

Resolution declaring it a policy of the City of La Crosse not to invest in fossil fuel companies and urging the board and management of the City's retirement funds to divest from publicly traded fossil fuel companies.

DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REVIEW

WHEREAS, the climate crisis is a serious threat to current and future generations here in La Crosse and around the world; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) ~~Fourth~~ Sixth Assessment Report found that ~~global warming is already causing costly disruption of human and natural systems throughout the world including the melting of Arctic ice, the ocean's rise in acidity, flooding and drought~~ reducing GHG emissions across the full energy sector requires major transitions, including a substantial reduction in overall fossil fuel use, the deployment of low-emission energy sources, switching to alternative energy carriers, and energy efficiency and conservation; and

WHEREAS, ~~almost every government in the world has agreed through the 2009 Copenhagen Accord that any warming above a 2°C (3.6°F) rise would be unsafe, and that humans can only pour about 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to maintain this limit;~~ and

WHEREAS, for the purposes of this ordinance, a "fossil fuel company" shall be defined as any of the two hundred publicly-traded companies with the largest coal, oil, and gas reserves as measured by the gigatons of carbon dioxide that would be emitted if those reserves were extracted and burned, as listed in the Carbon Tracker Initiative's "Unburnable Carbon" report; and

WHEREAS, in its "Unburnable Carbon" report, the Carbon Tracker Initiative found that fossil fuel companies possess proven fossil fuel reserves that would release approximately 2,795 gigatons of CO₂ if they are burned, which is five times the amount that can be released without exceeding 2°C of warming; and

WHEREAS, ~~a UK government commissioned review on the economics of climate change, is among the voices warning that~~ oil, coal and gas reserves are seriously overvalued, creating risks of a further blow to the world's already fragile economy; and

WHEREAS, the City of La Crosse believes that investments should support a future where all citizens can live healthy lives without the negative impacts of a warming environment; and,

WHEREAS, ~~students at more than three hundred campuses nationwide~~ at least twenty cities and one state have launched campaigns to have their universities to divested from fossil fuel companies;

WHEREAS, City funds and City employees' contributions are being invested in the fossil fuel industry that is negatively impacting our ability to thrive on a planet with a dangerously disrupted climate; and

WHEREAS, on July 11, 2019, the Common Council passed a resolution committing to achieve municipality and community carbon neutrality by 2050; and

WHEREAS, on May 13, 2021, the Common Council authorized the Environmental Planner to initiate a process to produce a Climate Action Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Common Council declares that it is the policy of the City of La Crosse not to invest in fossil fuel companies and commits to not invest, directly or indirectly, in such companies in the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Common Council urges the Wisconsin Retirement Board of ETF to review their investment portfolio to identify holdings that include direct or indirect investments in fossil fuel companies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Common Council urges ETF to ensure that none of its investments or commingled assets include holdings in fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within 5 years as determined by the Carbon Tracker list; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Common Council urges ETF to release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress made towards full divestment including indirect and commingled assets; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Common Council urges ETF to prepare a report discussing options for investing funds removed from fossil fuel stocks in a way that maximizes their positive impact by seeking out investments in opportunities to limit the effects of burning fossil fuels or help to mitigate its effects including, but not limited to, clean technology & renewable energy, sustainable companies or projects, and sustainable communities with an emphasis on investments that would support local projects and local jobs; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Finance Director shall send a copy of this resolution, along with a cover letter, to the Wisconsin Retirement Board of ETF urging them to divest their holdings from fossil fuel companies over a period of 5 years.