



Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins/ Speaker Heastie:

We write as community, labor, student, and faith organizations to urge you as the leader of the New York State Senate / Assembly to pass the Teachers' Fossil Fuel Divestment Act (A6331a Kelles / S4783a Brisport) this session, which will require the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) to divest its holdings from coal, oil and gas companies.

NYSTRS is a \$130 billion-dollar public pension, one of the ten largest in the nation, with an estimated \$4.5 billion in fossil fuel holdings. NYSTRS has over 434,000 members and beneficiaries, mostly teachers and school administrators, and is under the oversight of the State Legislature.

New York's teachers are increasingly in favor of decisive climate action. Both the American Federation of Teachers and NYS United Teachers have passed resolutions in favor of divestment. This year sixteen locals voted to support resolutions asking NYSTRS to divest.

The burning of fossil fuels is creating a climate crisis. Firestorms, superstorms, droughts and floods are already destroying lives and communities. Experts tell us, and the nations of the world agree, that a temperature rise of 1.5 centigrade will cause irreversible damage to the world's ecosystems and result in profound human suffering. The only rational course for humanity is to leave fossil fuels that have already been discovered in the ground and to rapidly shift from reliance on fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Across the world and here in New York State, more than 1300 institutions with assets over \$14 trillion including over 300 pension funds and governments have committed to divest from fossil fuels.

Comptroller DiNapoli has already divested the NYS pension fund from coal in July and tar sands just last month, citing financial risk to the fund from continued fossil fuel investments. New York City is in the midst of implementing a nation-leading divestment commitment for its pension funds and Governor Cuomo has directed state agencies that have assets valued at over \$40 billion, including the State Insurance Fund and the MTA, to divest from fossil fuels.

The Teachers' Fossil Fuel Divestment Act has tremendous support from legislators, with over 60 sponsors in both houses. It builds upon the prior Fossil Fuel Divestment Act and is modified to reflect the approach that Comptroller DiNapoli is undertaking to divest the Common Retirement Fund from fossil fuels.

Our campaign began meeting with NYSTRS more than a year ago about the need for them to protect the planet, pensioners and taxpayers by divesting from fossil fuels. NYSTRS recently announced that it hopes by the end of this year to develop a climate risk strategy for their investments. While we are encouraged that the trustees are beginning to focus more on this issue, this is not a climate plan. At this point in the climate crisis, delay is not an option, the solution is clear – NYSTRS needs to stop investing in fossil fuels that are driving climate change while significantly underperforming other investments.

We urge the legislature to pass the Teachers' Fossil Fuels Divestment Act now to ensure that the teachers' fund stops investing in climate destruction and risky investments that threaten the security of the pension fund.

Signed:

Divest NY	Community Advocates for a Sustainable Environment
350 Kingston New York	CUNY Climate Coalition
350.org	CUNY School of Public Health Graduate Student Government Association
350Brooklyn	Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
350NJ-Rockland	Divest Ed
350NYC	Divest NJ Coalition
504 Democratic Club	Downtown East for Progress
ABCRR Creation Collaborative	Drawdown NYC
All Our Energy	Dutchess County Progressive Action Alliance
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism	Earth Day Initiative
Bedford 2030	Empire State Indivisible
Beth Gelfond Marketing Consultant	Environmental Studies Summer Youth Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Bethlehem Morning Voice Huddle	Erie County Green Party
Bethlehem NY Indivisible	Food & Water Watch
Big Reuse	Fossil Fuel Divest Harvard
BK ROT, Inc	FrackBustersNY
Brightest	Gas Free Seneca
Bronx Climate Justice North	Grassroots Action NY
Broome Tioga Green Party	Green Education and Legal Fund
Campaign for Renewable Energy	GreeningUSA
Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition	HabitatMap
Chemung County Mother's Out Front	Healing & Protecting Our Land Together—A Call To Prayer
Church Women United in New York State	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
Citizen Action of New York	Indivisible Brooklyn
Climate Change Awareness and Action	Indivisible Cayuga
Climate Smart Gardiner	Indivisible Hudson Valley
Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region	Indivisible Mohawk Valley
CNY Solidarity Coalition Climate Justice Committee	Indivisible Nation BK
Coalition for Outreach, Policy, & Education	Indivisible Ulster
Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island	Indivisible Westchester
ColorBrightonGreen.org	

Interfaith Climate Justice Community of
Western N.Y.
Inwood Indivisible
Kinetic Communities Consulting
Long Island Activists
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Mazabit, LLC
Metro N.Y. Catholic Climate Movement
Mothers Out Front Dutchess County
Mothers Out Front Tompkins
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club
Natural Resources Defense Council
New York Interfaith Power & Light
New York Progressive Action Network
New York Youth Climate Leaders
New Yorkers for Clean Power
News from the Neighborhood
North American Climate, Conservation and
Environment (NACCE)
North Country 350 Alliance
North Country Earth Action
North Country NYPAN
North Star Fund
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
("for a nuclear-free, carbon-free world")
NW Bronx Indivisible
NY Climate Advocates
NY Indivisible
NYC Friends of Clearwater
NY-GEO (NY Geothermal Energy Organization)
NYPAN Greene/NYPAN Enviro
Otsego County Conservation Association
PAUSE - People of Albany United for Safe
Energy
People for a Healthy Environment
Peoples Climate Movement -Capital District
Peoples Climate Movement-NY
Progressive Schenectady
Protecting Our Waters
Putnam Progressives
Queens Climate Project
Renewable Energy Long Island (reLI)
Save the Pine Bush

Seneca Lake Guardy
Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable
Energy (SHARE)
Sisters of Charity Federation
Solidarity Committee--Capital District
South Shore Audubon Society
Stand.earth
StandUp Western New York
Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
StopCricketValley.org
SUNY New Paltz Environmental Task Force
Sustainability Team of Greece Baptist Church
Sustainable Tompkins, Inc.
The Climate Reality Project: Capital Region,
NY Chapter
TIAA-Divest! from Climate Destruction
Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative
Tompkins County Progressives
Transition Town Port Washington
United for Action
United University Professions
Up2Us
Upper Green Side
Uptown Progressive Action, a NYPAN chapter
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
Westchester for Change
Women Against War
Young Long Island For Justice