

## Press Release – For Immediate Release

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On Thursday, September 29th, Princeton University announced a commitment to [divest](#) and [dissociate](#) from 90 oil and gas companies, severing both endowment ties and research partnerships with parts of the fossil fuel industry. Princeton's commitment represents the first official adoption of a Fossil Free Research policy by a university. This historic achievement is the result of persistent student, faculty, and alumni organizing by the Divest Princeton campaign. It is also a testament to the growing power of the [Fossil Free Research](#) movement.

Princeton's announcement is proof that major research institutions can implement policy to protect academic integrity from fossil fuel industry capture. The announcement recognizes that genuine climate leadership must address the numerous ways in which universities continue to lend support for fossil fuel industry malfeasance beyond the endowment. As students, alumni, and faculty within the Fossil Free Research movement have [made clear](#), research partnerships with the fossil fuel industry raise an intractable conflict of interest that puts academic integrity, freedom, and credibility at risk. Just this month, new evidence has [surfaced](#) of oil and gas giants' concerted efforts to downplay the climate crisis and greenwash their companies.

Internal memos and emails from oil and gas companies have [exposed](#) fossil fuel companies' disregard for stated commitments to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, with one email from a Shell employee specifically stating that this pledge "has nothing to do with our business plans." Achieving a net-zero emissions energy sector by 2050 is crucial for averting severe planetary warming and requires an immediate cessation of investment in new fossil fuel supply projects, according to the [International Energy Agency](#). In complete contradiction of this scientific reality, reporting by The Guardian has [revealed](#) that the dozen biggest oil companies are on track to spend \$103 million daily from now until 2030 exploiting new oil and gas fields.

The list of companies from which Princeton will divest and dissociate includes two of these twelve companies, TotalEnergies and ExxonMobil, along with other industry giants such as Syncrude Canada. The university has had a particularly longstanding relationship with ExxonMobil, involving the receipt of over [\\$7.9 million](#) for climate and energy research in the last 6 years alone, despite the company's infamous [record](#) of undermining climate policy.

"Fossil Free Research is a necessary step in transforming universities into institutions of climate justice as well as climate action," said Chelsey Gilchrist, an organizer with Fossil Free Research. "Amid the devastation of historic floods in Pakistan, hurricanes Fiona and Ian, and innumerable other examples of escalating climate catastrophe, it is imperative that our knowledge of climate solutions be free from undue and toxic fossil fuel industry influence, which is putting so many lives on the line."

Efforts to secure Fossil Free Research are accelerating across the US, UK, and Canada. Right now, faculty members at the [University of Cambridge](#) and the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health are preparing to vote to establish fossil-free research

policies. Yesterday, members of the Stanford community marched with the Coalition for a True School of Sustainability to demand the new Doerr School of Sustainability reject fossil fuel industry money. Today, George Washington University students with Sunrise GW will hold a march calling on the university administration to cut ties with the Koch and Exxon-funded Regulatory Studies Center.

Princeton's establishment of a new fund to support energy research sets another precedent. This supports the conviction of Fossil Free Research activists, as further evidenced by a recent \$1.1 billion gift to the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability and a \$200 million gift to Harvard's Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability, that elite universities do not need to rely on Big Oil to fund climate research.

Campaigners recognize that Princeton can and must do more. Its divestment and disassociation commitments must be comprehensive, which means rejecting financial relationships with all companies whose core business model revolves around fossil fuel extraction and production, such as Chevron, BP, and Shell. It also includes refusing climate research funds from groups that aid and abet these companies' efforts to mislead the public about the harms of their products or otherwise oppose climate science and justice, such as the Charles Koch Foundation. As they continue fueling the climate crisis, these companies and groups should not have the privilege of associating with universities' credible name brands or having any role in the climate research such universities produce. This is a moment for Princeton and its peer institutions to demonstrate their potential for climate leadership and implement a robust Fossil Free Research policy.

"The university's failure to dissociate from other industry giants including BP means that Princeton remains vulnerable to the perverse influence of fossil fuel companies, particularly in its climate research projects like the [Carbon Mitigation Initiative](#)," said Aaron Serianni, Co-Coordinator of Divest Princeton. "We look forward to building on this momentum toward a truly fossil free Princeton and pushing all of Princeton's peer institutions to similarly step up to this critical moment."

More information about Fossil Free Research can be found at [fossilfreeresearch.com](http://fossilfreeresearch.com) and campaign updates are available on Twitter (@FosFreeResearch). Press and general inquiries about the action should go to [fossilfreeresearch@gmail.com](mailto:fossilfreeresearch@gmail.com)

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