testimony for BOR meeting 22 January 2015

Mark Hixon <hixonm@hawaii.edu>       Wed, Jan 21, 2015 at 6:48 PM
To: bor@hawaii.edu

Please see attachment. Thank you.

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Mark Hixon, Professor and
Hsiao Endowed Chair in Marine Biology
Department of Biology
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
2538 McCarthy Mall, Edmondson 216
Honolulu, HI 96822-2216

Office: Edmondson 417
Phone: 808-956-6427
E-mail: hixonm@hawaii.edu
Web: http://manoa.hawaii.edu/biology/people/mark-hixon

Outreach:

ThinkTech Hawai‘i TV interview
TED talk on coral reef conservation
TED talk on lionfish invasion
PBS TV on lionfish invasion

"I must be the change I wish to see in the world."
--attributed to Mahatma Gandhi

Mālama honua!

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Testimony before UH Board of Regents: 21 January 2015:

Good morning Chairman Moore, President Lassner, and Regents:

My name is Mark Hixon. I am a Professor and Sidney & Erica Hsiao Endowed Chair in Marine Biology at UH Mānoa. I’m here to speak on behalf of numerous students, faculty, and staff who request that the UH System divest from the fossil fuel industry.

I am honored to speak in this role because I have studied coral reefs for 35 years. In that time I have personally witnessed entire reefs in the Caribbean region DIE from ocean warming. Besides the emotional loss, the economic costs are formidable: lost tourism, depleted fisheries, reduced natural breakwaters, less sand production, and lost medicines from reef creatures, including anti-cancer agents.

I want Hawaiʻi to avoid such catastrophes, yet we are GREAT risk. 2014 was the warmest year on record, and this past fall we suffered record coral bleaching. As ocean warming accelerates this century, we also face increasing coastal erosion caused by rising sea levels and greater wave heights, as well as weakening trade winds and less rainfall. These ominous patterns are well-documented by scientists at UH and elsewhere.

But the good news is that we CAN end our inherited dependence on fossil fuels. YOU can help reverse the rising tide of global warming.
The University’s [strategic plan] expresses a public commitment to [quote] “acquire, allocate, and manage public and private revenue streams and exercise exemplary stewardship over all of the University’s resources for a sustainable future.” [unquote]

You heard earlier the case for divestment as an act of responsible fiduciary practice. You have in your binders the argument for divestment from several other perspectives.

News of your willingness to consider divesting from fossil fuels is high in symbolic value. It will factor into early meetings with legislators to explore how they might build on your actions. We have no doubt that, by moving to divest its endowment from fossil fuels, the University of Hawai‘i will set a compelling example for the rest of the State, and begin the cascade of policy and legislative changes we need to help reduce the effects of global warming.

Since this was submitted as group testimony on behalf of “Divest UH,” I’d like to show you the level of support that this campaign represents. I ask that all those here who agree with this testimony, please indicate so by raising your hand........Thank you.

Respectfully,
Dr. Mark Hixon
Department of Biology
UH Mānoa
hixonm@hawaii.edu