

POLICY PROPOSAL

TITLE: FOSSIL FREE BATH

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INTRODUCTION

The University of Bath should divest away from fossil fuels as part of its ethical investment policy. Investing in fossil fuels not only aggravates climate change but also possesses many financial risks. The Students' Union should take a common stand in favour of divestment, and demand investments that are actually beneficial to our future.

REASON FOR CHANGE

Considering

1. The fossil fuels industry has 5 times more proven reserves that we can safely burn to keep global warming below 2 degrees. The effects of climate change like floods, droughts and other extreme weather events are advancing faster than we can physically adapt. CO₂ is a stock pollutant, so the sooner we reduce emissions, the more likely we are to deal with climate change risks.
2. There are huge financial risks from fossil fuel investments resulting from the carbon bubble and changes in policy.¹
3. Many other universities like Glasgow, Edinburgh, Oxford and Stanford, as well as pension funds and churches, have moved towards divestment.²
4. The decision of a university to divest sends a strong signal to the wider society about the adverse social impacts of the fossil fuel industry. It is a powerful tool to drive wider policy changes to protect the environment.

Bath Student's Union recognises that

1. As a forward looking organisation, the university should invest in progress and sustainable solutions. Divestment is in line with the university's commitment to reduce its environmental impact and sustainable practices.
2. The Students' Union powerfully gather student voice on this issue, and present a solid proposal to the university.

For more information and arguments for the Fossil Free campaign

<https://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free/faqs>

¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/apr/19/carbon-bubble-financial-crash-crisis>
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/03/bank-of-england-warns-of-financial-risk-from-fossil-fuel-investments>

² https://www.ussu.co.uk/ClubsSocieties/societies/People_and_Planet/Public%20Documents/Divestment%20Commitments%20of%20UK%20Universities.pdf
<http://news.stanford.edu/news/2014/may/divest-coal-trustees-050714.html>

THE PROPOSAL

Bath Students' Union will

1. Lobby the University to
 - a. Screen and exclude fossil fuel industry from their investment portfolio and immediately freeze any new investment in fossil fuel companies.
 - b. Divest from fossil fuel industry and shift to lower risk, ethical investments within 5 years.
 - c. Support research in renewables and climate solutions, and give ethical careers advice. This involves inviting more green companies to careers fairs instead of companies from the fossil fuel sector.
2. Lobby the university to make their ethical investment policy public, clearly stating their stance towards the fossil fuel industry.
3. Present a formal proposal to the relevant University bodies, lobbying them to divest.