

Saturday Oct 15th 2022

Theresa Maldonado
Vice President for Research and Innovation
UC Office of the President

RE: Please ensure that the \$100 million climate research allocation does not go towards partnerships between UC researchers and the fossil fuel industry / private utilities.

Dear Dr Maldonado and President Drake,

We write regarding the University of California's new \$100 million program for climate research. While we expect that many grant proposals will involve partnerships with communities and state agencies, the funding call also referred to partnerships with industry.

Our concern is that, as funds are allocated, it is highly likely that some UC researchers will leverage partnerships with the fossil fuel industry and the related private utility companies. This is problematic because the fossil fuel industry and private utilities such as PG&E and SDG&E have a long and well documented history of employing the so-called "tobacco strategy" in their funding relationships. Like the tobacco industry, they have sought to downplay the risk of their products, advocated for the continued burning of fossil fuels for energy, and they have fought the transition to renewable energy using greenwashing tactics and other well documented strategies of delay and obfuscation, including buying influence in academia.ⁱ Clearly, these organizations have lost their social license to attempt to claim to be a part of the solution to the problem that they willfully continue to create. Thankfully, the UC has already started cutting financial ties with the fossil fuel industry by divesting its pension and retirement systems from publicly traded companies that extract fossil fuels or own fossil fuel reserves.

In an extension of these initiatives, we call on you to make it clear that fossil fuel and private utility partners are ineligible to participate in this initiative.

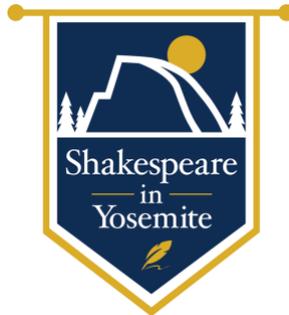
We point to a worldwide movement of faculty and students calling for a dissociation between climate research and fossil fuel funding.ⁱⁱ More than 750 prominent academics recently signed Fossil Free Research's letter asking for such a disassociation. Princeton University recently enacted a ban on partnering with 90 fossil fuel companies. Brown University and Cambridge University are exploring similar measures. Dozens of articles in mainstream media are making this argument, pointing out the irony of universities' climate pledges while also inviting influence from the agents of climate delay.

UC should be a leader in this movement. One wonderful consequence of this UC climate funding initiative is that it provides a funding source that is independent of fossil fuel and private utility company influence. It could thus free some researchers from dependence on this money. To partner with these entities would tarnish this laudable initiative and also be a lost opportunity

to free ourselves from their influence. We owe it to the public who are ultimately financing this initiative to choose our partnerships wisely.

Sincerely,

Green New Deal at UC San Diego
Campus Climate Change Committee - Academic Senate UC San Diego
Climate Action Campaign - San Diego and Orange County
SanDiego350.org
Fossil Free UC Davis
Climate Action Now UC Los Angeles
Green Campus Action Plan – UC Riverside
Marya Zlatnik, MD, MMD, Chair UC San Francisco SUST
UC Santa Cruz Climate Coalition
Santa Barbara Sunrise Movement
Shakespeare in Yosemite
Protect Our Communities Foundation



Protect Our Communities
Foundation



SAN DIEGO 350
CLIMATE ACTION

ⁱ <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ac8ab3>
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597619879191>
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-consensus-97-per-cent/2017/mar/13/the-fossil-fuel-industrys-invisible-colonization-of-academia>

ⁱⁱ <https://fossilfreeresearch.com/letter/>
<https://fossilfreeresearch.com/media/>
<https://www.princeton.edu/news/2022/09/29/princeton-dissociates-segments-fossil-fuel-industry>