Resolution on Divestment of Holdings in Fossil Fuel Companies
and Libraries’ Role in a Peaceful Transition to a Fossil-Free Economy

Whereas the American Library Association recognizes its broad social responsibilities (Policy A.1.1);

Whereas in light of alarming evidence of the extent CO2 emissions are having on climate change, the organization 350.org has launched a divestment campaign, supported by individuals such as Bishop Desmond Tutu, economist Naomi Klein, and activist Van Jones, prompting municipalities and institutions of higher learning across the country to divest holdings in fossil fuel industries;

Whereas precedence regarding divestment exists within ALA in its participation in the 1980s campaign against South African apartheid when divestment and boycotts were used as tools for non-violent political change;

Whereas global climate change and resource depletion is prompting military authorities to prepare for inevitable social instability, which in the U.S. will likely be exacerbated by a culture of violence and racism unless steps are taken to address and mitigate these tendencies;

Whereas libraries and communities have witnessed the impacts of climate change in the form of increasingly powerful floods, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires, agricultural damage, and rising sea-levels;

Whereas organizations representing many institutional investors have called on governments to “develop workable frameworks that will reduce climate risk and support low carbon investment”;

Whereas ALA’s Strategic Plan 2011-2015 states: “Libraries are widely recognized as key players in economic development, in building strong and vibrant communities, and in sustaining a strong democracy,” now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the American Library Association

1. direct its endowment trustees to begin divesting in the fossil fuel industry by excluding the three holdings in the “Filthy Fifteen” named in the Information Report that have “little or no significant negative impact” on ALA;

2. direct its endowment trustees to freeze any new investments in the fossil fuel industry to create a sustainable future;

3. urge libraries, in addition to collecting and providing information on the environment, to takes steps in assisting our communities in a peaceful transition to fossil-free energy sources, especially those communities whose economic well-being are heavily, if not completely, dependent on fossil fuels.

Supporting documentation:


