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New York State Comptroller misses the mark by only divesting \$25m of \$500 million from Exxon, neglects divesting from other Oil & Gas majors

Commits to ban new investments in fossil fuel exposed private equity, increase climate solutions investments to \$40 billion

*New York, NY – Today, [following the hottest year on record](#), New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, sole custodian of the \$285 billion NYS Common Retirement Fund (“Fund”), [announced a package](#) of fossil fuel divestment and climate action measures.

[DivestNY](#), the coalition that over the last decade has led the effort to divest the major public pension funds in New York from fossil fuels, expressed extreme disappointment in the recent announcement by State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli to divest only \$26.8 million of its more than \$500 million holdings in ExxonMobil and seven other integrated fossil fuel companies. Last year, DiNapoli reported that the Fund had nearly [\\$5 billion](#) still invested in fossil fuels.

“New Yorkers demand full divestment from Exxon and the other oil and gas majors – those most responsible for the climate crisis – across all of the Fund’s active and passive portfolios. The future of our climate and the hard earned pension dollars of the fund members can’t be risked with continued investments in fossil fuels.” said **Ruth Foster with the [DivestNY coalition](#)**.

Disturbingly, DiNapoli determined that other major oil and gas companies such as BP, Chevron, Occidental, Petrobras, Shell, and Saudi Aramco satisfy his opaque minimum standards for evaluating companies on their ability transitioning to a renewable energy economy, despite none having credible plans to do so.

[ExxonMobil is infamous as the lead denier of climate change](#), proving time and time again with its continued delay, denial, and greenwashing against life- and climate-saving policies, regulations, and legislation. In a latest example of Exxon’s climate crimes, the corporation [launched](#) a lawsuit against organizations and institutional shareholders for filing a climate-related resolution.

Today’s announcement did include a commitment to ban new investments in private equity funds investing in fossil fuel extraction and production, the first state pension fund in the US to do so, alongside a commitment to double investments in climate solutions to from \$20 billion to \$40 billion by 2035.

“New York State is taking a stride forward to cut ties with the most recalcitrant fossil fuel company: Exxon. While the best outcome for pensioners and the

planet is full divestment from Big Oil, this acknowledges that Exxon is a failing company and divestment is a winning strategy. Twinning this with a real limit on new investments in fossil fuel exposed private equity funds and a boost to climate solutions investments reinforces where we are headed - a fossil free world. Comptroller DiNapoli must do more in line with the urgency of the moment,” said **Amy Gray, Associate Director of Climate Finance with [Stand.earth](#) and coordinator of the [Climate Safe Pensions Network](#).**

The DivestNY and 350NYC coalition has asked for a direct meeting with Comptroller DiNapoli to discuss his proposed investment approach and strategies, with the goal of achieving full transparency and accountability. New Yorkers are proposing a public hearing to obtain broad-based input.

In late [2020](#), following over a decade of campaigning by the DivestNY coalition, the Comptroller committed to achieve net zero by 2040 and began a novel process of systematically evaluating the Fund’s nearly \$5 billion in fossil fuel holdings. Widely supported divestment legislation was retracted by Senator Liz Krueger at the time as a result. The Comptroller’s reviews, including this most [recent review of two dozen oil and gas majors](#), evaluate companies on transition readiness (or lack thereof) to inform the pension financial risk analysis of the companies. To date, the fund has put 50 coal, oil sands, and shale oil and gas companies on restriction lists, divesting nearly \$300 million from those listed.

New Yorkers underscore that the Comptroller’s own reviews, as well as external research, affirm that *full* fossil fuel divestment is necessary for DiNapoli to meet fiduciary duty. This includes setting stricter standards for future reviews, as no fossil fuel company has a credible transition plan or strategy for measurable changes in their business models for decreasing overall Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions. DiNapoli must take an intentional and ‘aligned-with-the-times’ approach to passive index investing and move to existing and more stable fossil free, low carbon indices that guarantee similar or better returns for pensioners.

In contrast, three New York City funds with assets totaling more than \$193 billion have [fully divested](#) from fossil fuels (shedding \$3+ billion in holdings) and committed to reach [\\$50 billion](#) in climate solutions investments by 2035. Just last week, the massive Dutch pension fund PFZW, with assets over \$265 billion, [announced](#) full divestment from all but seven of fossil fuel company holdings, dropping oil and gas majors like Exxon, Shell, BP, Total and 300 more, totalling more than \$3 billion. Many of these companies remain in New York State’s Fund.

To date, over 1610 institutions representing more than \$40.63 trillion in assets have committed to some level of fossil fuel divestment, according to the [Global Fossil Fuel Divestments Database](#).

QUOTE SHEET:

“The need to transition away from fossil fuels is urgent. People are already suffering and dying as a result of the climate crisis. Profiting from products that cause environmental damage and human suffering is morally wrong. The World Council of

Churches has spoken of the 'the moral imperative of fossil fuel divestment.' We need to divest now. Later will be too late." **Rev. John Paarlberg, NY State Council of Churches Executive Committee**

"My wife and I receive a pension from the Common Retirement Fund. For our own personal funds, we made a decision more than 4 decades ago to avoid investments that cause harm to the environment and to people. Investing in fossil fuels is probably the greatest danger that is posed to life on the planet. In addition, it is also a bad financial investment. With extreme weather already rampaging across the planet, we need all governments to take a firm stand against the continued use of fossil fuels," said **Mark Dunlea, who helped initiate the call with 350NYC nearly a decade ago to divest from the state's various public pension funds.**

"I joined Divest NY shortly after the 2016 election, eager to help pass the Fossil Fuel Divestment Act which would require the CRF to Divest from fossil fuels. I participated in many lobby days. To me, the Comptroller had been a Climate Champion in the Assembly... and the Climate clock was ticking. I remember when the Comptroller agreed to divest from all levels of fossil fuels and promised a transparent and robust process in his negotiated settlement with the Legislature. I remember how the Comptroller continued to evaluate his portfolio as it was negotiated. As a retiree, I find it hard to believe that Big Oil appears to have "sidestepped" the same protocol. Why do they, of all corporations, deserve a break? For pensioners now, and particularly future pensioners, the Comptroller is compromising his agreement, and that is very unlike the Comptroller, as I came to know him." **Miriam Hoffman, CRF Pensioner**

"On September 17th, 75,000 people, many of whom youth and pensioners took to the streets of Manhattan calling for, as science, as our state climate law, and as our international systems necessitate, an end to the fossil fuel era. From orange skies to flooded schools, we continue to see the effects of our continued investments in fossil fuels, something, here in New York, our pension funds are a large part of. Comptroller Di'Napoli must take a further step and stop funding our generation's destruction and divest the NYS Common Retirement Fund from all fossil fuels." **Keanu Arpels-Josiah, 18 years old Policy Co-Lead, Fridays For Future NYC**

"The Common Retirement Fund conducted a serious internal review and concluded that Exxon, the worst villain in the climate story, is a risk to the Fund because it does not have an adequate transition plan. According to the protocols the Comptroller created, this should mean that the CRF will divest from Exxon. But today the Comptroller announces that the Fund will only divest from a small portion of its Exxon holdings. Why? Because full divestment from Exxon would create a "tracking error" in the fund's passive investment strategy. In other words, while other companies that failed their reviews have gotten divested, Exxon will not because it is too big to divest. The Comptroller should be embarrassed, and the public should reject this decision for its hypocrisy and short-sightedness." **Jordan Dale of Divest New York**

"The New York State Comptroller, trying to please everyone, has pleased no one. Third Act Elders, 75,000 strong, are laser-focused on protecting our grandchildren

from the climate catastrophe. People like Tom DiNapoli need to be our ally—or need to get out of our way!” **Sheldon Pollock, Third Act NYC**

“As a recipient of the NYS Common Retirement Fund I have been anticipating Comptroller DiNapoli’s announcement regarding divestment of the fund from oil and gas investments. I am deeply dismayed that the Comptroller has stepped back from climate leadership by only divesting a very small percentage of holdings in Exxon and nothing from the other large oil and gas companies. I do not want my retirement funds to continue to prop up the horribly destructive fossil fuel companies. CRF members and all New Yorkers deserve a public explanation by the Comptroller’s office regarding his divestment process. So much more should have been done.” **Mona Perrotti, CRF member, and co-chair of Indivisible Mohawk Valley Climate Crisis Working Group**

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* Unceded, stolen territories of the Indigenous Peoples including Mohican, Wappinger, Schaghticoke, Lenape, Munsee Lenape, and more

Companies added to the restricted list include ExxonMobil, Delek, Dana Gas, Guanghui, Echo Energy, Oil and Natural Gas Co. Ltd, IOG, Unit Corporation.

To view this release online, visit: <https://climatesafepensions.org/release-divest-ny-exxon-2024/>

Link to Comptrollers announcement:
<https://www.osc.ny.gov/press/releases/2024/02/ny-common-retirement-fund-announces-new-measures-protect-state-pension-fund-climate-risk-and-invest>

Statement from Sen Krueger live - <https://mailchi.mp/1c2726d3065e/exxon-divestment?e=4fc0b2e708>