global warming"! How serious is it, I asked and he responded "It threatens the survival of our species. We must act now."

Tragically, economic downturns and a campaign of disinformation heavily financed by the fossil fuel industry have blunted the sense of urgency among our political leaders. Despite a reluctance to engage on climate issues, the federal government did agree in Copenhagen that we must not allow temperature to rise by more than 2o this century. Politicians make such longterm commitments in the knowledge that they will never be accountable for failing to meet the promises. But this commitment means that on purely physical grounds, we know what maximum emissions can be if we are not to exceed the 2o target. And all calculations suggest that we can only burn a small fraction of our known reserves and leave the rest in the ground. If and when the world truly commits to limiting temperature rise to 2o, investments in fossil fuels will not realize a return. So it behooves responsible investment, on economic grounds alone, to divest those fossil fuel assets.

I personally feel that the issue of responsibility to future generations over rides all others, but so long as discussions are bound by economic considerations, I think there is a powerful case to be made for divestment. Thank you for considering my letter.

Sincerely,



Dr. David Suzuki,  
Professor Emeritus University of British Columbia