

# The Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst

## Resolution in Support of Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies

(approved by the Board of Trustees on TBD and by the congregation on TBD)

WHEREAS, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst (the “Society”), a Unitarian Universalist Congregation, has covenanted to affirm and promote seven principles, including “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations,” and “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part;”[1] and

WHEREAS, the Society has acted upon its commitment to the Earth and the interdependent web of existence through various projects, including its Green Sanctuary Certification, the Connecticut River Clean Up Annual Event, its project to make the current building more energy efficient by air sealing, adding insulation and similar tactics, it’s Local Food Program, and various programs to reduce our carbon footprint; and

WHEREAS, almost every government in the world has agreed that any overall global warming above a 2°C (3.6°F) rise would be unsafe for the future of a livable world as we know it;[4] and

WHEREAS, scientists estimate that humans can pour only approximately 565 more gigatons of CO into the atmosphere and still have reasonable hope of staying below two degrees of global warming; computer models calculate that even if we stopped increasing CO levels now, the temperature would still rise another 0.8°C above the 0.8°C we’ve already warmed, which means that we’re already three-fourths of the way to the two degree limit;[5] and

WHEREAS, proven coal, oil, and gas reserves of the fossil-fuel companies, and of the countries, such as Venezuela and Kuwait, that act like fossil-fuel companies, equal about 2,795 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>, or five times the amount we can release and still stay within 2°C of warming;[6] and

WHEREAS, the sources of Unitarian Universalism counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science;[2] and

WHEREAS, in an attempt to awaken the world to the imminent dangers of global warming and convince fossil fuel companies to stop all activities contributing to the crisis, environmentalist Bill McKibben has initiated a global movement (“350.org”) calling upon universities, pension funds, public entities and religious institutions to divest their investments in fossil fuel companies ; and

WHEREAS, for the purposes of this resolution, 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; [7] and

WHEREAS, the 2006 Unitarian Universalist Association (“UUA”) Statement of Conscience calls on Unitarian Universalist congregations to “[u]se congregational financial resources to positively address the global warming/climate change crisis;”[8] and

WHEREAS, according to the Society’s Environmental, Social and Governance Principles/Investment Guidelines (4/16/12), investments in companies engaged in negative global impact activities are to be avoided [9]; and

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees has concluded, based upon our profound concern for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part and the imminent nature of the impending global environmental crisis, that the Society should take a public position on the problem of global climate change by joining the divestment campaign and to work proactively through its Green Sanctuary Committee to convince others to do so too.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst, that the Society will:

1. Immediately stop making any new direct investments in Fossil Fuel Companies;
2. To the best of its knowledge, divest of all securities holdings - whether direct, indirect, or dividend reinvestments - in Fossil Fuel Companies within five years;
3. Support a Business Resolution at the 2014 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association to divest the Common Fund from fossil fuel companies within five years and to prohibit future such investments, except for certain provisions such as maintaining a small number of shares for shareholder advocacy.
4. Support fossil fuel divestment efforts in the wider community, including endorsing the resolution of the Town of Amherst and any other towns to divest of fossil fuels; and endorsing state legislation that requires the Massachusetts Pension Reserves Investment Trust to divest from fossil fuel companies, and precludes new investment in fossil fuel companies; and urging our local and state officials to do everything they can to support passage of such resolutions and legislation.

[1] <http://uaa.org/beliefs/principles/index.shtml>

[2] <http://uaa.org/environment/sanctuary/120443.shtml>, (accredited in 2010).

[4] Do the Math: Bill McKibben Takes on Big Oil, November 11, 2012  
<http://www.marcgunther.com/do-the-math-bill-mckibben-takes-on-big-oil/>

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Adapted from the City of Northampton, MA [resolution:](http://www.northamptonma.gov/citycouncil/uploads/listWidget/12252/Resolution%20Fossil%20Fuel%20Divestment.pdf)  
(<http://www.northamptonma.gov/citycouncil/uploads/listWidget/12252/Resolution%20Fossil%20Fuel%20Divestment.pdf>)

[8] <http://www.uaa.org/statements/statements/8061.shtml>

[9] <http://www.uaa.org/documents/csri/guidelines.pdf>