



WHY CITIES SHOULD ENDORSE THE CALL FOR A FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

Fossil fuels are hurtling our climate towards breakdown. Coal, oil and gas make up nearly 80 percent of all carbon emissions released since the industrial revolution. **The fossil fuel industry continues to ignore science by planning new projects [that will result in 120 percent more GHG emissions by 2030 than what is needed to limit warming to 1.5°C](#)** and avert catastrophic climate disruption. Emissions from existing production capacity alone make it impossible to stay within that threshold. To stop this climate emergency, we need to end the fossil fuel era.

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is a global campaign to phase-out fossil fuels and propel a just energy transition globally. The treaty is designed to complement the Paris Agreement - which doesn't mention coal, oil or gas - and fill a fundamental gap to:

- stop fossil fuels at source everywhere (**non-proliferation**)
- phase-out existing fossil fuel reserves in line with a 1.5°C pathway (**fair phase-out**)
- support a global equitable transition to renewable energy (**just transition**)

Cities play a critical role in the global energy transition. Cities dominate global energy use, making up [“two-thirds of global energy consumption and more than 70% of annual global carbon emissions.”](#) They are sites of both climate havoc, facing heatwaves, flooding and wildfire smoke, and of climate solutions, stopping extractive projects, electrifying local grids, and moving swiftly to protect their communities from climate disruption. Furthermore, **just as nuclear free cities played a critical role in calling for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, councils around the world can help build momentum towards a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.**

In this path towards climate solutions, the treaty is campaigning alongside climate justice coalitions and progressive city councillors for cities to leave fossil fuels in the ground, phase-out existing reserves, and expand renewable energy access for all. With rising support from cities across the world, [Vancouver](#), [Barcelona](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Sydney](#), and [Toronto](#) are among many other cities who have all endorsed the Treaty. The Treaty Initiative is seeking endorsement of the call for a Fossil Fuel Treaty by hundreds of municipal governments across the world to grow global momentum to phase-out fossil fuels and transition to a renewably powered world.

For more about the Fossil Fuel Treaty, see: www.fossilfueltreaty.org

WHY SHOULD CITY GOVERNMENTS ENDORSE THIS INITIATIVE?

Cities can play a pivotal role in convincing national governments to phase-out coal, oil and gas and support a Fossil Fuel Treaty

Cities can build pressure from below for fossil fuel phase-out and a just energy transition, grow the public profile for the campaign and ultimately help influence national governments to sign and ratify a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Getting multiple municipal governments in a given country to pass Fossil Fuel Treaty endorsement motions can put pressure on national governments to take the treaty demands seriously. The very exercise of collectively campaigning for such motions is a powerful form of community mobilization and shifts the narrative on fossil fuels. There is plenty of historic precedence for such a strategy. In the 1970s and 1980s, as part of the nuclear disarmament movement, hundreds of cities around the world declared themselves to be [Nuclear Weapons Free Zones](#) (NWFZ) as a means of putting pressure on national governments to take bold action on nuclear disarmament. While the act of declaring a city a NWFZ was largely symbolic, the action was helpful in changing global norms, creating reputational pressure and building the overall nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament movement.

Cities will be hard hit by climate disruption

Cities are on the frontline of the climate crisis, facing natural disasters that are fundamentally reshaping urban communities, infrastructure and ecosystems. Municipal leaders know well that their budgets, businesses and residents will be hard hit by the climate crises, as cities wrestle with heatwaves, flooding and wildfires, and seek to accommodate thousands of climate migrants. City leaders know their populations – particularly the most at-risk and vulnerable – will face disruptions to food systems and rising food prices, displacement from extreme climate events, and are most likely to suffer the consequences of fossil fuel-derived pollution. And local leaders know it is cities that will face the escalating infrastructure costs of climate adaptation.

Cities are taking climate action, but fossil fuel expansion is undercutting their good work

Numerous cities are already taking substantive climate action, banning extractive projects (e.g. pipelines, refineries, gas stations) in their jurisdictions, electrifying urban grids and successfully lowering their GHG emissions (and a few countries, such as Costa Rica, Ireland, Spain, and Denmark have passed “keep it in the ground” laws and policies such as fracking bans and/or offshore oil and gas moratoria). But their efforts are being undermined by the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and production. Cities and their residents don’t want to be tricked, doing what they should to lower GHG emissions only to have the expansion of fossil fuel industries undo their best efforts. A Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty can put an end to this harmful dynamic and move beyond specific site-battles against fossil fuel expansion, instead ensuring all are pulling in the same direction as we act in the face of the climate emergency. A core appeal of the treaty is that it reinforces the efforts cities are already undertaking, ensuring their own actions are part of an overall process of forward momentum. **If your city is already taking climate action, the treaty is how to backstop all the good work you are already doing.** And if your city hasn’t taken concrete action yet, the treaty is a good place to start!

Endorsing the Fossil Fuel Treaty is one way to act on climate emergency motions

Over the last two years, hundreds of cities around the world have passed climate emergency motions. But the fossil fuel industry hasn't gotten the message. Their expansion plans massively overshoot any chance at a stable climate and a safe and liveable planet. Pushing for a Fossil Fuel Treaty is one way to reinforce a climate emergency motion, signalling to national governments that their economic and energy plans need to align with climate science. Once the treaty has been endorsed in your city, you can continue to [take action](#) to remove the social license of the fossil fuel industry and ensure the end to fossil fuel expansion in your city.

Fossil fuel companies are diverting COVID-19 pandemic recovery funds, siphoning stimulus money that cities badly need.

The latest data from Energy Policy Tracker indicates that, [since the beginning of the pandemic, at least \\$296 billion has been committed to fossil fuels by G20 governments](#).

Not only is this spending fueling the climate emergency, it is diverting billions of dollars in public money that could be redirected to support municipal efforts to Build Back Fossil Free, and to allocate stimulus funding for a just recovery that ensures clean energy for all.

HOW DOES CITY ENDORSEMENT HELP THE LARGER CAMPAIGN?

The global campaign for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty sees support from municipal governments as a key element of building the profile and momentum of this initiative. Cities can take swift action to phase-out fossil fuels in their jurisdictions and remove the social licence of the fossil fuel industry, while building collective pressure from below for the treaty campaign at the national level. The campaign is seeking vanguard cities to become early endorsers of the treaty, joining the likes of Vancouver, Barcelona, Los Angeles, Sydney, Canberra and Toronto, to help kick-start the global call for a new treaty.

The campaign hopes to announce its initial group of early endorser cities in November 2021 at COP26. This group will be calling on their national governments to support the treaty initiative, and will also invite thousands of other municipalities to join the global campaign.

The campaign can provide cities with [draft motions](#) for treaty endorsement.

OTHER FAQs

The UN Framework Convention and Paris Agreement already exist. Why not use these frameworks? Aren't we undermining them by proposing a new treaty?

Short answer: *UNFCCC and Paris Agreement are important but inadequate; we need to complement it with a Fossil Fuel Treaty.*

The Paris Agreement plays a vital role by mandating countries to set progressively more ambitious emissions reduction targets in the context of a 1.5C temperature goal. However, coal, oil and gas are not mentioned in the Paris Agreement, leading to a situation where country production plans are incompatible with their own emissions reduction targets.

The [Production Gap Report](#) says planned fossil fuel supply expansion is 120% greater than the 1.5°C budget by 2030. This is “decade zero” and we need to complement Paris with a treaty focused on fossil fuels.

A Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty could not only complement the Paris Agreement by tackling climate change at the source of the problem - fossil fuels - but also play an important role in ensuring a just and equitable transition for countries, communities and workers globally.

The world has been moving away from multilateralism and international cooperation. Is now the right time to propose a new multilateral treaty?

Short answer: *To get international cooperation we must demand it*

True, prospects for multilateralism are currently low. But things can change rapidly with new elections and new events - like COVID-19. The pandemic has changed what we thought possible by governments. Now is a time for bold new ideas like the Fossil Fuel Treaty.

The large fossil fuel producing countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Russia and the United States are not likely to join such a Treaty, so how would it work?

Short answer: *A club of “first movers” can influence big producers and markets*

We do not expect major fossil fuel producers to join an Fossil Fuel Treaty, at least in the medium term. Nor do we necessarily expect a “universal treaty” like the UNFCCC. Rather, we are calling for a group of “first mover” countries to work together. One model is the TPNW, a treaty led by non-nuclear-armed states to stigmatise and ban nuclear weapons. It seeks to change the narrative about nuclear weapons and prohibit producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing or stockpiling nuclear weapons. In developing the treaty there are many lessons to learn from other treaties on nuclear and chemical weapons, landmines, cluster munitions, ozone depleting substances etc.

Similarly, we believe a well-designed Fossil Fuel Treaty can:

- Strengthen demands on governments;
- Reduce industry’s regulatory and political space;
- Disrupt business-as-usual;
- Increase the risks, costs and uncertainty of fossil fuel expansion & investment; and
- Reduce access to finance and markets for fossil fuels.

In light of the urgency of scaling down fossil fuel production to address climate change, won’t negotiating a new treaty take far too long?

Short answer: *The journey matters.*

The experience of treaty negotiation differs — the nuclear NPT took 3 years; others have taken decades. We see the treaty as a “beacon” illuminating a number of important steps, all of which help scale down production.

At the local level it provides a focus for action akin to nuclear-free zone cities.

At the national level it’s a vehicle to engage governments in a discussion about supply side measures.

At the international level it provides context for a club of first movers, a new registry of fossil fuel production, and a global commission on fossil fuels.

It changes the narrative and increases risk to the fossil fuel industry, affecting access to finance. All of the strategies underpinning the treaty initiative - including the research, campaign and regional collaboration - have value individually and collectively. The treaty provides an overarching framework and a demand that can unify these efforts so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts - a systems approach to systems change.

Isn't the best way to phase out the fossil fuel industry tackling the demand side and allowing the market to phase-out fossil fuels?

Short answer: *Supply and demand must meet, like two arms of a scissors, to cut fossil fuel supply.*

Action on emissions and the demand-side is necessary but insufficient. Systems change requires a systems approach, including supply-side measures. The treaty is part of a systems approach involving multiple mutually-reinforcing strategies. Absent a treaty like the Fossil Fuel Treaty, industry will continue undermining climate science, policy and action and lock-in production.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force in 1970 yet nuclear-armed states have not disarmed. Why are you basing a fossil fuel treaty on a treaty that has failed?

Short answer: *the N-NPT is one model among others we're looking at for best practices.*

We are using the N-NPT as an analogy not as the sole or only model for a fossil fuel treaty. It is certainly true that the experience of the N-NPT is *mixed*: It *has* limited proliferation. But it has largely *failed* to disarm nuclear-states. They continue to hold 22,000+ warheads.

This led to a second nuclear treaty - the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The international campaign for this treaty, ICAN, won the Nobel Prize in 2017. As well as the NPT and TPNW, we are looking at numerous other treaties for lessons, and aim to build on the best practices of each.

The Fossil Fuel Treaty, unlike the N-NPT, is not seeking merely to prevent the expansion of fossil fuels – it also seeks to create a regime for winding-down fossil fuel production, guided by international agreement and cooperation.

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