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Stanford University Says It Will Divest From Coal Companies

By Michael McDonald - May 6, 2014

[Stanford University](#) said it will stop investing in coal companies in response to a student-led campaign aimed at curbing [climate change](#).

The university's board of trustees voted today to no longer make direct investments in publicly traded companies that mine coal for energy generation. The vote followed the recommendation of a panel including students, faculty, staff and alumni that has been studying the impact of fossil-fuel companies for several months, Stanford said.

"Moving away from coal in the investment context is a small but constructive step while work continues at Stanford and elsewhere to develop broadly viable sustainable energy solutions for the future," [John Hennessy](#), Stanford's president, said in a statement.

Stanford has one of the world's largest university endowments, valued at \$18.7 billion as of Aug. 31. It won't disclose the value of its existing investments in coal, which will be sold, said Lisa Lapin, a spokeswoman for the university, which is located near Palo Alto, [California](#).

A student-led group had asked Stanford to divest from 200 of the largest fossil-fuel companies, which led to the decision to sell investments in coal, Lapin said. The university declined to divest from oil and gas companies, she said.

"Stanford's commitment to coal divestment is a major victory for the climate movement and for our generation," the student-led group Fossil Free Stanford said in the university's statement.

While a divestment movement has spread to hundreds of campuses across the U.S. in the past two years, few schools have altered their investment policies. [Harvard University](#), the world's richest university, has declined repeated calls by both students and faculty to sell its holdings of fossil-fuel companies. [Brown University](#) also declined to divest from coal companies after a student campaign.

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