

# McGill Faculty & Librarians for Divestment

09 September 2015

To: Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility, McGill Board of Governors  
c/o Stephen Strople  
Secretary-General  
McGill University

CC: Divest McGill

Dear members of CAMSR,

We write to express the full support of McGill Faculty and Librarians for Divestment for the recent call by Divest McGill (memo to CAMSR - 5 September 2015) for CAMSR to advise the Board of Governors to initiate an immediate freeze on additional fossil-fuel investments by McGill pending the Committee's decision on the petition concerning divestment of McGill's endowment fund.

A great deal is at stake in CAMSR's continued delay in reaching a decision on the questions of social injury attending to the University's investments in the fossil fuel industry, and of the imperative to divest from the industry as a remedy for this injury.

Most importantly, the ongoing and escalating harm caused by fossil fuel extraction and its contribution to global warming makes deferral of even the mildest forms of remedial action by major institutions such as McGill both reckless and irresponsible. Among these harms is the continued exposure of the University community's financial position to investments that, quite literally, have no future.

Secondly, CAMSR's delay in this case risks casting doubt on the integrity of McGill's governing bodies, whose charge it is to act in the University's best interests in a timely and responsible manner. It has been three years since Divest McGill first brought this matter to CAMSR's attention, a period that has been marked by what appears to be interminable delay (to date, no timeline has been provided for a decision on the second comprehensive brief and petition submitted by Divest McGill in February 2015). A decision of this magnitude requires due diligence, but this cannot be an excuse for non-responsiveness, which calls into question the effectiveness and legitimacy of university governance.

Later this month, Divest McGill will host a week of activities on campus advocating for climate justice and a fossil-free future. McGill faculty members and librarians will take part in these events in a variety of ways, both inside their classrooms and beyond. The award-winning students of Divest McGill will be visiting faculty meetings across the university to describe their efforts and gather support. We anticipate that among the first questions that our colleagues will ask them is, "How has the university responded?" Their answer, and how it will be received by your constituency, will depend heavily upon what your committee does between now and then. Agreeing to the request to suspend new investments would be a positive sign that CAMSR is acting in good faith in its careful deliberations on this important petition.

Sincerely,

Shaun Lovejoy, Professor of Physics, Faculty of Science  
Greg Mikkelson, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts  
Katherine Zien, Assistant Professor of English, Faculty of Arts  
Darin Barney, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, Faculty of Arts

For the Steering Committee, McGill Faculty & Librarians for Divestment