

To the Rutgers University Board of Governors and Board of Trustees:

We are the Central Jersey Climate Coalition, an alliance of students, faculty, and community members who are demanding action to address the climate crisis. As the largest public university in the state, Rutgers plays an important role in spurring this transformation.

At its most basic level, a university creates the future. Universities shape the ideas and individuals that will guide the next generation, ideally in ways that will create a more equitable and sustainable future for us all. Faculty and students at Rutgers are leading in research and scholarship on the climate crisis. Despite this intellectual commitment, the Administration has developed no practical plan to combat climate change. Our University continues to engage in practices that actively work against any kind of meaningful transformation. To ensure that the university upholds its responsibility as a future creator, Rutgers must become **a fossil-free university** in both its operational and investment practices. In light of this goal, we demand that Rutgers:

- **Develop a Climate Action Plan immediately.** In order to ensure that future facilities projects at the university are aligned with the goals of a just and sustainable future, we demand that the university immediately begin developing a comprehensive Climate Action Plan in collaboration with students, faculty, and community members. This plan must include a framework for achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. Accomplishing this goal will require the university to eliminate fossil fuels from its transportation, electricity, and heating systems, and to find verifiable ways to reduce and offset emissions associated with off-campus travel. Already established long-term plans like the Rutgers 2030 Plan and the Rutgers Master Plan must be revised in order to conform to the Climate Action Plan. Currently, Rutgers has the available assets in the unrestricted reserves of the endowment to accomplish this transition, and the university will end up saving money in the long-term by achieving net-zero emissions in the next 10 years.
- **Achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.** In order to stabilize the global climate, the world must achieve net-zero carbon dioxide emissions, as well as major reductions in the emissions of other greenhouse gases. The nations of the world have agreed to limit warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, a goal Rutgers University affirmed when it signed the We Are Still In pledge. The IPCC has found that, to have a good chance of achieving this objective, the world must achieve net-zero emissions by or shortly after 2050. Because emissions are easier to reduce within a single institution in the developed world than in the world as a whole, US universities need to be more ambitious than the world as a whole. Several major universities – including Oregon State University, the University of California, the University of Florida, and the University of Vermont – have agreed to achieve net-zero emissions before or by 2030. We call on Rutgers join these peers.
- **Divest from fossil fuels by the end of 2024.** According to our own investigation, 7.9% of the Rutgers University Endowment Fund is explicitly invested in the fossil fuel

industry, comprising over \$80 million in investments. However, we believe this number grossly underestimates the actual scope of the problem, as there are many other holdings that are indirectly connected to fossil fuel companies. We demand that Rutgers divest from fossil fuels AND any other investments in fossil fuel services, technology, infrastructure, and so on.

- **Establish an Office of Sustainability by the end of 2020.** All of the actions above must be monitored by an independent body of students, faculty, and community members. An Office of Sustainability will coordinate the reform of University departments in line with the Climate Action Plan and set concrete benchmarks for progress. This office must have full access to information and data from the university in order to conduct research, determine current baselines, and make future recommendations.

Fulfilling these demands will require a fundamental transformation at all levels of the university. That is what is necessary to adequately address the crisis at hand. For too long, our leaders - including leaders at Rutgers - have delayed and stalled. Now, we are rapidly running out of time.

Your response, as the governing bodies of Rutgers, will determine the futures of not just Rutgers students and faculty, but also of communities near and far. The time is now for Rutgers to recognize its role in the solution. The time is now for Rutgers to become truly revolutionary. The time is now for climate justice and the end of fossil fuels. The time is now to act.

Sincerely,  
The Central Jersey Climate Coalition