



PHYSICIANS FOR
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER

548 Market Street, #90725 | San Francisco, CA 94104-5401

November 15, 2021

Dear Board of CALPERS,

My name is **Dr. Robert M. Gould**, writing from my home in San Francisco. After working as a Pathologist for over 30 years at Kaiser Hospital in San Jose, since 2012 I've been an Associate Adjunct Professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at the UCSF School of Medicine, working within our Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment.

I'm writing you today as past-President and current member of the **National Board of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)**, and for the **San Francisco Bay Chapter of PSR** for which I've been President for over 30 years. Representing thousands of health professionals, we speak for the health of our patients and communities. **As such, PSR calls for CALPERS to completely divest from coal and other fossil fuels, and instead invest its vast financial holdings in truly safe, renewable and sustainable, non-nuclear energy portfolios that could provide a prosperous future for its clients, while averting the most catastrophic public and environmental health consequences of global warming that threaten all human civilization.**

The recently released assessment by the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** is unequivocal in its call for urgent action to ensure an energy efficient and fossil free future. This call was recently reinforced by the unprecedented coordinated response of numerous prominent medical and health professional societies, with many journals such as the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine calling for emergency action on our climate crisis.

This call to action flows from the widespread understanding within the broad health professional community about the rapidly unfolding impacts of global warming that gravely threaten our health: sea-level rise with flooding and contamination of water systems; extreme weather events such as hurricanes that have devastated many areas in the United States, often in association with leakage of environmental toxicants from refineries and other petrochemical facilities; horrific wildfires such as we've witnessed in California over the past few years; the anticipated spread of new vectors and their infectious agents with potential epidemics beyond what we've experienced with COVID. All with disproportionate impacts on overburdened communities largely poor and of color.

These intersecting issues have, over our last decade, led major health organizations such as the American Medical Association, American Nurses Association and American Public Health Association to issue strong policy statements on global warming. These have been joined by resolutions from numerous health specialty societies including the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians, and many other members of the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health.

While working to green our own healthcare institutions, health professionals are also increasingly supporting divestment campaigns relevant to our call for CALPERS to completely divest from coal and other fossil fuels. In June 2018 the AMA Board of Trustees passed an official policy calling on the "AMA



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to protect human health from the effects of climate change by ending its investments in fossil fuel companies.”

As such, the AMA currently supports “efforts of physicians and other health professional associations to proceed with divestment, including to create policy analyses, support continuing medical education, and to inform our patients, the public, legislators and government policy makers.” Consistent with this, within the last few our UCSF Division of the Academic Senate overwhelmingly passed a resolution urging the UC Board of Regents to divest from the 200 publicly traded fossil fuel companies with the greatest carbon reserves.

I’ll close my comments with a personal note: at stake for me and my family is that our two grandsons can have a future to thrive in. **So, along with our community of physicians and other health professionals, I strongly urge CALPERS to speedily divest from coal and other fossil fuels, and set an example for California and the rest of the world to ensure we all have a planet that will be healthful and habitable for generations to come.**

Sincerely,

Robert M. Gould, MD

President, San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility