

# Deforestation Free Investment Action Toolkit



for the people | for the planet | for the future



**Friends of  
the Earth**

## About Friends of the Earth U.S.

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Friends of the Earth United States, founded by David Brower in 1969, is the U.S. voice of the world's largest federation of grassroots environmental groups, Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), which has member groups in 75 countries and represents 2.2 million members worldwide. Friends of the Earth works to defend the environment and champion a more healthy and just world. Through our more than 40-year history, we have provided crucial leadership in campaigns resulting in landmark environmental laws, precedent-setting legal victories and groundbreaking reforms of domestic and international regulatory, corporate and financial institution policies. **Learn more at:** [www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org)

Together with FoEI member groups in Indonesia, Uganda, Nigeria, Liberia, Europe and elsewhere, as well as other allies and frontline environmental defenders around the world, we are working to put pressure on the palm oil industry to halt its abuses and protect forests and human rights. Friends of the Earth U.S.'s **Deforestation Free Investment Campaign** is working to safeguard tropical forests and the rights of communities by calling on U.S. investors to defund deforestation and commit to human rights.

**Learn more at:** [www.foe.org/DeforestationFreeAction](http://www.foe.org/DeforestationFreeAction)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. Introduction	4
2. About the campaign	9
3. How to use this action toolkit	11
4. How to take action	12
5. How to start a deforestation free investment campaign	13
6. Successful campaign stories	20
7. Frequently asked questions	22
8. Additional information	25
• Some DFA and TIAA-CREF client institutions	25
• Executive summary of report, “Are you invested in exploitation?”	27
9. Resources	28
• Tips for organizing	28
• How to organize an event/film screening	29
• Fact sheets and reports	33
• Sample petitions	34



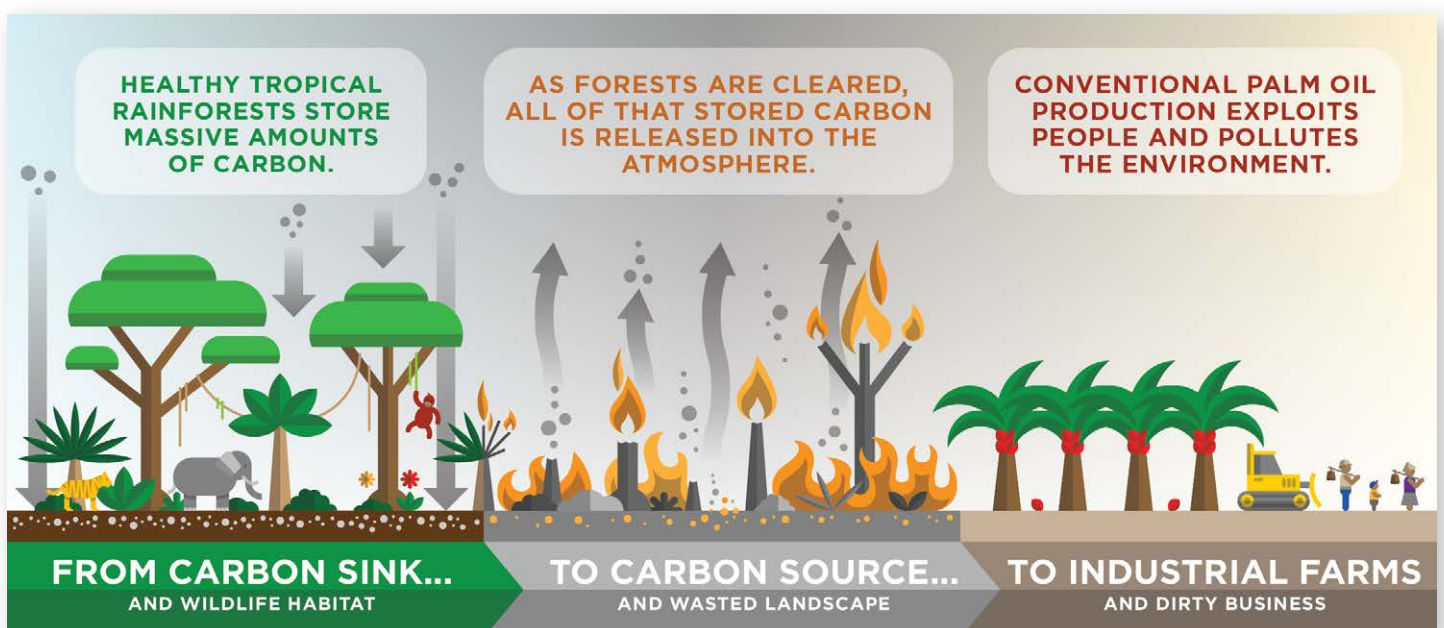
# 1 Introduction

## The problem of palm oil and deforestation

Deforestation – the large-scale destruction of intact forests – is second only to fossil fuel combustion as a leading driver of global climate change, and has huge, irreversible impacts on biodiversity, water and land rights of the 1.6 billion people who depend on forests for their livelihoods. The destruction of the world's remaining tropical rainforests is responsible for some 10-15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions – more than the emissions from all the cars, trucks, trains and buses in the world each year combined.

The single leading cause of tropical forest destruction is commercial agriculture; the “big four” commodities – palm oil, soy, cattle and timber – drive about 71 percent<sup>i</sup> of tropical deforestation.<sup>ii</sup> Of these, the biggest share of the destruction currently falls to palm oil.

Photo: Victor Barro/FoE Spain





## Examples of palm oil in consumer products

- Instant noodles
- Shampoo
- Cookies
- Soap
- Detergent
- Lipstick
- Chocolate
- Margarine

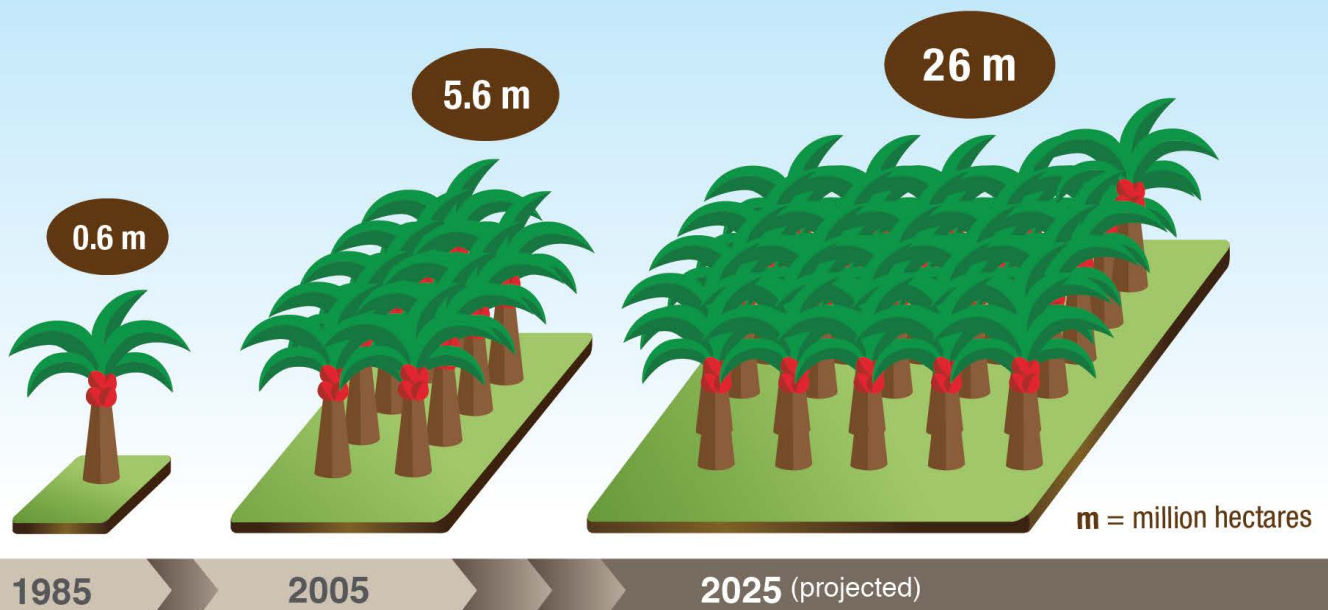


### What is palm oil?

Derived from the fruit of the West African oil palm tree, palm oil is the world's most widely traded vegetable oil, with production projected to double over the next decade.<sup>iii</sup> It is used in over half the food and cosmetics on our shelves, as well as in biofuels in many countries.

Due to the recent expansion of the palm oil industry which relies on large areas of land to generate profits, massive areas of forests and carbon-rich peatlands throughout the tropics have been destroyed to make way for plantations. This destruction makes palm oil production the leading cause of tropical deforestation.

Some 86 percent of the world's palm oil comes from Indonesia and Malaysia.<sup>iv</sup> In Indonesia alone, the palm oil industry deforests an area the size of Rhode Island every year.<sup>v</sup> The industry is growing rapidly in equatorial Africa, Mesoamerica and South America as well, where it has similar environmental and social impacts. Because of the huge areas of land needed to grow palm oil, it is also a major contributor to the global crisis of "land grabbing" – land previously used by local communities, largely indigenous peoples and peasant farmers being turned over to private interests, with no respect for human rights or international law.



### Projected growth of palm oil plantations in Indonesia, in millions of hectares

Furthermore, the palm oil industry employs as many as 3.5 million workers in Malaysia and Indonesia, many of whom are victims of serious labor exploitation. Workers are trafficked into bonded labor; forced to work and live under extreme conditions, with limited legal recourse; suffer from abuse or the threat of abuse; or are often times children. These exploitations in some cases constitute modern forms of slavery. Palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia has made the U.S. Department of Labor's List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor.<sup>vi</sup>

### Finance and palm oil

Financing for palm oil expansion has been on a steady rise for a decade, amounting to tens of billions of dollars per year. Since 2008, major financial institutions have invested more than \$20 billion in the palm oil industry.<sup>vii</sup> These institutions, therefore, are complicit in the social and environmental devastation wrought by the palm oil sector.

Of the tens of billions of dollars currently invested in palm oil, more than 10 percent is in the form of holdings by equity investors, much of it managed by investment firms in the United States. Most of these financiers are shielded from the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) impacts of their investments and the associated financial, legal, ethical and reputational risks. That is to say, by and large, they take no responsibility for the destruction their investments cause. Yet none of the top U.S. investment firms have clear policies to prevent investments in companies that cause deforestation and land grabbing.

Global agencies and academics are increasingly in agreement that private finance is a key driver of deforestation and human rights abuse;<sup>viii</sup> even the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – a group of the world's largest economic powers – has agreed that financiers are “directly linked” to the human rights and environmental impacts caused by their financing, regardless of the size of their investment – and therefore bear responsibility for resolving them.<sup>ix</sup>



## Environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies of the top U.S. financiers of palm oil

## Current ranking among US equity investors with stocks in palm oil production, by dollar amount invested.

**1 BLACKROCK \$8.73 billion**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

BlackRock's professes adherence to a particular vision of ESG, but has no public position on palm oil, forests, land grabs or human rights.<sup>xxxix</sup>

**2 Vanguard® \$2.88 billion**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

Vanguard has no publicly available ESG policies, and no public position on palm oil, forests, land grabs or human rights.

**3 J.P.Morgan Asset Management \$581.17 million**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

JP Morgan Chase has a reasonably strong Environmental and Social Risk Management policy for its commercial and investment banking, which recognizes palm oil as a high risk sector; but no such policy guides its asset management.

**4 Fidelity INVESTMENTS \$538.40 million**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

Fidelity Investments has no publicly available ESG policies, and no public position on palm oil, forests, land grabs or human rights.

**5 TIAA CREF \$433.65 million**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

TIAA-CREF has public commitments to ESG, but no public position on palm oil, forests, land grabs or human rights.<sup>xi</sup>

**6 NORTHERN CROSS \$410 million**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

Northern Cross has no publicly available ESG policies, and no public position on palm oil, forests, land grabs or human rights.

**7 Dimensional \$369.26 million**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

Dimensional Fund Advisors has no publicly available ESG policies, and no public position on palm oil, forests, land grabs or human rights.

**8 CalPERS \$106.90 million**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

CalPERS is proud of its sustainable investment approach, but it has no public position on palm oil, forests, land grabs or human rights.<sup>xli</sup>

**9 VanEck \$56.15 million**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

Van Eck has no publicly available ESG policies, and no public position on palm oil, forests, land grabs or human rights.

**10 Prudential \$52.11 million**

**No explicit commitment to preventing deforestation or land grabbing.**

No explicit commitment on palm oil, forests, or human rights.

(Based on financial data from Q4 2015)



## Who are the U.S. financiers of palm oil?

Among the largest financiers of palm oil in the U.S. are the asset management arm of JPMorganChase, the pension funds CalPERS and TIAA-CREF, and mutual fund managers Vanguard, Van Eck, Fidelity and Dimensional Fund Advisors. While some of these financial institutions have public commitments to address ESG concerns, they all have significant gaps in their policies and practices regarding investments that impact land, forests and human rights. These gaps mean, from the side of communities and the planet, they may continue assaulting forests and land rights now and into the future; from the side of the institutions themselves, this means they continue to be exposed to reputational, legal, financial and ESG risks.

Of course, palm oil is not the only driver of deforestation – just the biggest and fastest growing. So, it's important to note that our approach to solving deforestation BEGINS with palm oil and palm oil investments, but **our SOLUTION** is for investment companies **to stop financing all commodities that drive tropical forest destruction**, through **Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment**.

Friends of the Earth's efforts to fight deforestation and transform the palm industry are part of a global movement of people working towards creating a non-extractive economy that respects human rights, local land rights and food sovereignty. These efforts begin with one of the biggest root sources of the problem: your money.

Given that U.S. investment firms and retirement funds—including those of government and college employees—are among the largest financiers of palm oil, we have the power to use our stake in the palm oil industry to bring about change.

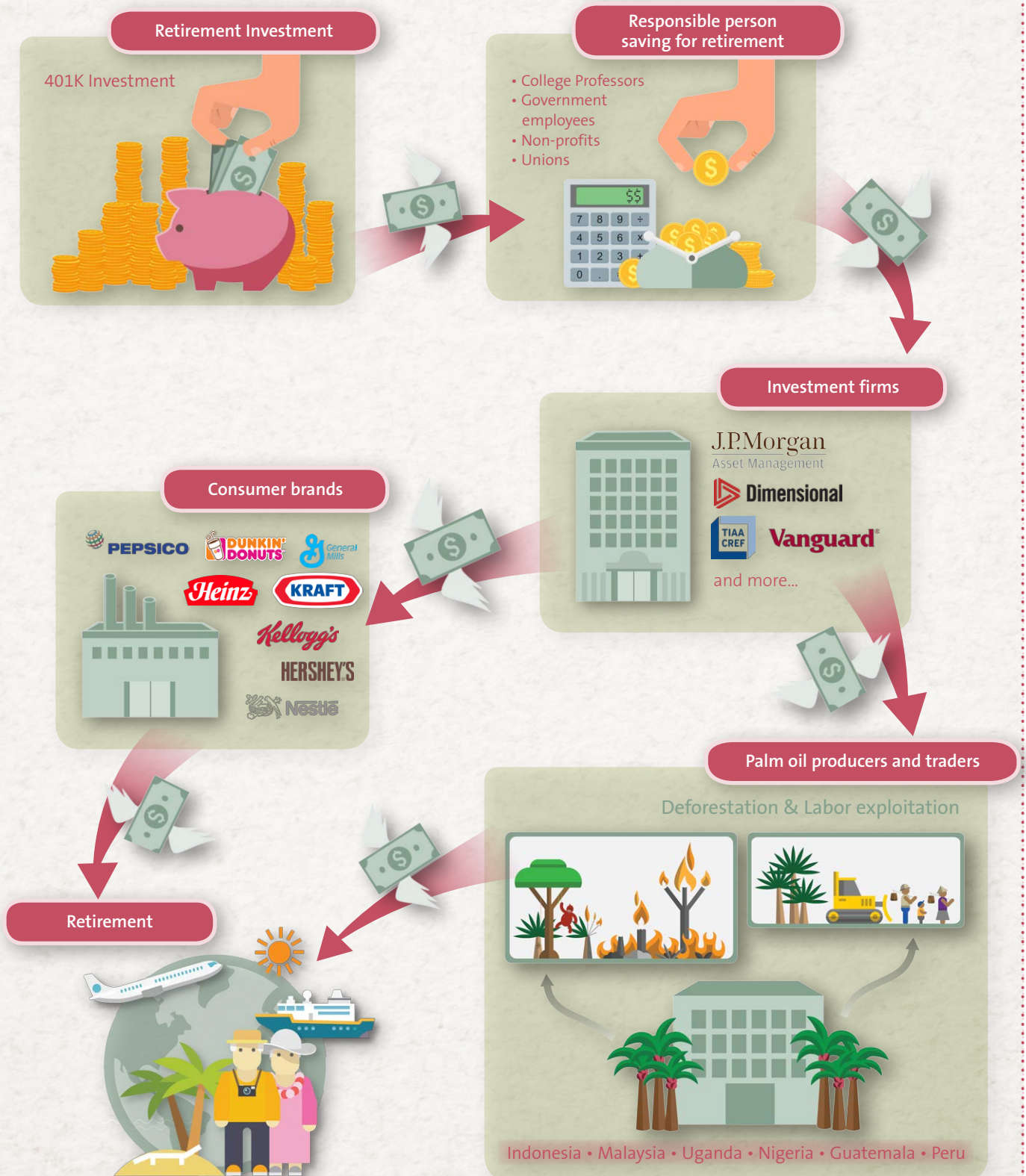
If your college, employer or city government has money invested for an endowment, retirement savings, or other purposes it may well be tied up in deforestation and land grabbing. That's the bad news. The good news is this gives you the opportunity to align your money with your morals. We need to show investment companies that their clients are supportive of them implementing a **Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment policy**.



# 2

## About the campaign

### How your money may be tied to dirty palm oil





## What is Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment?

To safeguard tropical forests and the rights of communities, Friends of the Earth is calling on investment companies to **quit deforestation and commit to human rights** by implementing a **Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment policy**.

For reasons we explain in the FAQs section, at the moment **we are not calling for divestment from palm oil**. Rather, we are identifying funds that are invested in palm oil producers, palm oil consumer companies, and other industries that prop up the current destructive model of palm oil production, and asking them to adopt an investment approach based on “Four Pillars of Responsibility” that includes the following actions:



1. **Disclose** their exposure to deforestation and land risk in palm oil and other soft commodities.
2. **Commit** to a Deforestation and Land Grab Free Investment policy.
3. **Exclude** bad actors and **advocate** for responsible financing.
4. **Repair** the damage: ensure justice for affected communities through accountability processes and support companies that restore ecological damage as part of their commitment to forests.

For an in-depth understanding of this campaign and of our asks of investment companies, see [Are you invested in exploitation?: Why US investment firms should quit financing conflict palm oil and commit to human rights](#).



# 3

## How to use this action toolkit



### How to use this action toolkit

Here are ways you can take action in your community to help defend human rights, protect forests and get U.S. financiers to stop investing in dirty palm oil.

**Step 1:** Review this action kit, which includes:

- Tips for getting your money out of dirty palm oil
- Deforestation Land GrabFree Investment petition campaign guide
- Sample petitions

**Step 2:** Choose an action to take from the action kit

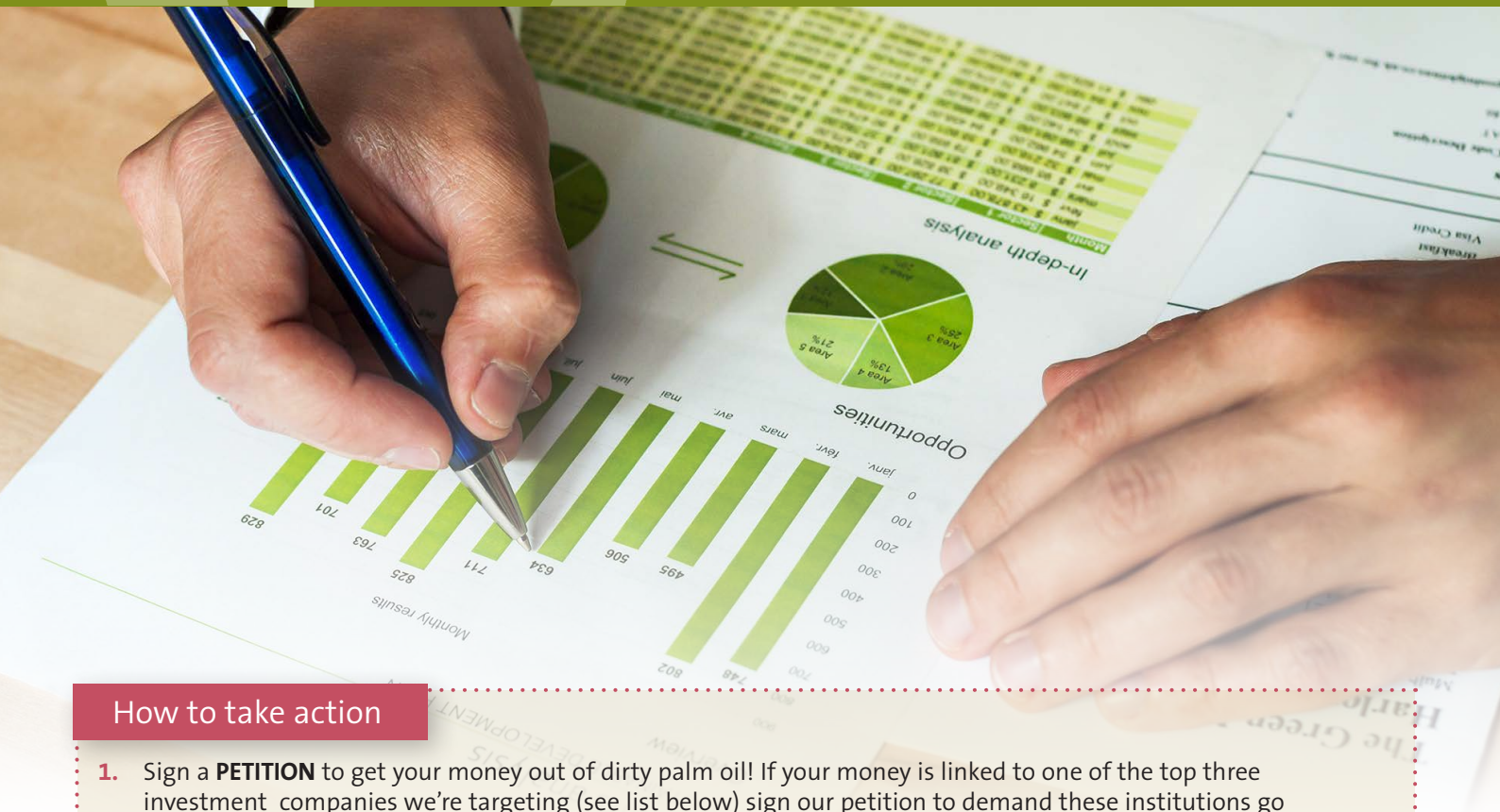
**Step 3:** Print any relevant campaign materials (petitions, signs, fact sheets etc.)

**Step 4:** Contact us at [DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org](mailto:DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org) if you want to make your city, state, college or pension fund go Deforestation Free and we'll walk you through the steps and provide resources to make it happen.



# 4

## How to take action



### How to take action

1. Sign a **PETITION** to get your money out of dirty palm oil! If your money is linked to one of the top three investment companies we're targeting (see list below) sign our petition to demand these institutions go Deforestation and Land Grab-Free. Find the online petition for each company here. (insert link to Pod 3) Then use our sample petitions (in the [Resources section](#)) to collect signatures to send to your college or local government pension funds whose investments are most likely linked to one of these 3 investment firms.



**Dimensional Fund Advisors (DFA):** manages pension funds for many city and state governments. For a list of DFA client institutions [see Additional information section](#).



**TIAA-CREF:** manages pension funds for many colleges and public institutions. For a list of TIAA-CREF client institutions [see Resources section](#).



**Vanguard:** manages pension funds for many private employers, individuals and institutions.

If your money is not linked to one of these three companies, check [www.deforestationfreefunds.org](http://www.deforestationfreefunds.org) to see if your money is linked to other institutions with ties to dirty palm oil.

2. To get your **COLLEGE** or **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION FUND** to go Deforestation and Land Grab-Free, follow the guide below to take the next steps in getting your money out of dirty palm oil!
3. If you're an **INDIVIDUAL INVESTOR**, talk to your financial advisor about finding clean fund options, and email us at [DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org](mailto:DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org) to let us know what you're up to and if you need our help.
4. If your investments are in your employer-sponsored 401K plan at work, talk to your **RETIREMENT PLAN MANAGER** and ask for deforestation and land grab-free fund options. See our [Deforestation Free 401k How-To Guide](#) for more tips and a sample letter to send to your plan manager.

# 5

## How to start a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment campaign in your college, city or state

# PETITION

### Overview:

- Step 1:** Start a petition campaign and develop a team
- Step 2:** Do research and plan your campaign strategy
- Step 3:** Build public support
- Step 4:** Apply pressure: deliver petitions
- Step 5:** Confrontation: meet with decision-makers
- Step 6:** Escalation: take direct action



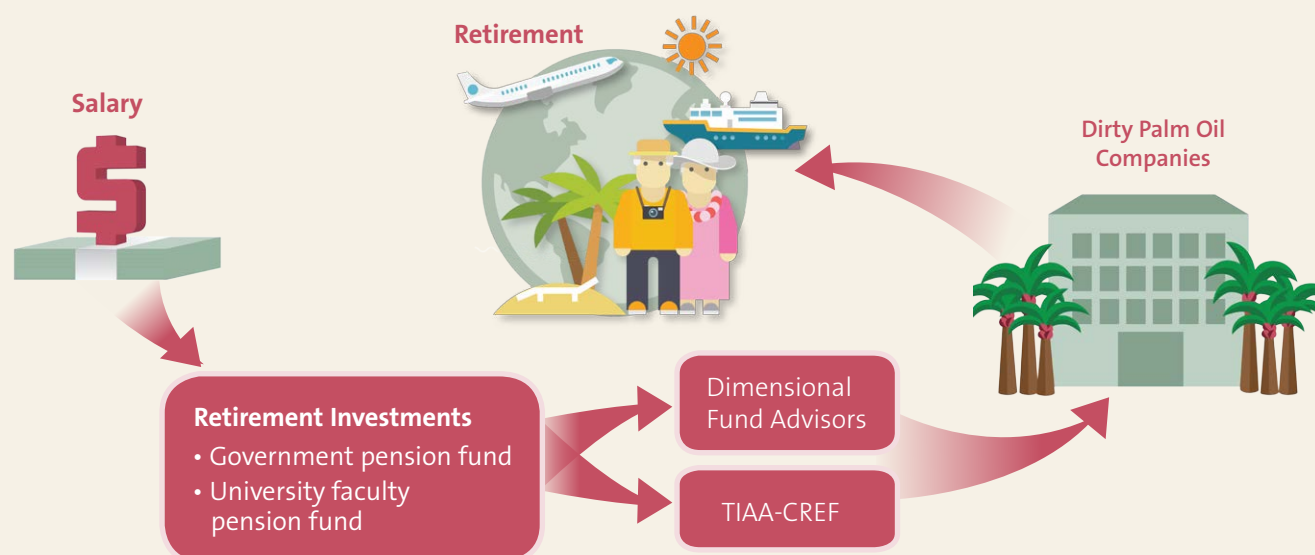
### 1: Start a petition campaign and develop a team

As we've seen with the fossil fuel and private prison divestment movements, and other progressive campaigns, starting a petition campaign has proven to be a hugely successful way to create change. A petition recruits support for the campaign and starts a discussion about deforestation and land grab-free investment in your community.

- **For our existing petitions:** After you sign it, share it with your network to build support through email or social media or in person by distributing print copies of these petitions.
- **To start a petition:** If you want to target a company we don't have an online petition for, use one of our sample petitions ([in the Resources section](#)) to create your own. Be sure to let us know who you're targeting so we can support your campaign.
- **Develop a team:** As you gain support for your campaign, you'll be able to bring a group of people together to help execute it.
  - » Set up a meeting to discuss the campaign ([see the Resources section for tips on how to organize a meeting](#)).
  - » Collect signatures by sharing your petition on social media, through email, and in person.
  - » For petitions you collect in person, be sure to email them to us so we can help you deliver them. Email them to us at: [DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org](mailto:DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org) or mail them to us at:

**Friends of the Earth: Deforestation Free Action**  
1101 15 Street NW, 11th Floor Washington D.C., 20005

## How government and college pension funds are linked to dirty palm oil



## 2: Do research and plan your campaign strategy

Think about who you need to target and what you're asking them to do. Whether you're targeting a government, school or private institution, you should do research to determine who the manager is that decides how and where your money is invested in. **If you're on a college campus**, your target will most likely be TIAA-CREF which manages the retirement money for professors and staff at colleges across the U.S. and has several hundred million dollars invested in destructive palm oil companies.

If you want to target your **city or state's government pension fund**, your target will most likely be the pension fund's Board of Administration and specifically the investment board committee. Dimensional Fund Advisors (DFA) manages the retirement funds for many local governments across the country and has several hundred million dollars invested in palm oil producers. There's a good chance DFA is linked to your government pension fund and even if you find out they're not, it's still important to send your government pension fund a petition to ensure your tax payer money isn't invested in companies involved in deforestation or land grabbing. If you're running another type of campaign, find out who the decision-maker is that has the power to do what you want: to implement a Deforestation and Land-grab Free investment policy!

**\*An important note:** While big investment firms like TIAA-CREF and DFA have lots of investments in palm oil, this does not mean that every investment portfolio they manage – your investments, your college's, your city's – are directly invested in palm oil. And, in contrast to fossil fuels, there are many companies that are not invested in palm oil, because palm oil is a much smaller sector. This is why our campaign is not simply asking for DIVESTMENT (taking money out of palm oil), but is asking for all investment companies to **disclose** their palm oil investments, **commit to a policy** that will prevent all investments in deforestation, and then, to **exclude, or divest from**, companies that do not adhere to this policy. Even if your college or local government pension fund doesn't invest in dirty palm oil, it's still crucial to ask them to commit to implementing a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment Policy to ensure they're not invested in another form of deforestation and to put pressure on institutions that do have investments in dirty palm oil to do the right thing and commit to going Deforestation and Land Grab-Free!

**For more information on which colleges and governments have investments in dirty palm oil through TIAA-CREF and DFA, go to the Additional Information section.**

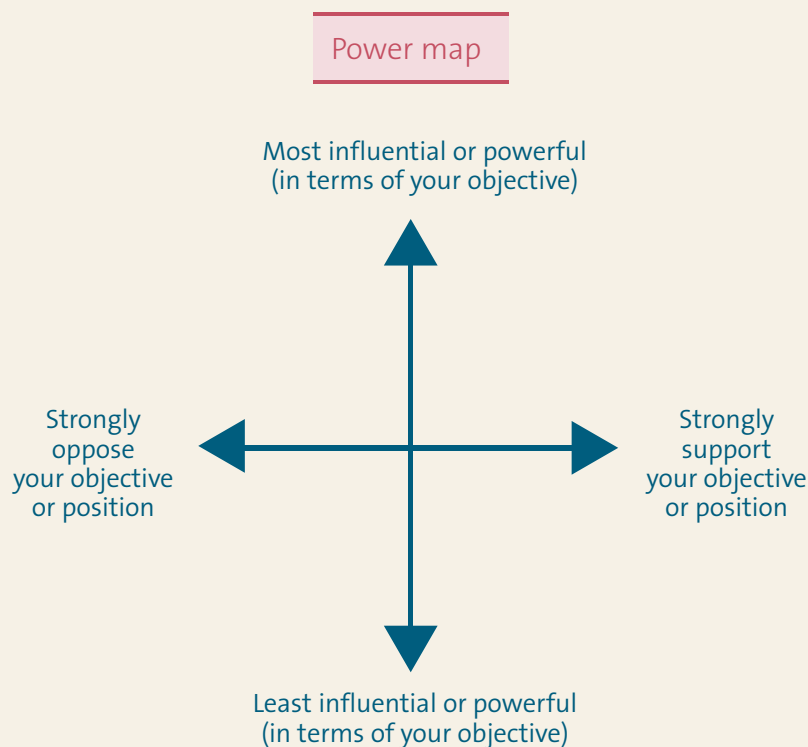


**Do a power analysis:**

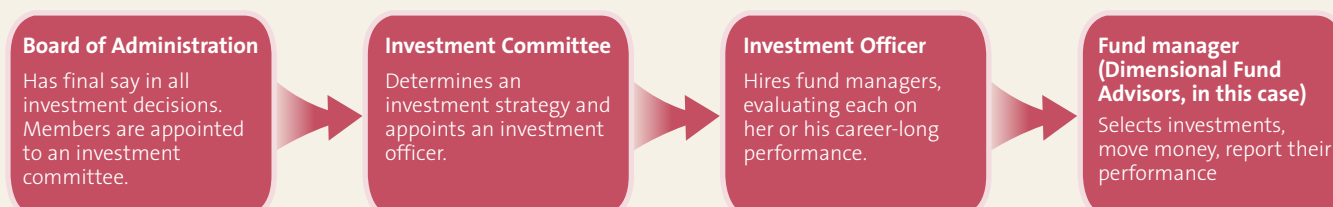
Map out the relationships between your target and the constituents that influence them. Identify influential community members, leaders and groups that could support your campaign. When building support, think outside the box of who can influence your target. Also be aware of people that stand in the way of you achieving your goal.

Ask these questions:

1. Who do you need to support your campaign and sign your petition?
2. Who are the constituents that have influence or power over your decision-maker?
3. What kind of power do they have over them?

**For GOVERNMENT PENSION FUNDS:**

Find out the process for becoming a member of the Board of Administration. Government pension fund boards are made up of about 7-13 members who typically include current and retired employees that are elected, financial city manager employees that are appointed by the mayor and city council members who are appointed by the mayor and/or City Council. Research who makes up your city or state's Board of Administration, what the election process is and who is on the investment board committee. Recruit constituents who have electoral power and can vote for the board members, contribute money to their campaign and/or people that can influence the decision-makers that appoint board members.



- **Power sources over target**

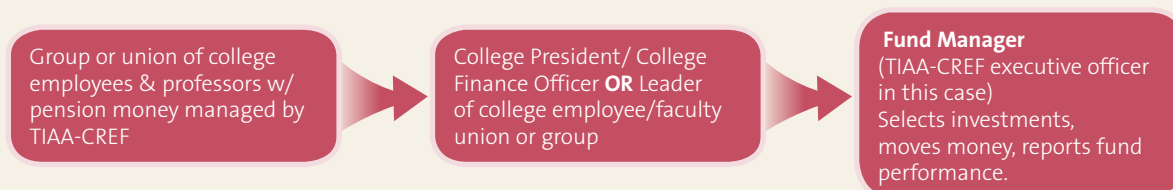
**Constituents:** employees of government pension fund (unions etc.), city or state residents

**Allies:** politicians who have relationships with pension fund investment board members; community groups who work on issues associated with palm oil and deforestation such as human rights, labor, environmental, climate, land rights, racial and social justice. Also, think about the countries where palm oil is a big issue: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Southeast Asia; Central America, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru; and West Africa. Seek out community leaders and groups who may be active in solidarity efforts with these countries.



### For COLLEGE PENSION FUNDS:

Find out if there's a decision-making process for your school to decide how employees' retirement money is invested. Do staff and professors have a union? If so, recruit the support of the union leaders. Most professors aren't represented by a union but it's worth researching. If there is no union, recruit the support of college faculty and staff with money invested in TIAA-CREF.



#### • Power sources over target

**Constituents:** college employees and professors who have retirement money invested in TIAA-CREF especially faculty or scholarly experts who study or care about issues related to palm oil and deforestation such as sustainable agriculture, indigenous land rights, international relations, economic development, political science, sociology, anthropology.

**Allies:** students, student groups who work on issues related to land, palm oil and deforestation impact such as human rights, labor, environmental, climate, land rights, racial and social justice groups, ethnic studies departments; students or college staff who have relationship with the college president or finance officer. Also, think about the countries where palm oil is a big issue: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia; Central America, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru; and West Africa, and seek out students and student groups who may be active in solidarity efforts with these countries.

See Resources section for more power-mapping resources.

### 3: Build public support

In order to build the pressure needed to get your decision-maker to implement a Deforestation Free Investment policy, you need to develop public support for your campaign. Set a goal for how many petition signatures you need to collect in order to show your decision-maker that there's a substantial number of people supporting your ask. You don't need everyone to support you but having a large amount of support is crucial for exerting influence over your targeted decision-maker.

Educate the public about your campaign to collect petition signatures and build a large support base.

- **Hold creative educational events such as a film screening or debate to educate your peers about issues associated with palm oil and ask them to take action to solve these issues by signing your petition.** See Resources section for tips on how to organize actions and events.

#### Some ideas for how to educate your community:

- **Film screening:** organize a screening of a movie or video about palm oil and deforestation to educate people about your campaign. See Resources section for our list of recommended films and videos.
- **House party:** invite your friends and family to your house to learn about palm oil and deforestation; make it a fun and informal atmosphere conducive to learning and dialogue. Provide snacks, show a video clip, and/or have an issue expert speak.
- **Panel discussion/debate:** invite people to speak about the various issues related to palm oil such as climate change, labor, human rights and biodiversity issues; or structure the event as a debate and invite speakers with differing opinions on the palm oil issue to discuss their different perspectives on how to address the problem and start a healthy discussion about Deforestation Free Investment in your community.
- **Table or canvass in a public space:** table or canvass in front of a public meeting place in your community such as your school's dining hall, your local supermarket or library  
See Resources section for tips on how to canvass.
- **Meet with as many groups as possible and have them sign your petition. Recruit a support base of individuals who consistently take action to support your campaign and are willing to take on leadership responsibilities. Increase someone's engagement by asking them to take on more responsibility with each action they do with you. This is called "moving up the ladder of engagement".** See Resources section for more tips on activist recruitment.

#### Typical Activist Engagement Ladder:





#### 4: Apply pressure: deliver petitions

Once you have garnered a strong base of supporters for your campaign and met your petition signature goal, deliver the petitions to your decision-maker in a public manner to put pressure on them.

- **Hold a creative demonstration (march, rally, street theater, etc.) outside their building.**  
See our [Resources](#) section for tips on how to organize creative actions.
- **Create your own media coverage of the action by writing a press release, posting on social media, publishing a Letter to the Editor or writing a blog article.**

##### **Traditional media:**

For guidance on how to send a press release and reach out to local reporters email us at [DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org](mailto:DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org) or see [Resources](#) section for some tips.

##### **NonTraditional media:**

Publish an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor (LTE) in local news outlets. Post photos and/or a video to announce your petition delivery action on social media outlets and tag your decision-maker and their institution.

This is your opportunity to bring together the folks who signed your petition to help out, ask them to: publish a LTE and/or post an ad in local news outlets (magazine, newsletter, newspaper); organize a Twitter and Facebook storm for the day of the petition delivery action; share your petition and informational materials with new people or write a blog article after the action.

For guidance on how to write a LTE or blog article see our [Resources](#) section. Once you've written the LTE or blog email it to us at: [DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org](mailto:DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org) so we can help you get it published!

#### 5: Confrontation: meet with decision-makers

Once you have delivered your petitions it's time to meet face to face with your decision-maker to escalate the pressure. Request a meeting with the investment board committee or finance manager to ask them to commit to our demand: to **disclose, commit, exclude and repair**. [Friends of the Earth's report, \*Are You Invested in Exploitation?: Why U.S. investment firms should quit financing conflict palm oil and commit to human rights\*](#) contains our in-depth campaign asks and information that will help a fund manager better understand the details of what we are asking of them. Deliver them a copy of the report.

Depending on the format of the meeting, you can present your ask in a short speech or give a power point presentation to educate people about the palm oil problem and how to go Deforestation and Land-grab Free. See [Resources](#) section for a sample speech.

As the meeting approaches, keep up the pressure with creative actions and other tactics. Host demonstrations outside of the meeting if you think the decision-makers need the extra push (the most likely scenario).

## 6: Escalation: take direct action

Most likely, the decision-makers will not respond the way you want, or will give vague assurances that they will take your concerns into consideration. If that's the case, it's time to escalate your campaign. Escalation can take a number of different forms: maybe you want to get employees to withhold contributions to their pension fund until the decision-makers commit to meet our demands; or maybe it's time to occupy their office building.

Escalating your campaign can be a serious and thrilling decision. Please know that you'll have our support and friends from the fossil-fuel divestment movement to back to you up if you decide to go in this direction.

Direct Action Basics from Ruckus Society's **Guide to Direct Action**:

### What is direct action?

Direct action means taking collective action to change our circumstances, without handing our power to a middle person.

### Common use of direct action :

- To pressure a target
- To sound the alarm- alert folks to issue
- To empower people
- To directly stop a social, environmental or political injustice
- To show a willful refusal to cooperate or participate in an injustice
- To re-imagine what's possible and create a community-based solution

### Types of direct action :

- **Protest** — registering dissent. Rallies, marches, teach-ins, pickets.
- **Non-cooperation** — withdrawing your power from the system to make it difficult to function. Boycott, labor strike, walkouts, withhold funding, civil disobedience of laws.
- **Intervention** — directly intervening in the functioning of the system. Fasting, occupation, blockades, tree sits, meeting disruption, street theater.
- **Creative solutions** — developing alternative community-based systems that challenge an injustice. Alternative social or economic institutions, alternative communication system, alternative markets.

**For more guidance on how to organize direct actions, see the Resources section.**

# 6

## Successful campaign stories

### Fossil fuel divestment campaigns

In December of 2015, 350.org and Divest-Invest announced that more than 500 institutions representing more than \$3.4 trillion in assets have made some form of fossil fuel divestment commitment.<sup>x</sup> Among the most recent notable institutions to partially or completely divest from fossil fuels are California Public Employees' Retirement System (CALPERS), the Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Canadian Medical Association, the World Council of Churches, the University of California system, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, the KR Foundation, Leonardo DiCaprio and the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation.<sup>xi</sup>

#### Governments and pension funds

More than 70 governments and 65 pension fund companies have made some form of fossil fuel divestment commitment.<sup>xii</sup> Some notable cities that have made fossil fuel divestment commitments include: Washington D.C., Ann Arbor, MI, Boulder, CO, Minneapolis, MN, Madison, WI, Seattle, WA.

#### California made history in 2015 when it passed the first binding divestment law

California state legislature passed the **first piece of divestment legislation** in the country requiring the two largest public pensions in the state, CALPERS and CALSTRS to divest from coal. While local organizers are still agitating for the state to divest from oil and gas (as well as ban fracking in the state), this legislation sets a precedent for using the state house to mandate climate action. It also cracked open public pensions as a ripe sector for divestment campaigning. New divestment legislation will be introduced in 2016 in New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Maine and Hawaii.<sup>xiii</sup>

#### Colleges

Nearly 40 colleges have made some form of fossil fuel divestment commitment including Stanford, Georgetown, the University of California, the University of Washington, Syracuse University, the University of Hawaii and Oxford. Considered to be one of the most powerful divestments yet, in September 2015 the University of California announced that it had pulled \$200 million out of coal and oil sands investments.<sup>xiv</sup> In June 2015, Columbia University became the first university to divest from private prisons.<sup>xv</sup>

### Palm oil producer and consumer brand zero deforestation commitments

In the past several years, environmental campaigns have won a series of unprecedented victories on palm oil. Dozens of snack food companies that use palm oil as an ingredient in their food products have committed to stop buying from dirty palm oil companies. Some of these brand-name companies include: Kellogg's, Nestle's, Mars, Mondelez, Hershey's, General Mills, ConAgra Foods, Smucker's, Krispy Kreme, Dunkin' Brands and Grupo Bimbo. In addition, many of the world's largest agribusiness companies that produce and trade palm oil have made commitments to "zero deforestation and zero exploitation". These companies, which many of us have never heard of, include Cargill, Unilever, Wilmar, and Golden-Agri Resources.



A partial list of companies that have pledged to go 'deforestation free' as of September, 2015



## Palm oil and land grabbing finance campaigns



Deutsche Bank

### Deutsche Bank divests from Bumitama Agri.

Friends of the Earth's palm oil campaign persuaded [Deutsche Bank to divest](#) from one of our target companies in 2014.



NORGES BANK  
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

### Norway's Government Pension Fund Global (GPF), the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, divests from world's dirtiest palm oil companies

The Rainforest Foundation Norway, a Norwegian NGO, was successful in getting the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, the Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global (GPF), to adopt tropical deforestation as a priority issue in its efforts to reduce climate change risk. This led to GPF eventually deciding to divest from most of the world's worst palm oil companies – including the companies our targets TIAA-CREF and Dimensional Fund Advisors invest in— because they fail to meet the fund's ethical criteria. For more information about this campaign success story see Rainforest Foundation Norway's report: [Rainforest protection and responsible investment: A quick-start guide to improving companies' behaviour in rainforests by influencing investors.](#)

J.P.Morgan  
Asset Management

### JPMorgan Chase adopts an environmental and social framework that covers palm oil

Friends of the Earth was part of a successful effort to persuade JPMorgan Chase bank to adopt a policy framework that prevents them from making loans to palm oil companies that cause deforestation and land grabbing.



### TIAA-CREF publically accused of land-grabbing in Brazil.

TIAA-CREF—**one of our top targets**— was called out by the [New York Times](#) and [NPR](#) for investing in Brazilian farmland that was acquired through land grabbing.<sup>xvi</sup> This case shows that public pressure is also building for getting powerful institutions like TIAA-CREF to end their ties to other environmentally and socially destructive activities such as land-grabbing. However, there's much more work to be done to ensure TIAA-CREF commits to cutting its ties to deforestation and land grabbing.

All of these cases show that the movement to shift towards a non-extractive economy that respects the rights of people and the environment is growing and has achieved monumental gains. People are increasingly holding powerful institutions accountable and demanding that they be environmentally and socially responsible. Public and private institutions are taking concrete actions to match their money with their morals. There is a growing movement of people who are interested in investing not just to make a profit but also to make a social impact. That is why we are building off of this momentum and taking the next step in making the world a better place by calling on investment firms to stop investing in deforestation and land grabbing.



# 7

## Frequently asked questions

### What is dirty palm oil?

**Dirty palm oil** is any palm oil that causes social and environmental harm in the process of producing it. Derived from the fruit of the West African oil palm tree, palm oil is the world's most widely traded vegetable oil, with production projected to double over the next decade.<sup>xvii</sup> Palm oil, used in over half the food and cosmetics on our shelves, as well as in biofuels in many countries, has become a serious problem that pervades all facets of our lives.

### What is deforestation and land grabbing?

**Deforestation** is the process of cutting down or burning native tree species in a forest. In the case of palm oil, deforestation occurs when palm oil companies cut down forests and dry out wetlands to make space to develop palm oil plantations. Due to the massive recent expansion of this industry, which relies on large areas of land to generate profits, palm oil production has become the fastest growing cause of deforestation. Because palm oil is grown in tropical forest regions, deforestation from palm oil poses threats to biodiversity, our climate and local and indigenous communities. [For more info, see these fact sheets: Driving deforestation: The ills of palm oil production, Palm oil's impact on climate change, Palm oil's threat to biodiversity.](#)



**Land grabbing** can also be referred to as 'large-scale land acquisitions' which are land purchases often involving tens or even hundreds of thousands of hectares of land (a hectare is about 2.5 acres), and are often intended to produce commodities for foreign food and biofuel markets. More generally, 'land grabs' applies to land that was previously used by local communities for subsistence agriculture, and then leased or sold to outside investors (including corporations and governments) without the consent of local communities, harming community interests. [For more info see our fact sheet: The case against land grabbing.](#)



## Why target investment companies and not food companies?

Photo: Stephen Johnson

A very robust and successful consumer campaign targeting the food and other consumer companies that buy dirty palm oil already exists. Many consumer companies have already made zero deforestation commitments. There's still much more work to be done in putting pressure on investment companies to cut their ties to dirty palm oil and deforestation. Palm oil is a capital-intensive industry and relies on public and private financing to continue to grow at the pace it has. In the movement to stop deforestation and land-grabbing, Friends of the Earth U.S. is playing the crucial role of putting pressure on financial institutions—one of the most powerful forces in society—to commit to implementing similar zero deforestation, zero exploitation policies that will further improve the practices of the palm oil industry. Our goal is change the behavior of investment companies and the way people invest so that they act not only based on what's most profitable but also on what's environmentally and socially responsible.



## Why Deforestation and Land Grab-Free investment and not palm oil divestment?



The fossil fuel and private prison divestment movements are right to demand that institutions completely divest from fossil fuels and private prisons: the private prison industry causes only harm for society and should not exist., and the fossil fuel industry is driving us to the brink of planetary destruction and needs to be phased out in favor of clean, renewable energy sources.

In contrast, the palm oil industry's core function and purpose, to produce palm oil, does not inherently harm people and the environment. It is the process by which palm oil is produced that makes it dirty, and the scale to which it has grown that makes it purely destructive. We have more power to pressure the palm oil industry to improve its practices on the ground by asking investment companies in the industry to use their Deforestation and Land Grab-Free investment commitment to require the palm oil producer companies they invest in to improve their practices and adopt measures that ensure the protection of forests and human rights. When they do not improve practices – and many do not – divestment becomes necessary. The third pillar in our four-pillar approach (Disclose, Commit, Exclude, Repair), is **exclude**, which essentially means divest: rather than asking for divestment across the board, we are asking investment companies to exclude, or divest from, any companies that cause deforestation and land grabbing.

Another important reason is, in contrast to fossil fuels, there are many financial firms that are not invested in palm oil, because palm oil is a much smaller sector. This is why our campaign is not simply asking for investment companies to take their money out of palm oil, but is asking for all investment companies to **disclose** their palm oil investments and **commit** to a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free investment policy that will prevent **ALL investments in any form of deforestation and land grabbing**.



## Where is palm oil produced and who produces it?

Wherever there's tropical rainforest, there are palm oil plantations. Almost 90 percent of the world's palm oil comes from Indonesia and Malaysia;<sup>xviii</sup> in Indonesia alone, the palm oil industry deforests an area the size of Rhode Island every year.<sup>xix</sup> The industry is growing rapidly in equatorial Africa, Mesoamerica, and South America as well. In all these regions, deforestation is driving the loss of species, threatening the livelihoods and cultures of local people, and contributing to climate change at an alarming rate.

Many palm oil companies are based in the global South, while much of the palm oil they produce is then shipped and sold by large U.S and European multinational companies such as Cargill, Unilever and Archer Daniels Midland and then re-sold to consumer goods companies like Pepsico, Yum! Brands, Nestle and so forth.

### Countries where palm oil is produced:

#### South and Southeast Asia

Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Cambodia, Thailand, India  
Some of the thousands of palm oil companies based in the region include:

**Bumitama Agri Ltd** - palm oil plantation company based in Indonesia, one of the country's largest palm oil producers, sells to global palm oil traders like IOI Corporation and Wilmar International. FELDA Global Ventures – based in Malaysia, is world's largest producer of crude palm oil, with operations in 10 countries.

**FELDA Global Ventures** - based in Malaysia, is world's largest producer of crude palm oil, with operations in 10 countries.

**IOI Corporation** - Malaysia-based palm oil company that owns large palm oil plantations in both Malaysia and Indonesia and sells from third-party palm oil traders.

**Wilmar International** - based in Singapore, one of world's largest agribusinesses and palm oil trading companies, owns palm oil plantation land in Malaysia, Indonesia, Uganda and Nigeria and other countries in West Africa and the Congo Basin. Wilmar's operations account for 45 percent of all globally traded palm oil.

**Golden Agri-Resources (GAR)** - an Indonesian company listed on the Singapore stock Exchange, GAR is the world's second largest palm oil plantation company.

**Sime Darby** - a Malaysian multinational company that owns vast areas of palm oil plantations in several countries.

**Relevant reports:** [Up in Smoke: Failures in Wilmar's Promise to Clean Up the Palm Oil Business](#) (focus: Indonesia), [Commodity Crimes: Illicit land grabs, illegal palm oil, and endangered orangutans](#) (focus: Indonesia)

#### Latin America

Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil  
A few palm oil companies based in the region are:

**Grupo Olmeca** - is the largest palm oil company in Guatemala and **Grupo Dinant** is a Honduran company; both are notorious for historic human rights problems, and both sell palm oil to multinational traders including Wilmar International and Cargill.

**Oleofinos and OleoMex** - two large Mexican palm oil traders.

**Grupo Bimbo** - is a Mexican multinational food conglomerate that buys much of the palm oil produced in Central America for use in its brand-name consumer products.

#### Africa

Uganda, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra León, Cote D'Ivoire, Cameroon, Togo, Democratic Republic of Congo

Many Southeast Asian companies are operating in Africa, including **Wilmar International**, **Sime Darby**, and **Golden Veroleum**, a subsidiary of Golden Agri-Resources.

Interestingly, the oil palm tree is native to West Africa and palm oil is a basic food staple there, and is also used for medicine, soap and other common uses. It is grown as one among many trees in mixed garden plots, where it is completely sustainable. Like corn, sugar or any other food crop, it is only when grown as an industrial monoculture crop that it becomes an environmental hazard.

**Relevant reports:** [Exploitation and Empty Promises: Wilmar's Nigerian Land Grab](#) (focus: Nigeria), [Case study: Wilmar International in Uganda](#)

# 8

## Additional Information

### Some TIAA-CREF Client institutions

#### Public and Private Institutions



**act:onaid**

#### COLLEGES and UNIVERSITIES

##### Midwest/ Southwest:

University of Chicago  
University of Illinois school system  
University of Texas school system

##### New England:

Harvard  
Boston University  
Yale  
Middlebury  
Tufts

##### NY:

City University of New York  
State University of New York  
Columbia University  
NYU  
Bard College

##### West Coast:

Stanford University  
Washington University  
Oregon public university school system

##### DC/ South:

American University  
Georgetown University  
George Washington University  
University of Maryland  
John Hopkins University  
Duke University

## Some notable DFA client institutions

### Partial list of Dimensional Fund Advisors' better known clients

(Note: As of March 3, 2014, this list was posted on Dimensional Fund Advisors' website, but was removed when public advocacy efforts began to encourage clients to contact DFA concerning its forest investments.)

#### Public funds

Arizona State Retirement System.	Marin County Employees' Retirement Association
California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS)	Maryland State Retirement Agency
City and County of San Francisco	Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System
City of Kalamazoo	Montana Board of Investments
City of San Diego	Nebraska Investment Council
City of Seattle	South Dakota Investment Council
County of Kalamazoo	St. Louis Public Schools Retirement System
Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund	St. Paul teachers Retirement Fund Association
Indiana Public Employees Retirement Fund	Utah State Retirement System

#### Non-Profit Organizations

Baptist Foundation of Alabama	Misericordia Home Endowment
California Institute of Technology	New Haven Community Foundation
California Wellness Foundation	The New Jersey Education Association
Carnegie Mellon University	The Pennsylvania State University
Chicago Community Foundation	Public Policy Institute of California
Gonzaga University	St. John's Hospital and Health Center
Idaho Community Foundation	San Francisco Foundation
J. Paul Getty Trust	Toledo Community Foundation
Kansas Health	United Way of Palm Beach County
Kansas University Foundation	University of Miami
Lubrizol Corporation Foundation	Western Michigan University Foundation
Lucille Packard Foundation for Childrens' Health	Winnipeg Foundation

#### UNIONS/Taft-Hartley Funds

Local 815 Affiliated Trust Funds
National Automatic Sprinkler Industry Pension Fund
National Electrical benefit Fund
UNITE General Fund and ILGWU Funds



## Executive summary of “Are you invested in exploitation?” report

In the past several years, driven by pressure from civil society, dozens of consumer companies with over \$30 billion in annual palm oil sales have instituted voluntary commitments to “No Deforestation and No Exploitation” – showing a willingness to address the risks associated with an industry that causes the loss of millions of hectares of rainforest and that drives widespread social and cultural harm. Not all of these commitments are created equal, and none are being implemented as rapidly or as thoroughly as necessary, given the scale and pace of the destruction. In order for these commitments by agribusiness companies and consumer brands to drive change, they need to be backed up by a similar tidal shift towards environmental and social responsibility in the finance industry.

Like corporations, the finance sector has human rights obligations, which have been articulated in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Although there are no clear laws in the U.S. requiring that investment firms or institutional investors respect human rights, or even disclose their ESG impacts and risks, private finance must recognize its role in driving deforestation and land grabbing. It should view the current wave of sustainability commitments in the consumer goods arena as an opportunity to shift towards lending and investment practices that foster positive change and reduce Environmental, Social and Governance risk.

Friends of the Earth calls on investors to quit deforestation and commit to human rights by disclosing exposure to deforestation and land risk in palm oil and other soft commodities sectors; committing to a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment policy; excluding companies that cannot meet this standard; and repairing the damage by supporting robust accountability processes and restoration of ecological damage.

**Disclose:** opaque value chains in the palm oil sector can make due diligence exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, investors should undertake regular disclosures, institute commitments that hold investee companies to account, and make it clear that investee companies that fail to meet these standards will be excluded from investment portfolios.

**Commit:** Investment firms should commit to Deforestation-free, Land grab-free investment policies in order to reduce exposure to ESG risk and drive change in investee companies in the palm oil and other soft commodities sectors. There is no one-size fits all investment policy, any more than there is a single approach to managing ESG risk. However, there is abundant guidance available for the development and implementation of such a policy.

**Exclude:** A robust Deforestation-free, Land grab-free investment policy will impact portfolio selection and should result in the exclusion of the most egregious palm oil companies.

**Repair:** The UN Guiding Principles require companies to provide “access to remedy,” but the challenge of doing this has yet to be widely taken up. Investment firms and institutional investors can drive investee companies to take up the challenge of providing remedy for past harms by requiring investee companies involved in forests, land acquisitions and commodity crops, to have active grievance mechanisms and to commit to ecosystem restoration.

In the broader context, remedy, and what we at Friends of the Earth call “repair,” implies shifting investments towards sectors that do as little harm and as much social good as possible.

**From Friends of the Earth’s report:** [Are You Invested in Exploitation? Why US investment firms should quit financing conflict palm oil and commit to human rights](#)

# 9

## Resources

### Tips for HOLDING A MEETING

350.org- Host a meet-up: <http://350.org/resources/host-meetup/>

### Tips for POWER-MAPPING

**Organizing for Power** - Power mapping resources: <http://organizingforpower.org/tools/>

**The Change Agency** - Power map template: <http://www.thechangeagency.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/power-map-template.pdf>

### Tips for ACTIVIST RECRUITMENT

350.org- Volunteer engagement ladder: <http://trainings.350.org/resource/increase-your-volunteers-involvement/>

### What Materials Will You Need?

Your table needs to draw people over to you to learn more about the Deforestation Free Investment, and once folks are there, you'll need to educate and engage. If you're canvassing, wearing a FOE shirt or having a campaign message on the back of your clipboard helps draw people over.

#### Checklist

- ☐ Banner/signs; Props/photos other attention-getters
- ☐ Tape, stapler, safety pins To empower people
- ☐ Pens, clipboard
- ☐ Campaign for Deforestation Free Investment informational materials (included in this action kit)
- ☐ Contact info for event organizer, other volunteers
- ☐ Snacks and water

### Best practices for tabling or canvassing:

- Familiarize yourself with the campaign materials and the issue.
- Start conversations with a short and upbeat opening, like "Hello! Have you heard about Deforestation Free Investment?" or "Hi! Do you know what palm oil is?" then ask if they want to learn more and sign the petition.
- Make sure people sign up for our e-mail list so we can share important information and expand our network! Say something like, "We're here today to collect signatures to send to xxx pension fund to ask them to commit to Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment. Would you take a second to sign?" Most folks say yes, but if someone says no you can say, "Okay, here is some information about the issue. Please visit the website if you're interested."
- It is okay to say "I don't know" to topics you're unfamiliar with. Direct people to our website or have them e-mail questions to [DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org](mailto:DeforestationFreeAction@foe.org).

## Info for organizing a FILM SCREENING

The following documentaries and videos are all terrific ways to start the conversation about the importance of getting your money out of dirty palm oil. After the film, you can hold a public discussion. Contact us for support to organize a film screening. \*Please make sure to visit the website for each film to learn more about hosting a screening and rights to the film.

### FILM/TV EPISODES

#### Vice TV

- Indonesia's Palm Bomb  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xOPKl169SU>  
Skip to 15:51 for the Palm Oil segment.

#### Resistencia: The Fight for Aguan Valley

(about Honduran resistance to the palm oil company Grupo Dinant )

- TRAILER: [resistenciathefilm.com/trailer](http://resistenciathefilm.com/trailer)

#### Coco TV

- Sumatra Burning: the heart of palm oil  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEKfYZBE14I>

#### Years of Living Dangerously series

(on Amazon Prime & Showtime)

- Indonesia Haze and Deforestation (Harrison Ford)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzI7kVNBLe0>
- Arnold Schwarzenegger  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJcapPimRbg>

### VIDEOS

#### Friends of the Earth

##### Friends of the Earth U.S.

- Land Grabbing and Deforestation for Palm oil  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzq2VaM3ln4>
- Rowing against the tide: Fighting palm oil destruction in Indonesia (Indonesia, Uganda)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go5-31WFgno>
- We Reject the Palm Oil Companies because this is our home (Indonesia)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDf6W\\_LaFzc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDf6W_LaFzc)

##### Friends of the Earth Uganda (NAPE)

- The Land Grab - Uganda's farmers battle with palm oil producers  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w21NJGbtBuQ>
- Wilmar video  
<https://vimeo.com/144793980>

##### Friends of the Earth Europe

- Palm oil and biofuels interview with Nego Tarigan, director of Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WAHLI)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4seRD7l6wmQ>
- Stop land grabbing for palm oil in Uganda  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=az5Tc91Hvfw>

#### Sum of Us

- A Cheesy love story  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPlxNhEc2IA>

#### Rainforest Action Network

- Orangutan sign language  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G32YehcdUAW>
- Fast facts about palm oil
  - > Palm oil expansion  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PtDyUbb64>
  - > Sumatran elephant  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sN1rID\\_dmr0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sN1rID_dmr0)
  - > Pepsi and palm oil  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4thG9-ltZLc>
- What does conflict palm oil look like in Indonesia?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZpH1oF2aAE>
- Warning: may contain palm oil  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKpTE5ID\\_OE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKpTE5ID_OE)

#### Greenpeace

- Protect Paradise: An Animation about Palm Oil  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G32YehcdUAW>
- Fast facts about palm oil
  - > Palm oil expansion  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0o6WHN4NDTk>
  - > Dove Onslaught  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odl7pQFyjso>
  - > Seen P&G's Thank you Mom? Find out the hidden truth  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NbsVwzTb\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NbsVwzTb_A)
  - > Freedom Struggle episode: Nandikesh Sivalingam of Greenpeace on Palm oil and coal mining  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YJ5uLCIM9Y>



## Tips for organizing CREATIVE ACTIONS

### 350.org

- How to organize an action:  
<http://350.org/resources/hold-action/>  
<http://350.org/resources/get-creative/>

### Ruckus Society

- Creative action tips and chant songs:  
<http://organizingforpower.org/songs/>

## Tips for organizing DIRECT ACTIONS

### Ruckus Society

- Guide to organizing a direct action:  
<http://350.org/resources/hold-action/>  
<http://350.org/resources/get-creative/>

### Ruckus Society

- Creative action tips and chant songs:  
<http://www.toolsforchange.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/RuckusActionStratGuide9.pdf?4c19cd>
- Action Planning template:  
<http://organizingforpower.org/action-planning-template/>

### Beautiful Trouble

- Direct action tactic:  
<http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/direct-action/>



## Tips for getting MEDIA COVERAGE

### NON-TRADITIONAL MEDIA

#### Write a Letter to the Editor or Op-Ed

Newspapers are still excellent ways to find public affairs information and spread information to masses of people. Op-eds and letters to the editors (LTE) are wonderful opportunities to speak directly to the public about an issue, respond to a recent event or issue covered by the publication and to shape the debate. They are short but can have big impacts.

#### How to submit an LTE or an op-ed:

- Familiarize yourself with the campaign materials and the issue.
- Start conversations with a short and upbeat opening, like “Hello! Have you heard about Deforestation Free Investment?” or “Hi! Do you know what palm oil is?” then ask if they want to learn more and sign the petition.
- Make sure people sign up for our e-mail list so we can share important information and expand our network! Say something like, “We’re here today to collect signatures to send to xxx pension fund to ask them to commit to Deforestation and Land Grab-Free Investment. Would you take a second to sign?” Most folks say yes, but if someone says no you can say, “Okay, here is some information about the issue. Please visit the website if you’re interested.”
- It is okay to say “I don’t know” to topics you’re unfamiliar with. Direct people to our website or have them e-mail questions to [deforestationfreeinvestment@foe.org](mailto:deforestationfreeinvestment@foe.org).

#### Tips:

- Keep it short: 150-200 words. Write in short paragraphs. Op-eds may be longer (500-800 words).
- Points should be concise and specific.
- You’re most likely to get published if you react to a recent publication. Respond quickly.
- Focus on one main point with a compelling argument and use important facts to back up your opinion.
- Make it personal. Include why you care about the issue or connect it to your local community.

#### Write a blog post

A blog can be a great way to project your voice on the web and spread awareness about an issue. Don’t have a blog? Start one for free at [Wordpress.com](https://www.wordpress.com), [Medium.com](https://www.medium.com) or [Tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com).

- Be short and concise – 100-500 words with a clear topic and focus. Be sure to cite sources.
- Be creative! Add in your own pictures, videos or graphics.
- End with a call to action. Let others know what they can do.

### TRADITIONAL MEDIA

**Hold a press conference** at your petition-delivery rally or on the day you meet with your decision-maker to get news coverage of your campaign and to put pressure on your target.

#### How to guide:

- Choose **spokespeople** to tell your story to the press. Representatives can be pension fund holders, allied organizations, or influential community leaders. (Ex: for TIAACREF- professors, campus staff...; for CITY/STATE- pension fund board members, local politicians, local business-owners...)
- Have each representative speak about need for your target to adopt a Deforestation Land Grab-Free investment policy and get your local community news outlets (newspapers, radio, TV) to cover the event.
- Write a **press advisory** to alert your local media about your press conference. Send it out a few days before the event. (Click [here](#) for sample press advisory)
- The day of the press conference: send your media contacts a press release summarizing the press conference, any action you did along with it and include some quotes from the representatives who spoke. (Click [here](#) for sample press release)

**For more tips on how to get media coverage see 350.org’s guide:** <http://350.org/resources/get-the-word-out/>

## Sample speech to an investment board

(Takes 2 ½ minutes to read aloud):

Members of the Board – thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning. My name is **[name]**, and I volunteer with **[group]** and am from **[place]**. I am speaking to you today on behalf of Friends of the Earth, an international environmental organization with member groups in 75 countries.

The issue I want to bring to your attention has to do with palm oil – a relatively unknown commodity crop that happens to be in about half of the processed foods on our shelves, and is the single leading cause of tropical rainforest destruction today.

**[Fund manager that manages investments in palm oil ex: Dimensional Fund Advisors (DFA)]**, which manages funds for [government pension fund or school ex: City of Seattle Retirement System], is one of the largest holders of shares in palm oil growers and traders in the United States, with holdings of **[amount of money invested in palm oil, ex: \$370 million]** through at least [# of palm oil companies, ex: 14] companies.

We believe that this gives [targeted school or gov't pension fund] a unique opportunity to take action to protect rainforests by developing a policy to make all of its investments “deforestation-free” and joining other [city pension funds or schools] to ask that **[fund manager, ex: DFA]** do the same. Here’s the problem: The rapid expansion of the global palm oil industry into the world’s remaining tropical forests is leading to massive rainforest destruction, species extinction and human rights violations. Between 2010 and 2015, the world lost 16 million acres of forest per year, mainly due to the expansion of palm oil and other agricultural commodities in the tropics.<sup>xx</sup> Tropical deforestation is also a major contributor to climate change – second only to fossil fuels – and the palm oil industry is a major driver of this deforestation.

Since 2008, major financial institutions have invested more than \$20 billion in the palm oil industry.<sup>xxi</sup> Of this amount, more than ten percent is managed by investment firms in the United States. Among U.S. asset managers, **[fund manager]** is the single biggest investor in palm oil. And [fund manager] manages our money here in **[city/state or college]**.

We understand that [city/state or college, ex: Seattle]’s own funds may be exposed to palm oil, and we believe that **[city/state or college]** has a unique opportunity to engage in the solution by taking an approach to environmental and social risk based on Friends of the Earth’s Four Pillars of Responsibility for Deforestation Free Investment. That is to ask **[fund manager]** to:

1. **Disclose** their exposure to deforestation through palm oil and other soft commodities.
2. **Commit** to a deforestation and land grab-free investment policy.
3. **Exclude** companies that fail to meet the standards of this policy commitment.
4. **Repair** the damage by supporting companies that restore ecological damage as part of their commitment to forests.

After hearing more about the negative implications of being exposed to the palm industry and steps investment companies can take to address this issue, will you commit to implementing a Deforestation Free Investment policy?



## Fact Sheets

- [Palm oil finance fact sheet](#)
- [How the palm oil industry is a major driver of climate change](#)
- [Issue Brief: Palm oil's Assault on Tropical Biodiversity:](#)
- [Driving deforestation: The environmental and social ills of palm oil production](#)
- [The case against land grabbing](#)
- [Palm oil in the North American consumer market](#)

## Reports

- [Are You Invested in Exploitation? Why US investment firms should quit financing conflict palm oil and commit to human rights](#)
- [Up in smoke: Failures in Wilmar's promise to clean up the palm oil business \(focus: Indonesia\)](#)
- [Exploitation and empty promises - Wilmar's Nigerian land grab \(focus: Nigeria\)](#)
- [Commodity Crimes: Illicit land grabs, illegal palm oil, and endangered orangutans \(focus: Indonesia\)](#)
- [Palm oil land grab in Uganda: Wilmar International's violations in Kalangala Island](#)

## On influencing investors

- [Rainforest protection and responsible investment: A quick-start guide to improving companies' behaviour in rainforests by influencing investors](#)

A report published by **Rainforest Foundation Norway** about their successful campaign to get Norway's Government Pension Fund Global (GPF) to implement a socially responsible investment policy that protects the rainforest and how to influence socially responsible investors to bring about positive changes in the industries that cause deforestation and exploitation.



## Sample petitions

Whether you're targeting your college or government pension fund or you decide to target a different company, use our sample petitions to start your petition campaign. Edit the relevant sample petition letter to include the current date, address of the target institution, and name of the targeted decision-maker. Print out copies and start collecting petition signatures! [Highlight the text in the letter below and copy and paste it to create your letter(s)]

### COLLEGE PENSION FUND Petition Template

Dear Rob Ferguson, CEO of TIAA-CREF,

I am writing to ask that you institute a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free investment policy across all of your investment vehicles. Specifically, I am concerned that TIAA-CREF holds several hundred million dollars worth of shares in destructive palm oil companies. TIAA-CREF's continued financing of palm oil's worst offenders therefore contributes to far-reaching environmental and social problems and exposes both TIAA-CREF and its clients to reputational and financial risk. Of all the institutions that ought to be looking out for the public good, surely our nation's colleges and universities are foremost among them. That's why I ask that investments managed by TIAA-CREF stop supporting an industry that's causing deforestation and climate change, killing endangered animals and violating human rights and re-invest in a more sustainable future.

Palm oil, used in over half the food and cosmetics on our shelves, as well as in biofuels in many countries, is the single fastest growing driver of deforestation and displacement of forest-dwelling indigenous communities across the tropics, and is a major driver of climate change. Deforestation is responsible for some 10-15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions – more than the emissions from all the cars, trucks, trains, and buses in the world each year combined. While palm oil production damages the environment as a whole, it has a particularly acute impact on the human rights of marginalized people in the global south, through coercive takeovers of their lands, well-documented labor abuses, and far-reaching impacts on cultures and livelihoods. As such, it is neither sustainable nor just.

As the palm oil sector's environmental and social impacts become more widely recognized, investments in these destructive palm oil companies are becoming increasingly risky.

Many banks and institutional investors are increasingly adopting policies to prevent financing companies that operate in ways that are illegal or unethical. The Norwegian Government Pension Fund, for example, excludes most of the world's largest palm oil companies – including the companies held by TIAA-CREF – because they fail to meet the fund's ethical criteria.

I believe TIAA-CREF should follow suit and commit to a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free investment policy that entails four pillars of responsibility: to publicly **disclose** its palm oil holdings, **commit** to a deforestation-free, land grab-free investment policy, **exclude** companies that do not meet the criteria of the aforementioned policy, advocate with the companies it owns to **repair** social and environmental harm; and to **re-invest** in a more sustainable future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

## GOVERNMENT PENSION FUND Petition Template

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To [GOVERNMENT PENSION FUND, Ex: San Francisco Employee Retirement System,],

Dimensional Fund Advisors manages the pension funds for many city and state governments across the U.S. Dimensional has been found to have hundreds of millions of dollars invested in palm oil companies that cause deforestation and land grabbing. I am concerned that [GOVERNMENT PENSION FUND]'s investments is tied to deforestation and land grabbing through Dimensional Fund Advisors. Dimensional's continued financing of palm oil's worst offenders contributes to far-reaching environmental and social problems and exposes both the company and its clients to reputational and financial risk.

Palm oil, used in over half the food and cosmetics on our shelves, as well as in biofuels in many countries, is the single fastest growing driver of deforestation and displacement of forest-dwelling indigenous communities across the tropics, and is a major driver of climate change. Deforestation is responsible for some 10-15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions – more than the emissions from all the cars, trucks, trains, and buses in the world each year combined. While palm oil production damages the environment as a whole, it has a particularly acute impact on the human rights of marginalized people in the global south, through coercive takeovers of their lands, well-documented labor abuses, and far-reaching impacts on cultures and livelihoods.

As the palm oil sector's environmental and social impacts become more widely recognized, investments in these destructive palm oil companies are becoming increasingly risky.

As institutions that serve the public good, local and state governments have a responsibility to act based on what's in the best interest of people and the planet. That's why they must stop supporting an industry that's causing deforestation and climate change, killing endangered animals and violating human rights and reinvest in alternative solutions. Financial institutions are increasingly implementing policies to prevent financing companies that operate in ways that are illegal, unethical, or environmentally destructive. For example, more than 70 government organizations and 65 pension funds have made some form of fossil fuel divestment commitment. The Norwegian Government Pension Fund excludes most of the world's largest palm oil companies – including companies owned by Dimensional – because they fail to meet the fund's ethical criteria.

I believe it is the responsibility of [GOVERNMENT PENSION FUND] to follow suit and **commit to a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free investment policy** that will send a clear message to Dimensional and other pension fund managers to **disclose** all investments in palm oil, **commit** to a deforestation-free and land grab-free investment policy, **exclude** all palm oil companies that do not meet the criteria of the aforementioned policy, advocate with the companies they own to **repair** social and environmental harm; and **re-invest** in a more sustainable future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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## MUTUAL FUND Petition Template

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Dear William McNabb III, CEO of Vanguard,

I am writing to ask that you institute a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free investment policy across all of your investment vehicles. Specifically, I am concerned that Vanguard holds billions of dollars worth of shares in destructive palm oil companies. Vanguard's continued financing of palm oil's worst offenders therefore contributes to far-reaching environmental and social problems and exposes both Vanguard and its clients to reputational and financial risk.

Palm oil, used in over half the food and cosmetics on our shelves, as well as in biofuels in many countries, is the single fastest growing driver of deforestation and displacement of forest-dwelling indigenous communities across the tropics, and is a major driver of climate change. Deforestation is responsible for some 10-15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions – more than the emissions from all the cars, trucks, trains, and buses in the world each year combined. While palm oil production damages the environment as a whole, it has a particularly acute impact on the human rights of marginalized people in the global south, through coercive takeovers of their lands, well-documented labor abuses, and far-reaching impacts on cultures and livelihoods. Palm oil production is based on an extractive agro-industrial plantation model that robs local communities of the cultural and economic value of their land and converts these values into wealth for national and foreign elites – the global one percent. As such, it is neither sustainable nor just. As the palm oil sector's environmental and social impacts become more widely recognized, investments in these destructive palm oil companies are becoming increasingly risky.

As the palm oil sector's environmental and social impacts become more widely recognized, investments in these destructive palm oil companies are becoming increasingly risky.

Many banks and institutional investors are increasingly adopting policies to prevent financing companies that operate in ways that are illegal or unethical – and I believe Vanguard should do the same. The Norwegian Government Pension Fund, for example, excludes most of the world's largest palm oil companies – including the companies held by Vanguard – because they fail to meet the fund's ethical criteria.

I believe Vanguard should follow suit and commit to a Deforestation and Land Grab-Free investment approach that entails four pillars of responsibility: to publicly **disclose** its palm oil holdings, **commit** to a deforestation-free, land grab-free investment policy, **exclude** companies that do not meet the criteria of the aforementioned policy, advocate with the companies it owns to **repair** social and environmental harm; and to re-invest in a more sustainable future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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[Copy and paste sign-up sheet below to end of your petition to collect petition signatures.]

NAME	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
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Please send completed petitions to:

Friends of the Earth: Deforestation Free Action, 1101 15th St. NW, 11th Floor Washington, DC 20005; Fax: 202-783-0444

<sup>i</sup> [http://www.forest-trends.org/documents/files/doc\\_4718.pdf](http://www.forest-trends.org/documents/files/doc_4718.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/03/11/almost-everything-you-buy-from-cereal-to-mascara-is-killing-the-rain-forest/>

<sup>iii</sup> [http://wwf.panda.org/what\\_we\\_do/footprint/agriculture/palm\\_oil/](http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/agriculture/palm_oil/)

<sup>iv</sup> White, Mel. "Borneo's Moment of Truth." National Geographic. November 2008. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/11/borneo/white-text/4>

<sup>v</sup> Carlson, Kimberly M. et al. "Carbon emissions from forest conversion by Kalimantan oil palm plantations." Nature Climate Change. 7 October 2012. <http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/ncli-mate1702.html>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods/>

<sup>vii</sup> Grayson, Jon and Jeanne Stampe. "2012 Palm Oil Investor Review: Investor Guidance on Palm Oil: the role of investors in supporting the development of a sustainable palm oil industry." World Wildlife Fund, 2012.

<sup>viii</sup> Among other sources, see United Nations Environment Programme (2015). Bank and Investor Risk Policies on Soft Commodities – a framework to evaluate deforestation and forest degradation risk in the agricultural value chain; The Financial Risks of Insecure Land Tenure: An Investment View. Prepared for the Rights and Resources Initiative

by The Munden Project. December 2012. At: [http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc\\_5715.pdf](http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_5715.pdf); No Excuse: How Australia's Big Four Banks Can Better Respond to Land Grabs. Oxfam Australia. 2015. At: <https://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-66-no-excuses-investor-briefing-report.pdf>; Tuk Indonesia & Profundo, Tycoon-controlled oil palm groups in Indonesia, Executive Summary, 2015. At: [www.tuk.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Tycoons-in-the-Indonesian-palm-oil-sector-140828-Tuk-Summary.pdf](http://www.tuk.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Tycoons-in-the-Indonesian-palm-oil-sector-140828-Tuk-Summary.pdf); Joint NGO Statement, 'Briefing to banks and potential investors on the ongoing risks and outstanding social issues in the palm oil business sector: Golden Agri-Resources (GAR) bond offering', BankTrack, 15 April 2015. At: [www.banktrack.org/show/news/briefing\\_to\\_banks\\_and\\_potential\\_investors\\_on\\_the\\_ongoing\\_risks\\_and\\_outstanding\\_social\\_conflicts\\_in\\_the\\_palm\\_oil\\_agribusiness\\_sector\\_golden\\_agri\\_resources\\_gar\\_bond\\_offering](http://www.banktrack.org/show/news/briefing_to_banks_and_potential_investors_on_the_ongoing_risks_and_outstanding_social_conflicts_in_the_palm_oil_agribusiness_sector_golden_agri_resources_gar_bond_offering)

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.bsr.org/en/our-insights/blog-view/what-the-oecd-guidelines-mean-for-investors> (accessed September 3, 2015)

<sup>x</sup> <http://gofossilfree.org/press-release/divestment-commitments-pass-the-3-4-trillion-mark-at-cop21/>

<sup>xi</sup> <http://gofossilfree.org/commitments/>

<sup>xii</sup> <http://gofossilfree.org/commitments/>

<sup>xiii</sup> <http://gofossilfree.org/usa/what-2015-means-for-2016s-divestment-campaigns/>

<sup>xiv</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/university-of-california-divest-fossil-fuels\\_us\\_55f1ccb2e4b093be51be0ae2](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/university-of-california-divest-fossil-fuels_us_55f1ccb2e4b093be51be0ae2)

<sup>xv</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/23/us/columbia-university-prison-divest/>

<sup>xvi</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/17/world/americas/tiaa-cref-us-investment-giant-accused-of-land-grabs-in-brazil.html>; <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/11/17/456351339/tiaa-cref-bought-brazilian-farmland-from-notorious-land-grabber-report-says>

<sup>xvii</sup> [http://wwf.panda.org/what\\_we\\_do/footprint/agriculture/palm\\_oil/](http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/agriculture/palm_oil/)

<sup>xviii</sup> White, Mel. "Borneo's Moment of Truth." National Geographic. November 2008. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/11/borneo/white-text/4>

<sup>xix</sup> Carlson, Kimberly M. et al. "Carbon emissions from forest conversion by Kalimantan oil palm plantations." Nature Climate Change. 7 October 2012. <http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/ncli-mate1702.html>

<sup>xx</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015: How are the world's forests change?. 2015.3

<sup>xxi</sup> Grayson, Jon and Jeanne Stampe. "2012 Palm Oil Investor Review: Investor Guidance on Palm Oil: the role of investors in supporting the development of a sustainable palm oil industry." World Wildlife Fund, 2012.



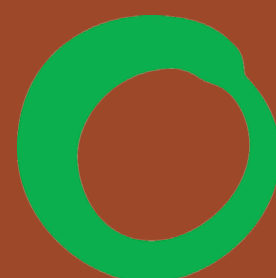




for the people

for the planet

for the future



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