

**Open Letter to the OSU Foundation from members of the academic community
at Oregon State University**

To the OSU Foundation Board of Trustees:

It is now firmly established that the global climate is changing, and that human activities are largely to blame. The year 2015 was the hottest since records began in 1880, breaking the previous record set in 2014 [i]. Fifteen of the 16 hottest years on record have occurred since 2000. Records continue to be broken: March 2016 was the 11th consecutive month to set a new monthly global temperature record [ii]. A recent study in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, led by scientists from the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences at OSU, concluded that “policy decisions made in the next few years to decades will have profound impacts on global climate, ecosystems and human societies — not just for this century, but for the next ten millennia and beyond” [iii]. In Paris, the world’s nations agreed to an aim of keeping global warming well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels. However, countries’ current commitments are not yet sufficient to meet this aim.

To keep global warming below 2 °C, it has been estimated that 80% of the world’s coal reserves, 50% of gas reserves, and 30% of oil reserves need to stay in the ground [iv]. Accomplishing this will require a rapid transition away from dependence on fossil fuels. As countries begin to bring their policies in line with what is needed to address climate change (and thus as they start to factor in the true costs to society of extracting fossil fuels) the value of coal, gas and oil reserves will fall. Many of those reserves are set to become worthless “stranded assets”, according to analysts at the World Bank, Citigroup, HSBC, Mercer and the Carbon Tracker Initiative [v].

Over 500 institutions worldwide, recognizing both this financial risk – and more importantly their ethical obligations as guardians of knowledge and integrity – have made commitments to divest from fossil fuels [vi]. These institutions control \$3.4 trillion, and include the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund and universities including the University of California, University of Glasgow and London School of Economics.

Divestment will not bankrupt the fossil fuel industry, nor is it even likely to dent its stock price directly. That is not its aim. Instead, the aim is to strip away its legitimacy, and to draw attention to its morally questionable business model. Eroding the political clout of the fossil fuel industry through divestment is one action among many that will be needed to shift the social logic away from coal, oil

and gas, and propel our economy toward cleaner sources of energy. The global economy has been built on fossil energy, and it was rational to exploit fossil fuels in the past. Knowing what we now know, however, makes it difficult to defend continuing to tie the financial future of our university to that of this industry.

We call on the OSU Foundation to take a leadership role in making its investments consistent with the scientific and educational mission of Oregon State University, and to commit to (1) immediately cease all new investment in any of the top 200 fossil fuel companies, and (2) ensure that within three to five years there are no assets that include holdings in these companies. We understand that some 6% of the Foundation's money is invested in fossil fuel companies, and thus the financial future of OSU, its students and its research, is currently tied to the future exploitation of reserves of coal, oil and gas which have lain underground since dinosaurs roamed the earth.

The moral, scientific and financial case for divestment is clear. The OSU Faculty Senate supports divestment. The ASOSU Senate supports divestment. In a recent ballot, 78% of OSU student voters supported divestment. OSU has a proud record of world-class climate science, of developing solar, wind, wave and nuclear energy technologies, and of on-campus sustainability initiatives. We call on the Foundation to step up to the challenge of climate change and take its money out of an industry that threatens our future.

Sources:

[i] NASA, NOAA Analyses Reveal Record-Shattering Global Warm Temperatures in 2015
<http://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasa-noaa-analyses-reveal-record-shattering-global-warm-temperatures-in-2015>

[ii] NOAA Global Analysis – March 2016 <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/global/201603>

[iii] Clark, P.U., et al. (2016) Consequences of twenty-first-century policy for multi-millennial climate and sea-level change. *Nature Climate Change*, 6, 360-369.

[iv] McGlade, C. & Ekins, P. (2015) The geographical distribution of fossil fuels unused when limiting global warming to 2 °C. *Nature*, 517, 187-190.

[v] Carrington, D. & Howard, E. (2015) Institutions worth \$2.6 trillion have now pulled investments out of fossil fuels. *The Guardian*, September 22nd.

[vi] For a list of institutional commitments to fossil fuel divestment, see:
<http://gofossilfree.org/commitments/>

Signatures are listed as follows: originators of the letter, in alphabetical order, followed by the signatures of other faculty, staff and graduate students, in alphabetical order. Signatures in this document are those received up to May 19th, 2016.

Glencora Borradaile

Associate Professor
College of Engineering Dean's Professor

Ben Phalan

Research Associate
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Ken Winograd

Associate Professor
College of Education

Nancy Allen

Head Advisor
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife

Dominique Bachelet

Courtesy Faculty, Senior Climate Change Scientist & Associate Professor
College of Agricultural Sciences

Chelsea Batavia

Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Christopher Bayne

Professor Emeritus
Department of Integrative Biology

Carrie Berger

Extension Associate
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Kim Bernard

Assistant Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Logan Berner

Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Matthew Betts

Associate Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Michael Blouin

Professor
College of Science

Bradley Boovy

Assistant Professor
College of Liberal Arts

SueAnn Bottoms
Assistant Professor
College of Education

Jana Bouwma-Gearhart
Associate Professor
College of Education

Christo Buizert
Assistant Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Anders Carlson
Associate Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Marisa Chappell
Associate Professor of History
College of Liberal Arts

Peter Clark
Distinguished Professor of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Richard Clinton
Professor Emeritus
College of Liberal Arts

Sharyn Clough
Professor of Philosophy
College of Liberal Arts

Kevin Credo
Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Engineering, Resources and Management

Theo Dreher
Professor
Department of Microbiology

Susie Dunham
Academic Advisor & Instructor
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife

Jesse Engebretson
Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Molly Engle
Professor
College of Education

Dianna Fisher
Director of Open Oregon State
OSU Extended Campus

Zachary Foster
Graduate student
Department of Botany and Plant Pathology

Jim Gouveia
Counselor
Counseling & Psychological Services

Brian Haley
Associate Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Jacob Hamblin
Professor of History
College of Liberal Arts

Mark Harmon
Richardson Chair and Professor
College of Forestry

Michael Henthorne
Director
Memorial Union

Karen Higgins
Associate Professor (Emeritus)
College of Education

Thomas Hilker
Assistant Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Laurie Holst
Academic Advisor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Jennifer Hutchings
Assistant Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Alex Irving
Faculty Research Assistant
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Engineering, Resources and Management

Evan Jackson
Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Stephanie Jenkins
Assistant Professor
College of Liberal Arts, Philosophy Department

Matt Jones
Research Associate
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Jonathan Kaplan

Professor of Philosophy
College of Liberal Arts

Jonathan Katz

Professor
College of Liberal Arts

J. Boone Kauffman

Research Professor
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife

Elizabeth Kelly

Academic Advisor
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife

Joseph Krause

Professor
College of Liberal Arts

Beverly Law

Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Stacey Lee

Coordinator, ESOL Program
College of Education

Luciana Leite de Araújo

Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Taal Levi

Assistant Professor
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife

Aaron Liston

Professor
Department of Botany and Plant Pathology

Cathleen Ma

Faculty Research Assistant
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

David Mildrexler

Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Charlie Miller

Professor Emeritus
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Alan Mix

Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, & Atmospheric Sciences

Kathleen Dean Moore

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy & Senior Fellow of the Spring Creek Project
College of Liberal Arts

Kat Morici

Graduate Research Assistant
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Engineering, Resources and Management

Kathryn Motter

CCAL Laboratory Manager & IWW Collaboratory Manager
College of Forestry & Research Office

Barbara Muraca

Assistant Professor
College of Liberal Arts, School of History, Philosophy, and Religion

Michael Paul Nelson

Ruth H. Spaniol Chair of Renewable Resources
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Anne Nolin

Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Mike O'Malley

Senior Instructor
College of Education

Joseph Orocco

Associate Professor
College of Liberal Arts

Keith Olsen

Senior Faculty Research Assistant
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Nana Osei-Kofi

Associate Professor and Director of the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Program
College of Liberal Arts

David Perry

Professor Emeritus
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Dwaine Plaza

Professor
College of Liberal Arts

Klaus Puettmann

Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Ronald Reuter

Associate Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society (Cascades Campus)

Michele Ribeiro

Psychologist
Counseling & Psychological Services

Bill Ripple

Distinguished Professor of Ecology
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Sandy Riverman

Instructor
INTO OSU Program

Daniel Roby

Professor of Wildlife Ecology
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit

Nancy Rosenberger

Professor
College of Liberal Arts

Darrell W. Ross

Professor and Director of Richardson Hall Quarantine Facility
College of Forestry

Josée Rousseau

Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Shawn Rowe

Associate Professor
College of Education

Andreas Schmittner

Associate Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Irene Schoppy

Classified staff
College of Forestry

Mark Schulze

Assistant Professor & H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest Director
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

John Selker

Professor of Biological and Ecological Engineering
College of Agricultural Sciences

Karen Shell

Associate Professor & Climate Science Program Head
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Aurora Sherman

Associate Professor
College of Liberal Arts

John Simonsen

Professor
College of Forestry, Wood Science and Engineering

Phillip Sollins

Professor Emeritus of Forest Ecology and Soils
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Chris Still

Associate Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Thomas Stokely

Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Joe Stoner

Associate Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Steven Strauss

Distinguished Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Robert Tanguay

Distinguished Professor of Environmental and Molecular Toxicology
Department of Environmental and Molecular Toxicology

Andrew Taylor

Graduate student
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Engineering, Resources and Management

Allen Thompson

Associate Professor
College of Liberal Arts, Philosophy Department

Karen Thompson

Assistant Professor
College of Education

Bryan Tilt

Associate Professor of Anthropology
College of Liberal Arts

Leigh Torres

Assistant Professor
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Marine Mammal Institute

Jim Trappe

Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Joanne Tynon

Associate Professor
College of Forestry, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

Brett Vicario

Psychologist & Training Director
Counseling & Psychological Services

Blaine (Tony) Vogt

Instructor & Adjunct Professor
College of Liberal Arts, Philosophy Department

George Waldbusser

Assistant Professor in Ocean Ecology and Biogeochemistry
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

Aaron Wolf

Professor
College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences