

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 take 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:

Ahmed, Nafeez (2013). “Pentagon bracing for public dissent over climate and energy shocks.” *The Guardian* (online). 14 June 2013. Accessed 15 June 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/earth-insight/2013/jun/14/climate-change-energy-shocks-nsa-prism>

American Library Association (1985). “ALA Acts: Membership, Council and Executive Board Summaries” *American Libraries* 16 (July-August 1985) p.510. Web. Accessed 31 December 2012.

Book Industry Environmental Council (2009). “Environmental Council Sets Climate Goals for U.S. Book Industry – A Global First in Publishing.” 16 April 2009. Web. Accessed 21 January 2013.

Brodie, Maxine (2012). “Building the Sustainable Library at Macquarie University”, *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 43.1 (March 2012) p.4. Web. Accessed 31 December 2012.

- Cook, Brian (2012). "Library Heroes Shelter Evacuees from the Summer of 2012", *American Libraries* 43: 9-10 (September-October 2012). Web. Accessed 31 December 2012.
- Eggars, Dave (2009). *Zeitoun*. San Francisco: McSweeney's.
- Green Press Initiative (2007). "Frequently Asked Questions." n.d. Web. Accessed 21 January 2013.
- Henn, Jamie (2012). "Seattle Mayor Orders City to Divest from Fossil Fuels," *350.org*. Web. 22 December 2012. Accessed 23 December 2012. <http://gofossilfree.org/seattle-mayor-orders-city-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels/>
- Hertzgaard, Mark (2012), "Latinos Are Ready to Fight Climate Change—Are Green Groups Ready for Them?" *The Nation*, 24-31 December 2012. Accessed 30 January 2013. <http://www.thenation.com/article/171617/latinos-are-ready-fight-climate-change-are-green-groups-ready-them>
- Hopkins, Rob. (2008). *The Transition Handbook: from Oil Dependency to Local Resilience*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.
- Investor Network on Climate Risk (2012) "Letter from Global Investor Networks to the Governments of the World's Largest Economies" Web. 26 November 2012. Accessed 31 December 2012. <http://www.ceres.org/incr/files/investor-files/2012-global-policy-letter>
- Johnson, Brad (2012). "The \$20 Trillion Carbon Bubble: Interview with John Fullerton, Part One," *ThinkProgress.com*. Web. 26 March 2012. Accessed 23 December 2012. <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/03/26/432617/the-20-trillion-carbon-bubble-interview-with-john-fullerton-part-one/?mobile=nc>
- Lubber, Mindy (2012). "Fossil Fuel Divestment is a Timely Issue for Investors," *Forbes*. Web. 17 December 2012. Accessed 23 December 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mindylubber/2012/12/17/fossil-fuel-divestment-is-timely-issue-for-investors/>
- McKibben, Bill (2012). "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math" *Rolling Stone*. Web 2 August 2012. Accessed 31 December 2012, <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719#ixzz2EJ5GliBH>
- "New Orleans Deals with Layoffs, Damage" *American Libraries* 36.10. Web. November 2005. Accessed 31 December 2012.
- "Seattle: An Update on Fossil Fuel Divestment." *States News Service* 21 Dec. 2012. *General OneFile*. Web. 31 Dec. 2012. <http://mayormcinn.seattle.gov/an-update-on-fossil-fuel-divestment/>
- "Top 200 Fossil Fuel Companies," *gofossilfree.org*. Web. n.d. Accessed 23 December 2012. <http://gofossilfree.org/companies/>
- Yarnold, David (2013). "Green Groups Must Embrace Latinos' Concern for Environment." *Huffington Post*, 29 January 2013. Accessed 30 January 2013. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-yarnold/green-groups-must-embrace\\_b\\_2573717.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-yarnold/green-groups-must-embrace_b_2573717.html)