



Global Nonviolent Action Database

Published on *Global Nonviolent Action Database* (<https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>)

University of Hawaii Students, Faculty and Staff Successfully Campaign for Fossil Fuel Divestment, (2013-2015)

- Fossil Fuel Divestment Movement (2010 -)

September
2013
to: 21 May
2015

Country: United States

Location City/State/Province: *Manoa, Hawaii*

Goals:

To get the University of Hawaii to freeze all new investments in fossil fuel companies, and to come up with a long term plan to divest it's assets from the fossil fuel industry.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 001. Public speeches

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 006. Group or mass petitions

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 038. Marches

Methods in 4th segment:

- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 006. Group or mass petitions

Methods in 5th segment:

- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 015. Group lobbying

Methods in 6th segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Environment

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- Undergraduate and graduate students
- University faculty and staff

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Michelle Tigchelaar, Divest UH

Partners:

350.org, Graduate Student Organization

Involvement of social elites:

Bill Mckibben

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Graduate Student Organization

Groups in 2nd Segment:

- 350.org

Groups in 3rd Segment:

- Divest UH

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length: 3 months

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

University of Hawaii Board of Regents

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

None

Campaigner violence:

None

Repressive Violence:

None

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

0.5 points out of 1 point

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

In the fall of 2013, University of Hawaii graduate student and oceanography major Michelle Tigchelaar launched a fossil fuel divestment campaign after witnessing the devastation that climate change was bring to Hawaii's famed coral reefs. Initially, the campaign was organized by members of the University's Graduate Student Organization. The campaign launched in September 2013 with a movie screening 350.org's movie Do the Math. The campaign lost traction in its first year after several members of the Graduate Student Organization graduated in the at the end of the fall semester. On 22 April 2014 however they succeeded in bringing environmental activist Bill Mckibben to campus.

After the successful rally and speech by Bill Mckibben, the students launched a petition asking the college to create a plan to divest its 66 million dollar endowment from fossil fuel companies. Over the summer of 2014, fellow graduate student and campaigner Stuart Scott launched the campaign's official website, Divest UH. The website listed information about the campaign demands and why divestment is a useful tactic to combat climate change, along with a form for the online petition.

On 21 September 2014, Divest UH and 350.org held the Honolulu people's climate march in conjunction with the national people's climate march in New York City. Hundreds attended the event and brought publicity to how climate change would directly impact Hawaii's livability.

In October 2014, climate change activist Brodie Lockhard launched 350Hawaii.org to "bolster the campaign by collecting and organizing testimony, and advocating via print, radio, online and social media." UH marine biology professor Dr. Joe Mobley organized faculty and staff in support of the resolution and to sign the petition. Several professors wrote op-eds in the student newspaper in support of divestment.

On 11 December 2014, the University of Hawaii Graduate Student Organization, a student body representing graduate students in the UH system, voted unanimously in favor of supporting fossil fuel divestment. Initial response from the University's Board of Regents, the body in charge of running the university and managing its endowment, was critical of divestment. Board of Regents chair Randolph Moore insisted that divestment may not be financially feasible.

On 8 January 2015, Divest UH and 350hawaii.org presented the board of regents with with 1,330 signatures in support of

divestment, 477 written testimonies and 18 verbal testimonies by University of Hawaii faculty, staff and students. After receiving the testimony, the board's Committee on Budget and Finance approved the creation of a divestment task force, comprised of members of the BOR, UH administration, UH investment advisers, GSO, the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (ASUH) and Divest UH. The group was designed to analyze the financial feasibility of divestment and present its conclusions to the board in May. The proposal to create the task force was subsequently sent to the full board for approval on 22 January 2015 and was approved unanimously.

On 2 February 2015, The Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (ASUH), the at large representative student body, voted to abstain from supporting the divestment campaign until the financial effects were fully detailed by the divestment task force.

The task force concluded that fossil fuel divestment was a financially sound decision that would protect the endowment from the carbon bubble, and likewise concluded that it would have little to no short term effects on endowment growth.

After presenting their findings to the board in May 2015, the board voted unanimously on 21 May 2015 to fully divest its endowment from coal, oil and gas companies by 30 June 2018. University of Hawaii became the largest educational system thus far to divest from fossil fuel companies.

After successfully pursuing divestment at the University, Divest UH has since gone on to pursue divestment at the privately held UH Foundation, which separately manages an additional endowment for the University.

Research Notes

Sources:

Nitta, Jeremy. "University of Hawai'i System Divests from Fossil Fuels." Ka Leo Hawaii. Ka Leo, 21 May 2015. Web. 02 Nov. 2015. <http://www.kaleo.org/news/university-of-hawai-i-system-divests-from-fossil-fuels/article_4751d982-0024-11e5-85f4-6bea369702e9.html>.

"Resolution Passed for Divestment UH." The Mānoa Graduate (2014): n. pag. Graduate Student Organization of UH. Web. 1 Nov. 2015. <http://gso.hawaii.edu/gso2/files/newsletter/2014/Nov-Dec_2014_GSO_Newsletter.pdf>.

Teague, Courtney. "ASUH Clarifies Stance on Divestment from Fossil Fuels." Ka Leo O Hawaii. Ka Leo, 2 Feb. 2015. Web. 02 Nov. 2015. <http://www.kaleo.org/news/asuh-clarifies-stance-on-divestment-from-fossil-fuels/article_24d3ea68-ab46-11e4-b3eb-e7c33649ba53.html>.

"Divest UH." 350 Hawaii. 350hawaii.org, n.d. Web. 02 Nov. 2015. <http://350hawaii.org/?page_id=323>.

"University of Hawaii System Divests from Fossil Fuels." Fossil Free. Gofossilfree.org, 22 May 2015. Web. 02 Nov. 2015. <<http://gofossilfree.org/press-release/university-of-hawaii-system-divests-from-fossil-fuels/>>.

Shih, Leillei Joy. "Heat Is On: UH Foundation Should Divest from Fossil Fuels." Ka Leo O Hawaii. Ka Leo, 21 July 2015. Web. 02 Nov. 2015. <http://www.kaleo.org/opinion/heat-is-on-uh-foundation-should-divest-from-fossil-fuels/article_a1629fce-2fc2-11e5-9d76-17d159115231.html>.

Fujii, Noelle. "Group Calls for UH to Divest from Fossil Fuels." Ka Leo O Hawaii. Ka Leo, 12 Jan. 2015. Web. 02 Nov. 2015. <http://www.kaleo.org/news/group-calls-for-uh-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels/article_db3e24e8-99fe-11e4-aa71-3f9e68d25cda.html>.

Fujii, Noelle. "Regent Committee Approves Study on Divesting from Fossil Fuels." Ka Leo O Hawaii. Ka Leo, 8 Jan. 2015. Web. 02 Nov. 2015. <<http://www.kaleo.org/news/regent-committee-approves-study-on-divesting-from-fossil>>.

fuels/article_887f0eba-97a2-11e4-a8a8-2b668e2faedb.html>.

Howard, Emma. "University of Hawaii System Votes to Divest from Fossil Fuels." The Guardian. The Guardian, 22 May 2015. Web. 1 Nov. 2015. <<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/keep-it-in-the-ground-blog/2015/may/22/university-of-hawaii-system-votes-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels>>.

Stoetzer, Ethan. "University of Hawaii Becomes Largest Institution to Divest from Fossil Fuels ." USA TODAY College. USA Today, 03 June 2015. Web. 02 Nov. 2015. <<http://college.usatoday.com/2015/06/03/university-hawaii-divests-fossil-fuels/>>.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Lewis Fitzgerald-Holland, 1/11/2015

A project of Swarthmore College, including Peace and Conflict Studies, the Peace Collection, and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.

Copyright Swarthmore College.



Global Nonviolent Action Database is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/) .

Original website design and artwork created by [Daniel Hunter](#).

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu> .

Registered users can [login](#) to the website.

Source URL (retrieved on 08/19/2019 - 05:43): <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/university-hawaii-students-faculty-and-staff-successfully-campaign-fossil-fuel-divestment-20>

Links:

[1] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/wave-campaigns/fossil-fuel-divestment-movement-2010>

[2] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/mainly-or-initiated-student-participants>

[3] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/local-community-or-neighborhood-level-campaign>