

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 118

Approved March 2, 2015

WHEREAS, On June 20th, 2013, the City Council approved resolution #301 requesting that the Board of Investment Commissioners ensure that, within five years, its assets not include holdings in fossil fuel companies; and

WHEREAS, The market for fossil fuels has changed significantly since that resolution was passed, with oil prices dropping 38% and gasoline prices dropping 34% from July 2014 to January 2015 according to Forbes magazine; and

WHEREAS, A Bloomberg Business report found that dropping fossil fuel prices have led to a \$390 billion loss from investment funds, retirement accounts and bank balance sheets since June 2014; and

WHEREAS, The significant volatility in the market for fossil fuels over the last year and a half has shown that, even before accounting for the environmental issues caused by fossil fuels, there is a fiduciary duty to immediately consider divestment from fossil fuel companies; and

WHEREAS, According to NASA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2014 was the warmest year since record-keeping began in 1880; and

WHEREAS, All of the 10 warmest years on record have occurred since 1997; and

WHEREAS, Climate change is a serious threat to current and future generations here in Providence and around the world; and

WHEREAS, According to the New York Times, “the vast majority of those who study the climate say the earth is in a long-term warming trend that is profoundly threatening and caused almost entirely by human activity”; and

WHEREAS, Almost every government in the world has agreed through the 2009 Copenhagen Accord that any warming above a 2°C (3.6°F) rise would be unsafe, and that humans can only add about 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by 2050 to maintain this limit; and

WHEREAS, For the purposes of this resolution, a “fossil fuel company” shall mean any of the two hundred publicly-traded companies with the largest coal, oil, and gas reserves as measured by the gigatons of carbon dioxide that would be emitted if those reserves were extracted and burned, as listed in the Carbon Tracker Initiative’s “Unburnable Carbon” report; and

WHEREAS, In its “Unburnable Carbon” report, the Carbon Tracker Initiative found that fossil fuel companies possess proven fossil fuel reserves that would release approximately 2,795 gigatons of CO₂ if they are burned, which is five times the amount that can be released without exceeding 2°C of warming; and

WHEREAS, The Providence City Council has a moral obligation to ensure that no public money is being used to promote industries or practices that harm the health and well-being of the people of Providence; and

WHEREAS, The City of Providence believes that its investments should support a sustainable future where all people can live healthy lives without the negative impacts of a warming environment; and

WHEREAS, February 13th, 2015 was Global Divestment Day, a worldwide event encouraging governments, corporations, universities, and other institutions to divest from fossil fuel companies; and

WHEREAS, Providence is among 35 city governments, two county governments, 24 colleges and universities, 67 religious institutions, and 30 non-profit foundations worldwide to commit to divesting from fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, Divestment campaigns have successfully been used by governments, corporations, and universities to positively impact society, create social change, and undermine tyrannical regimes.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council does hereby request that the Board of Investment Commissioners provide the Council with a report within 90 days detailing its progress toward fossil fuel divestment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the members of the Board of Investment Commissioners, the City Treasurer, the Director of Finance, and the Mayor.

IN CITY COUNCIL

FEB 19 2015

READ AND PASSED

[Signature]
PRES.

[Signature]
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

[Signature]

Mayor

Date: 3/2/15