



# Divestment for a Sustainable Future

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## ☀ Call to Action

To get involved with one of the many educational institutes, non-profit organizations, and community programs taking on fossil fuel consumption through divestment campaigns, please visit [divested.betterfutureproject.org](http://divested.betterfutureproject.org).

## ☀ Values

- Determination
- Cooperation
- Leadership
- Social Justice
- Environmentalism

## ☀ Lessons Learned

**You are the one who decides how to live your life.** Make wise decisions that take the future and well-being of the planet into consideration.

**Be resilient, be brave, be creative, and be fierce!**

**Looking at problems from a different perspective can help you find innovative solutions.**

**A successful community is built on the wisdom of multiple generations.**  
Strength comes from diversity.

**During her first year at UCLA, Alyssa Lee became obsessed with the problem of plastic pollution.**

“What really got me on the case was a speech by Van Jones called “Plastic Pollution is a Social Justice Issue.” That was the first time I ever heard the term environmental justice. And it was the first time I heard environmental issues related to issues of class and race.” The more she came to understand the destructive actions of powerful institutions, the bigger the issues she began to focus on. “And what bigger issue does the environmental community face than fossil fuels?” So she started the Fossil Free UCLA divestment campaign.

Alyssa’s divestment movement targeted universities, aiming to prompt them to remove their investments from fossil fuel companies. She went on to her work supporting youth activists with the Better Future Project, Divest Ed, and the Future Coalition.

## ☀ Language Arts

**Research the most common practices for disposing of plastic waste in the U.S.** Create a presentation in which you focus on “Sacrifice Zones.” Explain what they are, where they are located, the environmental impact of this practice, the consequences for public health in regions where they are present, and which populations are most affected by their existence. End your presentation with a call to action: What can be done to eliminate this practice, or at least minimize it?

**Write an argumentative essay in which you argue for divesting from fossil fuels.** Support your argument with facts (based on research). You should also address at least one counterargument.

**After watching this [tutorial](#)<sup>1</sup>, create an animated presentation in which you explain the divestiture movement:** its

origins, its importance in the climate change movement, its current state, and its goals for the future.

**Using the platform of your choice, create a petition to make sustainability education available to the public in your area.** Focus not only on the dangers created by the lack of education, but on the benefits that this type of education can bring to your community.

## STEM Activities

**Select a college or university that you are interested in attending and find out whether they invest in or profit from fossil fuel companies.** Based on your findings, how are their investments contributing to environmental damage and/or impacting human health? What would be the effects if they decided to stop investing in fossil fuels? What are some alternatives they could turn to?

**Research the general processes of plastic production, use, and disposal, and identify one way that it negatively affects humans (toxins in seafood, water pollution, toxins in commercial packaging, etc.).** Design a solution to help mitigate this issue.

**Using this [activity guide](#)<sup>2</sup>, research and test several different microplastics filtering methods** on commercial products brought from home, and design an experiment to identify the impact of microplastics on human health.

**Record the purchases you make over the course of a week.** Assess the ecological impact of your purchases, or look at the companies you bought from and assess their ecological footprint. What is the total ecological impact of your purchases?

## Sustainability Innovations

**There are hundreds of fossil fuel divestment campaigns targeted at universities, pension funds, and other organizations.** [Go Fossil Free](#)<sup>3</sup> is a project of 350.org that serves as a host to start a local campaign or participate in current fossil fuel divestment campaigns. There are currently 667 campaigns in the U.S., 230 in Europe, and several others across the globe.

**As the director of [Divest Ed](#)<sup>4</sup>, Alyssa assisted in focusing the efforts of fossil fuel divestment campaigns and creating increased collaboration between colleges.** What other types of divestments are occurring based on climate change and moral issues?

**Private prison reform has also become a recent focus of many activists and community leaders.** [Families for Freedom](#)<sup>5</sup> is an organization that addresses the correlation between undignified immigration and the for-profit prison industry. Research the private prison industry: highlight areas of strength and areas that need improvement.

## Sustainability Career Pathways

**Green Investor.** With billions of dollars being invested, where that money goes shapes the future of business. Do we invest in oil companies or renewable energy companies? In downtown real estate or suburban malls? Working with a socially responsible investment firm, or with a university, city, or foundation as an asset manager, can be a great way to help develop the sustainable business sector. Here is a brief [introduction](#)<sup>6</sup> to the many jobs in the field.

**Divestment Campaigner.** Around the world, students and activists are pushing for divesting from fossil fuels. There are also many focused on ensuring that major banks and international financial institutions like the World Bank are investing money in ways that

help people and the planet. Through organizations like [DivestEd](#)<sup>2</sup> and the [Bank Information Center](#)<sup>3</sup> there are ways to make a living fighting this important fight.

**Renewable Energy Advocate.** Renewable energy is a rapidly growing field: it will make up an ever-larger percentage of the world's energy mix in decades to come. Becoming part of a renewable energy company--as a manager, [salesperson](#)<sup>9</sup>, or support staff--is a way you can help with this transition. Or, by joining one of the many nonprofit organizations that are promoting or lobbying for the transition to renewable energy, you can help draw attention and investments to this worthy cause.

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1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoyE48W3RUY>

2 <https://www.teachengineering.org/lessons/view/uok-2116-plastisphere-microplastics-pollution-wastewater-treatment>

3 [https://campaigns.gofossilfree.org/?\\_ga=2.246024774.372712381.1619415086-897762842.1619415085](https://campaigns.gofossilfree.org/?_ga=2.246024774.372712381.1619415086-897762842.1619415085)

4 [https://divested.betterfutureproject.org/forms/user\\_sessions/new](https://divested.betterfutureproject.org/forms/user_sessions/new)

5 <https://familiesforfreedom.org/>

6 [http://finanzasostenibile.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/13-04-2017\\_FBicciato\\_ProfessioniSRI\\_SdR.pdf](http://finanzasostenibile.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/13-04-2017_FBicciato_ProfessioniSRI_SdR.pdf)

7 [https://divested.betterfutureproject.org/forms/user\\_sessions/new](https://divested.betterfutureproject.org/forms/user_sessions/new)

8 <https://bankinformationcenter.org/>

9 <https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/cleantech-careers-solar-sales-at-a-residential-installer>

