

To Adam Falk and the Board of Trustees

*Letter of Support for Steve Kaagan*

Students of Divest Williams

We, the students of Divest Williams, stand in support of Steve Kaagan and his decision to return his honorary degree to Williams College. The Williams College Board of Trustees' decision to continue to profit off of the fossil fuel industry is in direct contradiction to its values and mission statement: "Williams should not be regarded as a privilege destined to create further privilege, but as a privilege that creates opportunities to serve society at large, and imposes the responsibility to do so." As an institution of great wealth and influence, it is the College's responsibility, to its stakeholders and to all living beings, to utilize its power and effect to stigmatize and fight against the fossil fuel industry.

What we urgently need goes far beyond on-campus sustainability improvements. Focusing on campus changes alone sends the dangerous message that we can buy our way out of the climate crisis. In order to be leaders against climate change, we have to act in ways that impact the broader political climate. The fossil fuel industry harms people and the planet, and it continues to extract carbon in the face of the climate crisis. If we continue to invest in fossil fuel companies, we remain complicit in this destruction and exploitation. By divesting, we can help break the chokehold these corporations have on our government and demand meaningful climate legislation. By reinvesting in renewable energy and in solutions that center communities at the front lines of climate change, the College can support a just transition to a sustainable world. We, the students of Divest Williams, ask that the Board of Trustees function with transparency and publicize the data and rationale behind the "no" decision to fossil fuel divestment. The hundreds of students who support fossil fuel divestment will continue to demand that the College stop investing in the fossil fuel industry, holding it accountable to its mission statement and stakeholders.