

Dear Mayor De Lille

## **Request for the City of Cape Town to divest its investment in fossil fuel companies**

### **The ask**

Cape Town is, rightly, internationally recognised for its efforts to meet the threat of climate change.

However, the global fossil fuel industry continues to block change, funding climate change-denying politicians, concealing the evidence for human-induced climate change, resisting the development of climate-friendly policies, soaking up subsidies that should now go to renewable energy, threatening human health through air and water pollution, land degradation, and energy supply instability; and threatening good governance through sponsoring corruption.

The industry's resistance to efforts needed to assure global human security in the face of climate change has inspired the global divestment movement, a moral movement as vital and urgent as the struggle against apartheid.

In December 2016, climate movement partners met with representatives of the Cape Town City Council to encourage the municipality to commit to disclosing the total value of its fossil fuel investments and divesting all fossil fuel holdings within five years.

We were very impressed with the open attitude amongst your officials, but the discussion seems to have slowed. We request that you give renewed priority to pursuing this discussion, to disclosing information about the City's bond investments and money management, and to adopting a graduated approach to divestment. This could begin, for example, with a simple statement of solidarity with the divestment movement and promise to investigate what steps the City can take.

The City's efforts to achieve ambitious local climate protection goals risk seeming half-hearted if it continues to invest in companies that significantly contribute to climate change.

At the end of 2016, global commitments to divest from fossil fuels reached \$5 trillion in assets. Being part of this global commitment would clearly demonstrate the City's seriousness about transitioning to an economy based on renewable energy. It would send a strong message to all spheres of government as well as the general public, which is increasingly demanding real climate action.

***We hereby request to meet with the city to present our call for a fossil free Cape Town.***

## Why divest from fossil fuels

2016 was the hottest year on record and 2015 was the second hottest. These are just the most recent years in a warming trend over the past 30 years. The burning of fossil fuels – oil, coal and natural gas – is the main cause of this warming trend.

To maintain a livable planet, we need to shift completely away from fossil fuels, leaving 80 percent of known deposits of oil, coal and natural gas in the ground. This means that fossil fuel companies will have to change their business plan, abandoning their “assets” and shifting to a renewable future.

“We need an apartheid-style boycott to save the planet” - Desmond Tutu

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group is leading the fossil fuel divestment movement. Eight C40 cities have committed to divestment and are selling their investments or have already done so. These include Berlin, Copenhagen, Oslo, Paris, Melbourne, New York, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C. These cities have already inspired more than 100 other cities worldwide to commit to divestment. The city of Cape Town can be the first on our continent to divest and lead the way for others.

With less than [100 days](#) of water supply left, the Western Cape government has declared Cape Town a disaster area for the next three months. We need strong leadership to weather this crisis. However, climate impacts similar to this drought will only intensify if we keep burning fossil fuels. We have the technologies to transition to a renewable future. All we need now is the political will to implement policies that accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels. The City of Cape Town has an opportunity to inspire broader decisions that invest in the long-term sustainability of our cities and place the interests of people and the planet first, but it needs to act now.

Signed by,



Anglican Church of  
Southern Africa,  
GREEN ANGLICANS



**African Climate  
Reality Project**



Centre for  
Environmental Rights  
Advancing Environmental Rights in South Africa

