

## **FOSSIL FREE BRANCH UNION MOTION, 2021-22**

*See references on the final page of this document for source information.*

This Branch **notes** that:

1. Fossil fuel companies were responsible for 71% of global carbon emissions between 1988 and 2017.
2. Unless other projects are phased out before the end of their lifetime, all new fossil fuel infrastructure built after 2017 will violate the Paris Agreement.
3. The extractive operations of fossil fuel companies cause direct social harm: displacing communities, destroying livelihoods, demolishing sacred indigenous sites, murdering trade unionists, and leaving workers and communities with severe health problems.
4. Frontline and Indigenous communities are continually forced to resist the destructive business models of fossil fuel companies operating on their lands.
5. In 2016, the UCU congress passed into national policy a motion supporting fossil fuel divestment: recognising the importance of fossil fuel divestment as part “of combatting climate change”. They instructed the National Executive Committee to “produce resource materials to support members and branches engaging in divestment campaigns”, “work with students to campaign” and “ensure that the divestment process is carried out in a way that does not disadvantage any members, for instance those researching fossil fuels.”
6. Since 2013, the student-led Fossil Free movement has actively campaigned, with support from People & Planet, to demand universities exclude fossil fuel extractor companies from their current and/or future investment portfolio(s). Over half of UK universities now hold a Fossil Free commitment.

This Branch **believes** that:

1. Unions, workers, and affected communities should be at the heart of campaigns for climate justice and the Just Transition to a low-carbon world.
2. We should act in solidarity with the trade unionists around the world who are fighting the extractive industry for health protections, environmental protections, and compensation for their communities - and often paying with their lives.
3. Ending this university’s investment relationship with the fossil fuel industry is an effective method of showing solidarity with the communities and trade unionists impacted by both fossil fuel extraction and climate change.



4. We should support the struggle of frontline and Indigenous communities in their resistance against fossil fuel extractor companies.
5. Our universities must be a part of the solution and act against these injustices by severing investment ties with the fossil fuel industry.
6. University commitments to climate action - such as carbon neutral/net zero strategies - should extend to their investment portfolios and policies.

This Branch **resolves** to:

1. Publicly support the student-led Fossil Free campaign, and demands that our university:  
(delete as appropriate):
  - a). if the university has investments - adopt the People & Planet Fossil Free campaign and demand that our university: 1. exclude the fossil fuel industry from their investment portfolio; 2. introduce a publicly accessible ethical investment. policy excluding the fossil fuel industry; 3. commit to, and fully divest from all fossil fuels within 3 years.
  - OR**
  - b). if the university does not have investments - adopt the People & Planet Fossil Free campaign and demand that our university: 1. sign the [Fossil Free Declaration](#) to publicly affirm that they do not hold investments in fossil fuel companies, as well as committing to never invest in them in the future; 2. introduce a publicly accessible ethical investment policy excluding the fossil fuel industry.
2. Actively work with students campaigning on Fossil Free and People & Planet to support their grassroots campaign for the demands above.
3. Use relevant Union social media channels to amplify petitions, statements and other calls to action from the Fossil Free campaign.
4. Work with student campaigners and the students' union to lobby for and secure student and staff representation on all university investment-related committees.
5. Put up a website statement announcing the passing of this motion and the support of the union for this campaign.
6. Write to university management outlining our support for the Fossil Free campaign and request a meeting, alongside student representatives, to discuss the university's progress towards committing to be Fossil Free.



## Background Briefing

- Notes 1: [New report shows just 100 companies are source of over 70% of emissions - CDP](#)
- Notes 2: [The '2°C capital stock' for electricity generation: Committed cumulative carbon emissions from the electricity generation sector and the transition to a green economy - ScienceDirect](#)
- Notes 3: [UNHCR - Frequently asked questions on climate change and disaster displacement](#)

[Climate change link to displacement of most vulnerable is clear: UNHCR || UN News](#)

[CUT AND RUN: How Britain's top two mining companies have wrecked ecosystems without being held to account](#)

<https://www.reimagineerpe.org/node/307>

[The Dark Side of Coal](#)

[Cerro de Pasco: The city built around a mine](#)

- Notes 4: [Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon | Indigenous Environmental Network \(ienearth.org\)](#)

[Frontlines of the Climate Crisis: Fossil Fuel Resistance - YouTube](#)

- Notes 5: [Business of the Strategy and Finance Committee 2016 \(open session\)](#)
- Notes 6: [People & Planet's Fossil Free campaign | People & Planet \(peopleandplanet.org\)](#)

[Fossil Free Victories | People & Planet \(peopleandplanet.org\)](#)

- Resolves 1: [Fossil Free Declaration | People & Planet \(peopleandplanet.org\)](#)

