

Dear Organization:

A coalition of Minnesota pensioners, environmental groups, unions, youth organizations, financial advisors, government organizations and elected officials is reaching out to the four voting members of the State Board of Investment (SBI). We are requesting the Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor and Attorney General to take urgent action to divest our state pension fund from fossil fuels (see link [here](#) for details).

We invite your organization to join us.

This is a time of tremendous challenges on multiple fronts, due to the COVID-19 crisis. These challenges demand immediate attention. Nurses, janitors, home care providers and many other public service workers are at great risk of contracting COVID-19, and too often are without the health and safety resources that they need. Union members are stepping up as volunteers, as well. This is not a time to be risking public employees' pensions by keeping them invested in risky fossil fuels, which continue to trend strongly downwards. And COVID-19 makes clear that we can only prevent the most catastrophic consequences of global crises with timely, planful, fact-based planning and action – and the climate crisis clearly demands that kind of response.

Divesting from fossil fuels will improve the stability and resiliency of pension fund financial returns, both in the long term and the short term. [The list of organizations and municipalities](#) who have already divested is a long one, and only growing longer. The fossil fuel sector continues to [shrink](#), as more and more businesses are pushing for renewable energy. It is the safe and responsible choice both now and in the long run, as climate change is a danger to infrastructure, transportation healthcare and so much more. Fossil fuel investments are incredibly risky and increasingly volatile, as the recent decline by this already-weakened sector during the COVID-19 crisis has shown.

The S&P 500 Energy Index has significantly underperformed the market in recent years, translating to significant losses in the Minnesota pension funds. As of August 10, 2020, calculations show that over the past 5 years the energy index is down about 49 percent and the S&P 500 is up about 53 percent. There is little hope that the energy index will return to its former profitability. The elected officials on the State Board of Investment have the fiduciary responsibility to protect Minnesota pensioners' retirement savings – and the only way to do that is to divest from risky fossil fuel investments as quickly as possible.

A recent resolution by the State Board of Investment states “The MSBI Executive Director will develop and implement plans for reporting on and addressing ESG investment risks and evaluate options for reducing the MSBI's investments to long-term carbon risk exposure.” We call on the SBI to act on this commitment by starting a process to divest from fossil fuels.

Minnesotans have been [calling for divestment](#) for some time, thanks in part to the work of MN350 and Divest-Invest MN, having been involved since 2012. From the City of Minneapolis resolution in 2015 to the Education Minnesota convention resolution in April 2019 people have been stepping up to voice their support. We all have an interest in protecting Minnesota's investments from the risks presented by climate change. Please consider signing on to the following statement:

“We the undersigned organizations and individuals support divesting Minnesota's public pensions from fossil fuel industries. We do so to protect the financial value of our retirement funds as well as our common future in the face of catastrophic climate change. We call on the Minnesota State Board of Investment to start a process to divest from fossil fuels in 2020.”

ORGANIZATIONS SIGNING THE LETTER

Sierra Club North Star Chapter

DFL Environmental Caucus

Honor the Earth

MAPE Local 2101

Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE)

MN350

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

League of Women Voters of Minnesota

Citizens Climate Lobby

Cooperative Energy Futures

Community Power MN

Centered Wealth

Fossil Free Macalester

Wilderness in the City

Vote-Climate

Mighty Earth - Twin Cities

Gichi Ka, LLC

Zimmer Environmental Improvement, LLC

University Lutheran Church of Hope

Walker Community UMC - Peace with Justice Committee

Walker United Methodist Church

World Without Genocide at Mitchell Hamline School of Law

