

1753 Supporting student action on climate change

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Union notes:

1) Climate change is exacerbating floods and droughts¹, with estimates for those already seriously affected as high as 325 million people². This humanitarian crisis disproportionately affects those who have done least to be the most affected by climate change³.

2) The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) will be held in Paris from 30th Nov to 11th Dec. The conference objective is to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate action. Previous COP talks have failed to reach legally binding agreements considered satisfactory by climate scientists⁴.

3) Concerns have been raised that corporations with a vested interest in watering down any agreement have too much power in the talks⁵. Sponsors of the conference include energy company EDF, who operate coal power stations and are actively involved in plans for expansion of nuclear power in the UK⁶, and Suez Environment⁷, a member of the pro-fracking lobby group Centre for Non-Conventional Hydrocarbons⁸. The 'business focussed' Sustainable Innovation Forum, a side event, is sponsored by car company BMW and Vattenfall, an energy company that operate controversial lignite coal mines in Germany⁹, among others¹⁰.

4) UK government has proposed to cut renewables subsidies by up to 87%, a move suggested to have contributed to the collapse of two solar power companies shortly after the announcement¹¹.

5) Mass demonstrations are planned in Paris, and in many other cities including in London on 29th Nov. Demonstrators plan the 'largest mass civil disobedience climate justice action that we have ever seen in Europe'¹².

Union Believes:

¹ <http://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>

² <http://www.ghf-ge.org/human-impact-report.pdf>

³ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2011_en_summary.pdf

⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/02/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-paris-climate-summit-and-un-talks>

⁵ <http://www.triplepundit.com/2015/07/groups-raise-concern-role-cop21-sponsors/>

⁶ <https://www.edfenergy.com/energyfuture/edf-energys-approach-why-we-choose-new-nuclear/edf-energys-nuclear-strategy>

⁷ <http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/partners/business-and-sponsors>

⁸ <http://www.chnc.fr/le-chnc-en-bref#les-membres>

⁹ <http://corporate.vattenfall.co.uk/about-vattenfall/about-us/operations/generation/coal/>

¹⁰ <http://www.cop21paris.org/>

¹¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/08/second-solar-firm-in-two-days-goes-bust-blaming-tory-policy>

¹² <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/08/activists-promise-largest-climate-civil-disobedience-ever-at-paris-summit>

- 1) That we must do everything in our power to rapidly reduce the global use of fossil fuels and expand clean energy alternatives.
- 2) Government inaction on climate change is unacceptable and irresponsible, and civil disobedience is an appropriate response.
- 3) Corporations with a vested interest in watering down climate legislation should not be permitted to lobby at, let alone attend, COP events. Such corporations include those who operate in fossil fuel extraction, energy supply and the automotive industry.
- 4) UUEAS should support students who wish to demonstrate in support of real action on climate change, including participation in civil disobedience.

Union resolves:

- 1) To organise and fund transport for students to the 'The People's March for Climate' demonstration in London on the 29th November 2015.
- 2) To invite students from Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) and City College to use this transportation.
- 3) To mandate SOC to mobilise students for this demonstration and those in Paris throughout the COP15 talks.
- 4) To continue to support student participation in future campaigning and protest around climate change.