

1 RES 25-04 | FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

2 SUBJECT: California-Pacific Annual Conference Resolution on Fossil Fuel Divestment

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7 ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:

8 SOURCE OF STAFF TIME:

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10 WHEREAS: The spiritual and moral reasons for divesting from fossil fuels are clear. Jesus said, “Do to
11 others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31). In “The General Rules,” John Wesley said,
12 “First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally
13 practiced....” In secular terms, the simplest moral reason is that “It is wrong to profit from devastating
14 the planet and degrading the natural world.”

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16 WHEREAS: In 1980, The United Methodist General Conference as a body passed a resolution on
17 Energy Policy acknowledging the harm caused by fossil fuels (#1120, 2024 Book of Resolutions, pages
18 67). The UMC was the first denomination to call for a just transition away from fossil fuels toward
19 conservation and renewable energy by governments and the church, yet our denomination continues to
20 invest in and profit from coal, oil, and gas.

21

22 WHEREAS: The United Methodist Church’s endorsement of fossil fuel corporations through our
23 investments contradicts our stated commitment to a transition away from fossil fuels and toward a just
24 and sustainable future. Two decades of Wespath’s corporate engagement and stockholder actions with
25 the world’s largest greenhouse gas producers, including Chevron, Exxon Mobil, and Occidental
26 Petroleum, [have failed](#).

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28 WHEREAS: These corporations have known since 1970s that [their products would warm the climate](#)
29 and endanger creation, but instead of transitioning to conservation and renewable energy, they created a
30 massive [public relations campaign](#) to foster doubt that climate change was real. Their profit-seeking
31 strategies continue today in the form of “greenwashing,” lobbying government for corporate subsidies,
32 and blocking strong climate legislation and international treaties. By continuing to invest and engage
33 with them, we provide moral cover for these corporate “bad actors.” This makes The United Methodist
34 Church complicit in knowingly causing unspeakable harm to children, marginalized people, our human
35 family, and the community of all creation, not just now but into the future.

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37 WHEREAS: In addition to being the primary drivers of climate change, fossil fuels cause tremendous
38 harm in their extraction, transport, and processing. They create “[sacrifice zones](#)” by polluting
39 marginalized, mostly racially diverse communities, regions, and countries. When burned, they destabilize
40 the climate, causing harm on a scale that [threatens human civilization](#) and the [community of creation](#)
41 here on Earth. This harm disproportionately impacts the world’s most vulnerable people, who have done
42 least to cause climate change.

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44 WHEREAS: The fossil fuel divestment movement has now grown to over [1,600 institutions with assets](#)
45 [totaling over \\$40.6 trillion](#) that have divested from fossil fuels. Thirty-five percent of them are churches
46 and other faith communities. If we divest from fossil fuels here in the California-Pacific Annual

1 Conference, it will be a witness to how The United Methodist Church can walk its talk about climate
2 change.

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4 WHEREAS: Investing is always risky but investing in fossil fuel stocks will become ever-riskier
5 financially as climate change accelerates. Known coal, oil, and gas reserves cannot all be burned without
6 making the planet uninhabitable. These reserves will become “[stranded assets](#)” as the global transition to
7 renewables advances, as renewables continue to gain market ground, as [lawsuits against fossil fuel](#)
8 [corporations](#) become more common, and as large institutions continue to divest.

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10 WHEREAS: In the past ten years, fossil fuels have [underperformed](#) when compared to the overall stock
11 market. Many alternative investment funds are available that are largely fossil free, including the Social
12 Values Choice funds administered by Wespath. These funds have a five-year history of competitive
13 returns, usually outperforming their counterparts; and

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15 WHEREAS the California-Pacific Annual Conference has shown its support for creation care and
16 climate action, and has made the commitment to reduce its emissions to Net Zero by 2050,

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18 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

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20 BE IT RESOLVED that by October 1, 2025, the California-Pacific Annual Conference of The United
21 Methodist Church shall identify all investments in their portfolios whose core business activity involves
22 the ownership of reserves and/or production of coal, petroleum, or natural gas. Core business activity
23 refers to a company's primary, central focus of activity and is an essential element in the company's
24 economic success, and

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26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that by February 1, 2026, the California-Pacific Annual Conference
27 shall have identified sound financial strategies to screen out fossil fuels from conference investment
28 portfolios, with the help of consultation and resources readily available through annual conferences that
29 have already divested from fossil fuels, and

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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that by May 1, 2026, the California-Pacific Annual Conference shall
32 be following a path of divestment away from any company or entity whose core business activity
33 involves the ownership of reserves and/or production of coal, petroleum, or natural gas, and

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there will be a report on the progress of divestment from fossil
36 fuels and a timeline for its completion made by the Council on Finance and Administration to the 2026
37 California-Pacific Annual Conference session.