



## Fossil Free American University's Formal response to AU's decision to divest from fossil fuels

On the morning of Wednesday, April 23, 2020, American University announced its plan to divest from fossil fuels. AU has sold off all direct and indirect fossil fuel investments over the past five months. The objective of Fossil Free American University, a student-led campaign that started over seven years ago, has always been to ensure that American University divests its entire endowment from the harmful fossil fuel industry. We are elated that AU has taken this historic step in fighting against climate destruction, and we commend University administrators and the Board of Trustees on making this happen.

We want to emphasize our gratitude to the student body who have supported our campaign over so many years, and who recently turned out in such overwhelming support for the divestment referendum, with 93% of voters supporting divestment from fossil fuels. We want to thank the dedicated staff at DivestEd and our coalition of other DMV and Baltimore area campus divestment campaigns. We have all played a role in this victory today. This is not just the University's win; this is our collective win.

As students, our power lies within our universities to make change happen internally. Divestment has always been imperative not just because the fossil fuel industry is underperforming market averages, but because divestment is morally the right thing to do. Our University's slogan is "Creating Change-Makers for a Changing World", so it is important that Fossil Free AU emphasize that student power is what got us to this point, and student power is what will continue the movement beyond our campus.

It is important to acknowledge that this decision is by no means revolutionary. The data has shown for years that divesting would not have a negative impact on our portfolio. This is; however, a huge stride in the University's acknowledgment of its social and financial leverage and the necessity of divestment as a tool to actively fight climate change rather than fuel it.

We hope that AU will commit to collaborating with Fossil Free AU, the student body, and the community on the University's plans for reinvestment. We encourage the administration to make this transition just and equitable by allowing involvement from all members of the AU community in the process of reinvestment. Together we are one step closer to a future where American University is fossil free. Now, it is time to ensure a future where all voices are recognized to make the entire American University Community heard, seen, and respected.

### **Fossil Free American University**

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*\*\*It should be noted that the university released no information as to whether AU still has money invested in the carbon underground 200 in a separate, private investment portfolio; however, we encourage the Board to be transparent regarding this in order to officially claim the title of a 'fossil free university'.*