

## RES 25-04 | FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

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

SUBMITTED BY: Rev. Christian DeMent, Eric Dewey-Hoffman, Suanne Dewey-Hoffman, Rev. Leigh Ann Shaw, Susan Naslund, Sharon Russo, Rev. Molly Vetter, Rev. Janet Voigts, Rev. Jeanette Bragunier, Rev. Erika Gara, Kenny Funk, Rev. Bob Rhodes, Rev. Molly Lorden, Honor Leibold, Rev. Jennifer Rath, Rev. Karen Ristine

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:

SOURCE OF STAFF TIME:

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS: The fossil fuel divestment movement has now grown to over [1,600 institutions with assets totaling over \\$40.6 trillion](#) that have divested from fossil fuels. Thirty-five percent of them are churches 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.

3  
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.