**Decarbonization begins at home: supporting the 350.org divestment campaign**

Milan Ilnyckyj - PhD student, University of Toronto - milan.ilnyckyj@mail.utoronto.ca

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In order to reduce global greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution and avoid the worst potential impacts of climate change, it is necessary to redirect investment on a vast scale. Billions of dollars are now being spent on infrastructure designed to extract the world's remaining fossil fuels, while an insufficient degree of investment is being directed at the development of the low-carbon infrastructure that will be necessary in the future. As major institutional investors with a long-term focus, universities can help lead this process by divesting from fossil fuel companies.

The climate change group [350.org](http://350.org/) is coordinating an international effort to get universities to divest. Campaigns are underway at schools including Harvard, Colorado State University, the University of California, the University of Ottawa, and the University of Toronto.

For more information, see: [gofossilfree.org](http://gofossilfree.org/)

**Why divest?**

Reasons for universities to divest from fossil fuel investments include:

* Aligning their investment choices with their institutional values and sending a message about the importance of climate change mitigation
* Reducing their institutional exposure to the risk of a substantial fall in the value of fossil fuel companies, a reasonably probable medium-term consequence of regulating GHG pollution
* The current value of fossil fuel companies reflects the assumption that they will be able to dig up and sell all of their proven reserves. These reserves far exceed the quantity of fossil fuels that can be burned without producing dangerous climate change. If the right to release GHG pollution freely into the atmosphere is curbed, much of the value of these companies may be eliminated.
* Fossil fuel investments are a risk to the rest of the school's investment portfolio. For instance, unmitigated climate change threatens to cause rapid sea level rise as well as other impacts that could reduce or reverse global economic growth.

**What can be done here?**

1. Become involved with the divestment movement at your school, or consider creating one
2. Endorse the 350.org campaign in whatever published results this workshop produces

**Why endorse the campaign?**

Every endorsement adds legitimacy to the overall campaign and increases the odds that other people will join in. In particular, each faculty endorsement at a particular school makes it easier for additional faculty members to express their support.