

House Finance

HB21-1246 PERA Divestment From Fossil Fuel Companies

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Dolores Campos-Herzfeld</p> <p>For</p> <p>Self</p>	<p>Madam Chair Herod and members of the House Finance Committee,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 21-1246. My name is Dolores Campos-Herzfeld, and I urge you to vote YES on HB 21-1246. As a PERA member, I do not want my retirement savings to be invested in fossil fuel companies that are directly destroying the Earth that my two children will inherit. Both of my children are deeply afraid of the future of the planet due to climate change, and I am worried for them, and their future children, if we do not rapidly and dramatically change the way that we invest our public funds. I am also worried about the financial risk of fossil fuel investments. I know that fossil fuel companies are declaring bankruptcy at an alarming rate, and their profits will only continue to plummet as we make the necessary move towards sustainable and renewable energy alternatives. Colorado has been a national leader in so many ways, so it only makes sense that we would be leaders in investing in a sustainable and renewable future, to create a planet where our children and grandchildren can thrive. I know many other PERA members who feel the same way, and who want the PERA board to make ethical investments with our retirement savings. Again, I urge you to vote YES on HB 21-1246. Thank you for considering my testimony today.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Dolores Campos-Herzfeld</p>
<p>Duane Harris</p> <p>Against</p> <p>Self</p>	<p>To whom it may concern, I'm writing you regarding this piece of legislation being put forth known as HB-21-1246. I am absolutely opposed to it!! This is nothing more than a political move by democrats to obtain the ability of "FORCED COMPLIANCE" and by doing so, dictate all future investments by PERA. It goes against PERA's very core. And if this passes, what will they dictate next? The kind and make of automobile I drive? The restaurant I'm allowed to frequent? What clothing I may wear? This socialist, radical progressive agenda, was popular with Nazi Germany too! It endangers PERA's ability to make constructive and lasting investments for retirees.</p>

House Finance

	<p>And while "Green Energy" itself may be a future possibility, its the wrong fit at the wrong time, and this asinine approach of endangering my pension by "FORCED COMPLIANCE" is a sure way to sour me on "Green Energy" I strongly urge you to vote NO on HB-1246, and any future legislation that is bent with this same stigma. Thank you for your time,</p>
<p>Brendan Havner For Self</p>	<p>Madam Chair Bird, members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 21-1246. My name is Brendan Havner. I urge you to vote YES on HB 21-1246, because we need to divest and ultimately abolish fossil fuels for the sake of all humanity and Earth's organisms.</p> <p>As a community member that is directly impacted by the fossil fuel companies that PERA is invested in, I feel obligated to take any opportunity to stop the fossil fuel industry in its tracks. Here in Colorado, we are already seeing the effects of climate change first-hand, especially with increased forest fires and air pollution. The impacts of continued fossil fuel extraction can be seen around the world, even in the Amazon rainforest for example. As those with the power to stop this obsolete fuel source, the time to act is now.</p> <p>To reiterate, please vote YES on HB 21-1246, and thank you all for considering my testimony.</p>
<p>Ron Sommers Against Self</p>	<p>Must we all go off the deep end with regards to liberal ideology? There is NO WAY you can replace the amount of energy in a barrel of oil by going 'alternative'. Texas proved that lesson. Divesting from 'fossil fuels' is dumb. It's costly and PERA is having 'difficulty' making ends meet as it is.</p> <p>You would better serve your people by buying up farm land or whole housing developments - like Bill Gates did - but you'll still need oil to develop them!</p> <p>You should also consider investing in physical gold and silver as insurance. NOT paper derivatives, but the actual metal. 15% of the portfolio would suffice. It has NO counter-party risk. If the dollar fails as reserve currency - and it certainly appears it is heading in that direction - your clients will be covered. Biden's \$4 trillion+ is going to have an inflationary effect like no other.</p> <p>This doesn't include the missing \$21 Trillion Catherine Austin Fitts recently uncovered. https://www.forbes.com/sites/kotlikoff/2018/07/21/is-our-government-intentionally-hiding-21-trillion-in-spending/?sh=4dd7bdbd4a73</p>

House Finance

<p>Ann Jordan For Self</p>	<p>I support this bill requiring PERA to divest of fossil fuels. This move is one tool in our toolbox for getting fossil fuel use to zero. It is the right thing to do to protect the health and safety of all workers who depend on PERA for their retirement. Studies show it will not damage the return on PERA investments. The fossil fuel industry has entered a death spiral and it is only the members of the fossil fuel industry who refuse to see it. I have divested from the fossil fuel industry in my personal investments and am glad I did.</p> <p>I support this bill and I ask the committee to do so as well.</p>
<p>Kimberly Miller For Self</p>	<p>Madam Chair Bird and House Finance Committee,</p> <p>My name is Kim Miller. I am asking that you vote Yes on HB21-1246. I worked as an audiologist in the schools of Colorado for 32 years. My PERA retirement is a very important part of my financial security. I have divested my private funds from fossil fuels because I am concerned about the harm the industry is doing to our air and our climate. As a native of Colorado, I am saddened by the decreased air quality, more intense and frequent fires, beetle kill, and floods that are made worse by climate change. I had a cough that lasted for four months and required me to use an inhaler for the first time in my life when Fort Collins was shrouded in smoke from the Cameron Peak Fire last summer and fall. It is my wish that my hard earned money not be invested in an industry that is in decline, at risk of losing money, and harmful to our state when other investments could do just as well. I put my faith in the PERA system to take good care of my investments, and so I hope that you will vote YES on HB21-1246.</p>
<p>Michael MILLER Against Self</p>	<p>As a concerned citizen and retired educator with PERA I am against HB 21-1246 It is not good policy to restrict PERA, who is also against this bill by limiting their ability to make investment choices. Also this bill does nothing for our economy in Colorado and does not support the energy industry which is important to jobs, our energy and the economy. Please vote this HB 21 1246 down in your committee. Thank you.</p> <p>Sincerely Michael Miller</p>
<p>Morgan Anker For Self</p>	<p>Dear Madam Chair Herod and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 21-1246 PERA Divestment. My name is Morgan Anker, and I urge you to vote YES on HB21-1246.</p> <p>I grew up in LA where we never had snow days, but we had ash days, where charred white flecks fell from the sky like dystopian snow flakes. I was haunted by those memories this past summer when Colorado experienced record-breaking fires, which are directly tied to the desertification of Colorado. If we act now, we can begin to stabilize our</p>

	<p>climate and ensure breathable air, clean water, and the health and safety of our communities.</p> <p>We have a moral imperative to reject the interests of coal, oil, and gas that harm our frontline communities first and worst. Their polluting practices directly cause higher rates of asthma, cancer, and heart and lung complications for nearby residents. Attempting to profit from investments in companies whose gains depend on poisoning our air, water, and bodies puts tainted money into the hands of Colorado Public Employees.</p> <p>The state has fiduciary responsibilities to these public employees, and divesting is the correct financial decision. A recent study conducted by Corporate Knights estimates that PERA is valued at least \$1.77 billion less than it would have been had it divested from fossil fuels in 2009 and redistributed those funds across the rest of the portfolio. Coal, once the titan of the U.S. economy, no longer has even one representative in the S&P 500. Statistics show that over the next 35 years, the coal industry can expect to see annual returns reduced by 26% to 82%. Similarly experts project that oil and utilities are projected to see expected median returns fall by 38% and 60% respectively over the same time frame. Academic research suggests that divestment movements can have significant impact on companies through changes in market norms, so PERA's divestment from fossil fuels can help speed our transition to a clean energy future. Colorado would also join the company of 144 pension funds worldwide - including the New York City pension funds - and 1,100 institutions that have committed to fully or partially divest from fossil fuels.</p> <p>As we enter a post-COVID economy, we want to ensure that we join the right side of history by taking care of Coloradans' health and economic security, while also ushering in the end of the fossil fuel era.</p>
<p>Rich Griffin Against Self</p>	<p>Although I agree with the need to eliminate greenhouse gas emission, this divestment strategy is not the way to do it.</p> <p>Putting the screws to fossil fuel companies will not stop us from driving our cars or heating our homes. It would, however, increase our cost as we rely on places like Saudi Arabia for our fossil fuel supply as American companies can no longer provide the fuel. The largest companies, such as Exxon-Mobil, will survive such an attack and will become even more profitable because of the higher prices.</p> <p>While Increasing fuel cost will accelerate the development of alternatives, why send our money to Saudi Arabia in the process? A better answer is the carbon fee and dividend bill introduced in Congress. This bill would place a fee on fossil fuels in proportion to the amount of CO2 that would be emitted when burnt and return all the revenues back to the people in the form of a dividend. The resulting higher fuel prices would accelerate the move to alternative energy sources. We now have a President and a</p>

House Finance

	<p>Congressional majority that recognize the need to combat climate change. Give them a chance to act.</p> <p>Finally, the divestiture timetable incorporated into HB-21-1246 could force selling of assets at an inopportune time resulting in loses. If such divestment laws force many retirement institutions across the country to sell fossil fuel stock at the same time, prices will drop and retirement institutions will lose a lot of money complying with the laws.</p>
<p>Stephanie Vigil</p> <p>For</p> <p>Self</p>	<p>Madam Chair and members of the House Finance Committee:</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you regarding HB21-1246. My name is Stephanie Vigil, I'm a 15-year resident of Colorado Springs, and I'm writing to urge you to vote yes on divesting PERA from fossil fuels. Colorado is moving away from fossil based fuel sources in our own energy economy, and as we become leaders in that regard, we need to also move Colorado's money out of a diminishing source of revenue. One study even shows that PERA is already lower in value than it would be if we'd made this divestment in 2009. The next best time to do it, is now.</p> <p>This is important to me because I am a human animal. I breathe air, drink water, eat food, and require shelter. Like other hominids who have come before me, my fellow human animals and I are more likely to continue to thrive in the climate that we are currently destabilizing. Anything we can do to divorce our shared future from fossil fuel dependency is good for humans.</p> <p>I'm a proud Coloradan, and I cherish the connection to the natural world that I get to experience as a privilege of being here. It's an expression of love and patriotism to protect this beautiful space, and moving PERA dollars out of investments that thrive on environmental destruction is a good way for us to do so.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and attention, and please vote Yes on HB21-1246.</p>
<p>Deborah Fahrney</p> <p>Against</p> <p>Self</p>	<p>As a retired Personal Finance teacher, I only know a drop in the bucket about investing compared to the PERA professionals with financial expertise and experience, but something I do know and common sense tells us, is that MANDATING by timeline "What and When" to sell without considering the market is Not Wise. Be wise and vote NO on HB21-1246.</p>

House Finance

	<p>If fossil fuels are not a profitable investment, with research PERA will choose to divest at the right time. Remember PERA’s Board has stated, “It serves the singular purpose of ensuring the retirement security of Colorado’s current and former public servants.”</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Deborah Fahrney, Retired Teacher and Mel Fahrney, Retired Teacher/Coach</p>
<p>Hazel Gordon For Self</p>	<p>Madam Chair Bird, members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 21-1246.</p> <p>My name is Hazel Gordon, and I am writing on behalf of only myself.</p> <p>I urge you to vote YES on HB 21-1246, for economic, health and global reasons. As a pensioner of a government agency in another state and now residing in Colorado, I realize how important my pension is to my economic survival. I believe that PERA should invest in companies that are expanding and give a good return, not those that are declining in productivity and income, such as many in the fossil fuel industry. One of the prime examples of economic insecurity is Craig, Colorado, which had relied on its defunct coal industry to support many of its citizens.</p> <p>Now that the USA is in agreement with the Paris Climate Accord to set a world-wide effort to minimize carbon dioxide, methane and other aerosols that directly affect climate changes and warming, I feel that it is time for states to follow these guidelines as well. The health effects of these and more toxic atmospheric pollutants on Front Range and other cities, especially linked to fossil fuel burning in vehicles and in fossil fuel emissions from their production has been repeatedly documented. Air quality monitoring in Boulder County sites, for example, has often shown non-compliant emissions that are implied from the timing of and proximity to these mobile and stationary sources. Other stationary sources of such continuous emissions in the Denver area have been shown to impact low-income residents nearby and presumably to affect their respiratory health more than other residents further away.</p> <p>I urge you to join the movement of other governmental pension fund managers, such as that in New York City and many dozens of others that have divested their funds from companies that are related to fossil fuel use and production. Please vote Yes on HB 21-1246.</p> <p>I wish to thank the members of the House Finance Committee for considering my testimony.</p>

House Finance

	<p>Hazel Gordon arctostaph@gmail.com Zip code 80501</p>
<p>Michael Neil For Self</p>	<p>Hello Madam Chair Bird and Vice-Chair Snyder. Thank you for letting me submit testimony. Thank your, Rep. Sirota. I rise in strong support of HB21-1246. I am speaking on behalf of myself, although I was a member of DU Divest, the successful climate divestment movement at the University of Denver, where I attended graduate school. I would like to make two points.</p> <p>The first is to echo Rep. Sirota on the moral imperative and consequences of climate change, As we have seen in these past years, decreased snow pack and rain from climate change has contributed to wildfires the size, expense, and like of which we have not seen before in previous wildfire seasons.</p> <p>The second is to comment on fiscal impact. I am not a financial analyst, but I do know human behavior. It is often the case that human buying choices drive policy and that policies like divestment assure individuals that a product is acting ethically. With the passage of this bill, I firmly believe that our eco-conscious Colorado residents in civil service would be happier to choose PERA if such a choice is available.</p> <p>With that, I ask for a firm aye vote on HB21-1246.</p>

Madam Chair Bird, members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 21-1246.

My name is Tom Stumpf, and I reflect the attitude of numerous members of PERA. And, as a very pleased member of PERA, enjoying its generous benefits for the past eleven years of retirement, I am nonetheless concerned about the financial risk of maintaining fossil fuel companies in the PERA's investment portfolio.

As already noted, I am currently a very grateful member of the Colorado Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA). I recently contacted its officials to immediately and responsibly curb fossil fuel investments which are harming public health and fueling the climate crisis. The association needs to begin the essential process of divesting from fossil fuels and, simultaneously, to proactively plan for the energy transition to renewable energy.

While I am a profoundly appreciative beneficiary of PERA's program, our public money should not be invested in companies which are adversely impacting our public health and safety.

PERA manages the pensions of half a million current and former state employees, and is investing public money in problematic fossil fuel companies, such as Suncor and Extraction Oil and Gas, both under scrutiny for harming local communities through dangerous pollution violations.

Such companies financially helped by PERA are forcing a massive industry expansion all over Colorado. As a result, communities are experiencing dangerous consequences from this expansion of oil and gas drilling.

Climate change is not a distant issue; global warming is already here with one of Colorado's driest years on record, with much of the state in extreme drought. In addition, wildfires have collectively burned 175,000 acres of our lands.

PERA needs to make climate-safe investments immediately, especially since evidence is increasing that fossil fuels are bad investments, with bankruptcies of US oil and gas companies escalating dramatically in recent years. Colorado ranks the 5th highest state in the US for the number of bankruptcy filings by the oil and gas industry since 2015.

PERA must invest public funds in ways that are not only financially viable long-term, but also support the public good. HB 21-1246 will mandate that Colorado's Public Employee Retirement Association divest from fossil fuel investments over a five year period, beginning with coal divestment as a first step in the next one to two years.

Here is the rationale for this vital bill: The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined that in order to keep the increase in global average temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius, global greenhouse gas emissions must decline by 45% by 2030, and reach net zero by 2050. As such, Colorado has codified into law HB1261, Climate Action Plan to Reduce Pollution, with a goal of reducing 2025 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26%, 2030 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50%, and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90% of the levels of statewide greenhouse gas emissions that existed in 2005.

[HB21-1246 PERA Public Employees' Retirement Association Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies](#)

Monday, April 19, 2021

House Finance Committee

Laura Rizzo, SVP External Affairs, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

Opposition testimony

Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the committee, for the opportunity to provide this written testimony today. My name is Laura Rizzo and I am the senior vice president of external affairs for the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce. I am here today on behalf of the Chamber, our 3,000 members and their 400,000 employees to express opposition to House Bill 1246.

For us, this bill isn't about climate change. This bill is about the legislature overruling investment decisions made by PERA's team of financial experts and informed by PERA's own investors.

We recognize the many challenges PERA faces with its unfunded liability, and this bill challenges PERA further by taking investment choices out of the hands of PERA investment experts and putting them into the hands of the legislature. Regardless of the issue, we believe PERA should retain its ability to respond to the market and make investment decisions that best ensure its sustainability. PERA is also already actively engaged in soliciting feedback from investors about where investments are made. Similarly, in an effort to keep stakeholders informed of PERA's environmental, social and governance investing initiatives, the chief investment officer's office engages its Investment Stewardship group to publish an annual report outlining such investments.

Given this information, we ask that you join us in opposing HB 1246.

Written Testimony of Judy Lubow in support of HB21-1246

My name is Judy Lubow from Longmont. I am urging you to vote YES on HB 21-1246, the PERA fossil fuels divestment bill. The on-going climate change being created by the burning of fossil fuels will destroy our civilization unless it is controlled by determined human action. This divestment bill is one very important part of the mix of actions that will be necessary to reduce the dangerous use of climate-changing fossil fuels. In my opinion, it is a moral imperative to do this for the sake of future generations. In addition, it is also sound economics, because maintaining PERA's investment in fossil fuel companies is unreasonably risky to the value of PERA's portfolio, since the fossil fuel industry is on a downward economic spiral that shows no signs of abating.

Thank you for considering my testimony. Once again, I urge you to vote yes on HB 21-1246.

Judy Lubow 80504 judy123@indra.com

To the House Finance Committee: Testimony on HB 1246 on divestment of PERA investments in fossil fuels.

I retired as a Design Engineer from CDOT in 2003. I have actively followed PERA's progress and legislative changes since 1972. I am also very concerned about the Climate Crisis.

With that in mind, I fully support the opposition of the PERA Board to HB 1246. I agree that it would be ineffective and create unnecessary costs in time, energy, and money for the PERA fund. The bill itself talks about divesting only if it does not interfere with PERA's fiduciary responsibility. Presumably they have already exercised their responsibility to divest if it is a poor investment. I also assume they won't be buying coal companies while coal plants are shutting down or real estate on Miami Beach. I do think that natural gas is not going anywhere until we have nuclear power replacement. Although I have personally divested from fossil fuels, I think some investments may make sense in the short term.

This bill creates "make work" that is unnecessary and harmful.

A more useful focus would be to study how to fund the electric grid changes needed for electric vehicles and solar panels and how CDOT is funded as gasoline sales decrease.

Thanks For Your Attention,

Steve McCulloch

Madam Chair Bird, members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 21-1246.”

My name is Evan Freirich, and my Wife Janet Roberts a retired Teacher. I have been asked to speak here by Fossil Free PERA and Colorado 350.ORG

In my written comments are links to all the sources I cite.

My wife and I are PERA beneficiaries. For over 35 years we lived west of Boulder in an area subject to severe flooding and wildfires. We watched many of our longtime neighbors and friends lose their homes to the effects of climate change. Our neighbors and us have become increasingly anxious due to the extraordinary changes in our weather patterns due to climate change.

We live in a time of a Climate Emergency.

The effects of climate change are personal to us.

We feel powerless in knowing that the pension we funded and now benefit from is investing in the very industries that are harming us. It is a greedy gamble with our future.

PERA is invested in the same companies that are antithetical to state policy.

HB1261, the Climate Action Plan to Reduce Pollution, with a goal of reducing 2025 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26%, 2030 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50%, and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90% of the levels of statewide greenhouse gas emissions that existed in 2005.

Further The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined that in order to keep the increase in global average temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius, global greenhouse gas emissions must decline by 45% by 2030, and reach net zero by 2050. As such, Colorado has codified into law HB1261, Climate Action Plan to Reduce Pollution, with a goal of reducing 2025 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26%, 2030 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50%, and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90% of the levels of statewide greenhouse gas emissions that existed in 2005.

“

PERA is an enabler of the industries which are against state policy. PERA uses the clout of every

state employee and retiree to give credibility to investing in fossil fuels by labeling them “sound” investments.

While other pension and investment funds across the country have disinvested from fossil fuels, PERA has issued a formal statement fighting disinvestment and in other recent pieces have sought to greenwash their support for the fossil fuel industry by touting there investments in renewables.

<https://peraontheissues.com/recently-introduced-divestment-bill-would-affect-pera-investments/>

<https://peraontheissues.com/issue-spotlight-responsible-investing/>

They have also said that without guidance from the state legislature, they will not exercise their fiduciary duty to disinvest.

A recent study conducted by Corporate Knights estimates that PERA is valued at at least \$1.77 billion less than it would have been had it divested from fossil fuels in 2009 and redistributed those funds across the rest of the portfolio.

<https://world.350.org/colorado/files/2019/11/PERA-Exec-Summary.pdf?emci=c3abe8e4-df17-ea11-828b-2818784d6d68&emdi=7db7daaf-4518-ea11-828b-2818784d6d68&ceid=3589897>

If PERA is attempting to play the long game by holding these investments until the last possible moment, a negative outcome will be doubly offensive because of the nature of the industry and the well documented losses since 2009.

Colorado is a leader in addressing climate change and therefore so are its public employees. We are not the employees of the fossil fuel giants our pension fund invests in and PERA seeks to protect.

According to the Global Strategy Group, voters are prepared to reward candidates who back this kind of strong action. According to research among registered Colorado voters in May 2020, re-framing the generic legislative ballot to be between a Democrat who supports “strong government action to combat climate change” and a Republican who opposes such action boosts the Democrat’s margin in the generic ballot by a net of 13 points (shifting the margin from +8 in an initial, straight ask of the generic ballot to +21 when the ballot is re-framed around climate action). These electoral gains are most prominent with Unaffiliated voters, who shift toward the Democrat by a net 15 points and Republican voters, who still support the Republican candidate but by a 21-point closer margin.

<https://globalstrategygroup.app.box.com/s/8rfwzgoio9ukhi9465aub5hghg052g10>

Please excercise your fidicuary duty over PERA and to our public employees and retirees by supporting HB1241-26.

I'd like to request a point of personal privilege before our formal statement, if the Committee will indulge me. I've read the PERA Board's response to this bill, and found the rationale disappointing, since it indicates objection to the level of due diligence regarding fossil fuel investments that I assumed was their current standard operating practice for *all* investments made on behalf of public employees. And the arguments being made by public employees seem motivated by saving their own jobs, rather than protecting the return on investment that should be the focus for *all* employees that are members—working and retired—of PERA.

If I knew a decade ago what I know now about how precipitously coal would decline in the United States, it would have substantially changed my investment practices from then until this very day. The writing is on the wall for all fossil fuels, and it would be terrific if the PERA Commission applies the lessons of history moving forward in protecting the fund—and the state's \$200M contribution to the health of the fund this year—by putting those painfully learned lessons into practice with the other fossil fuels which must be wound down to save the national economy and the planet itself from destruction. You have only to look at Exxon-Mobil's quarterly performance for the last four quarters to see what has become of what was once the most profitable company in the world. It seems clear to me that divestment now from fossil fuels is exactly in keeping with the PERA Board's fiduciary requirements. Thank you for this indulgence. Best, Jan Rose. JSR/bh

Written Statement of Support for HB21-1246 by Colorado Coalition for Livable Climate (CCLC)

I am writing on behalf of CCLC, a coalition representing 33 Colorado-based community and environmental organizations who are developing and advocating strategies for reducing Colorado's greenhouse gas emissions to levels supportive of a livable climate. Our vision is the State of Colorado's annual greenhouse gas emissions should be supportive of limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5°C (2.7°F) or less by the end of this century, and should become carbon neutral by 2030.

The CCLC voted unanimously to support [HB21-1246 PERA Public Employees' Retirement Association Divestment From Fossil Fuel Companies](#). We believe it is vital that Colorado continue to lead the fight against climate change in every way possible. It is our moral imperative to do so as climate change is a real and serious threat to the health, welfare and prosperity of all Coloradans, all Americans, and all people on the planet. Maintaining the status quo of fossil fuel energy production will unquestionably lead to a self-created catastrophe. Therefore the State of Colorado has an ethical responsibility to take steps to avert this disastrous result. Attempting to profit from investments in companies whose profits depend almost exclusively on the continuation of practices that cause climate change (and worse, losing money on those investments) is not acceptable and puts Colorado on the wrong side of history.

Colorado has codified into law HB1261, Climate Action Plan to Reduce Pollution, with a goal of reducing 2025 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26%, 2030 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50%, and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90% of the levels of statewide greenhouse gas emissions that existed in 2005. **Continuing to invest our public funds and pensions in fossil fuels does not serve us in achieving these goals.**

Furthermore, CCLC acknowledges the financial argument in favor of fossil fuel divestment. The fossil fuel sector continues to struggle, with profits dropping, cash flow down, long-term debt loads rising and growth opportunities limited.

A 2021 [report by BlackRock](#) examined hundreds of divestment actions of funds worldwide and concluded that the divested portfolios experienced no negative financial impacts from divesting from fossil fuels. In fact, they found evidence of modest improvement in fund return. The fossil fuel industry is in a continued downward trend, facing increased climate-related financial risk, and mounting concerns over the growing climate crisis. Investment risks continue to mount, and the number of lawsuits seeking billions of dollars in damages from the biggest contributors to climate change is growing. **All of this significantly impacts the value of oil and gas companies and investment returns for the fund.** CCLC strongly supports HB-1246. Our public money should not be invested in companies that are adversely impacting our public health and further exacerbating the climate crisis.

Thank you for considering this testimony in support of HB21-1246.

Sincerely,
Jan Rose
Legislative Spokesperson, Colorado Coalition for Livable Climate (CCLC)

JSR/bh

Madam Chair Bird, members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 21-1246. My name is Kristin Barrett, and I am speaking on behalf of myself. I am an adjunct instructor at Colorado Mountain College (CMC) and a PERA member. I urge you to vote yes on HB 21-1146 because, as an instructor in the areas of environmental science and environmental sustainability, I am acutely aware that divesting from fossil fuels is a critical step in stopping climate collapse.

My job at CMC is to teach and inspire students to solve problems impacting the planet. Nearly every week, my students and I discuss some aspect of climate change. We are very worried about the climate and rightly so. As we know, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined that to keep the increase in global average temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius, global greenhouse gas emissions must decline by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050. This timeline is probably too lax as we are already starting to see many ecosystems changing and, in some cases, collapsing due to climate change. We often forget that humans depend on these natural systems for air, water, food, spiritual inspiration and recreation. We must act now, and we must stop taking fossil fuels from the ground and burning them.

I believe it is increasingly risky, from a financial standpoint, to continue to have investment portfolios that include fossil fuel industries. They are a dying breed, and we need to invest in clean, renewable energies that are one of the biggest growth industries on the planet now.

Once again, I urge you, on behalf of my students, myself and our world to VOTE YES on HB 21-1246.

Many thanks to the Finance Committee members for considering my testimony.

Kristin Barrett
Zip: 80420
Cell: 719-839-0280