

Resolution Urging Fossil Fuel Divestment of All Denominational Funds at Wespeth

Submitted by: Climate Justice Ministries Task Force

Number of Members: 15

Members present when voting: 11

Members voting for: 11

Members voting against: 0

Date adopted: April 28, 2026

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Fiscal Impact: Unknown

Parliamentary Procedure in Plenary, Session Pursuant to Standing Rule I.C.5.a.

Resolution

- 1 Be it Resolved that the California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church directs the
- 2 Annual Conference Secretary to send a letter by August 1, 2026, to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of
- 3 Wespeth's Board of Directors, and the Wespeth staff listed at wespeth.org/leadership. This letter shall
- 4 express gratitude for the exemplary performance of Wespeth's fossil-free funds, and shall make the following
- 5 request:
- 6 The California-Nevada Annual Conference urges Wespeth:
- 7 To commit to move toward excluding fossil fuels from all their investment portfolios in order to correct the
- 8 undermining of the denomination's witness for God's creation and human rights by simultaneously investing
- 9 in the fossil fuel companies responsible for global emissions, air pollution, infrastructure build-out and
- 10 support that causes millions of deaths annually, suffering and displacement, and ecological destruction
- 11 world-wide; and
- 12 To create, publish and share an actionable roadmap for fossil fuel divestment of their unrestricted and
- 13 restricted assets.

Background

The moral arguments for divesting our money from fossil fuels are clear: Surely the God of steadfast love, who declared all creation good and who has nurtured and sustained life on earth for eons, intends for life in abundance to continue (Genesis 129:12-17; Exodus 20:6), yet fossil-fuel driven climate change threatens human life and all life on earth. Surely Jesus, who said "just as you did it to one of the least of these siblings of mine, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40), calls us to consider our impacts on those who are most vulnerable, yet climate change impacts those who are most vulnerable first and worst.

The 1980 General Conference resolution on energy policy made The United Methodist Church the first denomination to link the burning of fossil fuels to what was then called "global warming." It urged our church and the nations of the world to transition away from fossil fuels to renewable energy and conservation. That resolution has been updated at almost every General Conference since it was passed.

The United Methodist Church's mission to care for God's creation and commitment to human rights is seriously undermined by the denomination's simultaneous investment in the fossil fuel companies that are the primary drivers of climate change. They are responsible for global emissions that contribute to extreme weather events around the world, for pollution of vulnerable and marginalized neighborhoods and regions, for harmful health impacts that disproportionately impact children and other sensitive populations, for the buildout of durable fossil fuel infrastructure, and for deliberately fostering doubt about climate change. This missional misalignment must be addressed because it results in millions of deaths annually, suffering and displacement, and ecological destruction world-wide.

The fossil fuel industry is also fueling inequality, violence, militarism, and war. Oil, gas, and coal are being called "weapons of mass destruction" because of their devastating role in both the climate crisis and in conflict.

Green energy sources like solar, wind and hydropower reduce carbon emissions and empower nations to generate their own electricity, reduce dependence on fossil fuel exporters, and eliminate one of the central motives behind many modern conflicts and wars.

Scientists are calling for a fast and fair phaseout of fossil fuels. Divesting from fossil fuels is one way that United Methodists can take a moral stand by ending our investments in fossil fuels and phasing out fossil fuels from our own investment portfolios.

Wespath has successfully created alternative “Social Values Choice” funds that exclude companies with fossil fuel reserves used for energy purposes, and certain other investments associated with a prolonged and systematic pattern of human rights abuses.

Fossil fuel investments have underperformed in the stock market for a decade. Further, since 2017 the Social Values Choice (“fossil-free”) investment portfolios at Wespath have outperformed their portfolios that include fossil fuels, increasing earnings to support ministry. While wars and other shocks may temporarily raise the value of oil, resulting in higher profits for fossil fuel corporations and higher returns for investments, this is not a rationale for ethical investment.

As a response to the devastating harms caused by climate change, various Annual Conferences in The United Methodist Church have voted to divest their own long-term investments from fossil fuels by investing in Wespath’s Social Values Choice funds.

The global “fossil free” movement has inspired fossil fuel divestments from thousands of faith communities, universities, foundations, and financial institutions with total assets of over \$40 trillion. The movement’s slogan states the moral argument in simple terms: “It’s wrong to profit from wrecking the planet.”

References

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[Plain Talk: This Is What’s at Stake](https://fossilfreeumc.net/2024/02/13/plain-talk-this-is-whats-at-stake)

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[Fossil fuels Continue to Drive Global Instability, Conflict, and Economic Insecurity](https://350.org/press-release/fossil-fuels-continue-to-drive-global-instability-conflict-and-economic-insecurity)

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[9 Ways Fossil Fuels Are Tied to Conflict — and How Feminist Peace Action Through the Fossil Fuel Treaty Can Stop It](https://fossilfueltreaty.org/blog/feminist-peace-action)

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[IPCC Latest Report Reaffirms Urgency to Phase Out Fossil Fuels to Tackle Climate Emergency](https://fossilfueltreaty.org/ipcc-ar6)

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[The UCS Position on a Fossil Fuel Phaseout: We support a fast and fair phaseout of fossil fuels around the world](https://www.ucs.org/ucs-fossil-fuel-phaseout)

[<https://www.ucs.org/ucs-fossil-fuel-phaseout>]

[The Financial Case for Fossil Fuel Divestment](https://ieefa.org/financial-case-fossil-fuel-divestment)

[<https://ieefa.org/financial-case-fossil-fuel-divestment>]

[Introducing the Social Values Choice \(SVC\) funds for institutional investors](https://www.wespath.com/assets/1/7/6099.pdf)

[<https://www.wespath.com/assets/1/7/6099.pdf>]

[Global Fossil Free Commitments Database](https://divestmentdatabase.org)

[<https://divestmentdatabase.org>]

[California Nevada and California-Pacific Annual Conferences Join Pacific Northwest and Desert Southwest in Divesting from Fossil Fuels](https://fossilfreeumc.net/2025/07/30/california-nevada-and-california-pacific-annual-conferences-join-pacific-northwest-and-desert-southwest-in-divesting-from-fossil-fuels)

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