

Divest from Coal Mining and Coal-burning Utilities

I'm Breck Lebeque MD MPH, retired public health physician and Co-Chair of WA Physicians for Social Responsibility Climate and Health Task Force, writing to persuade the WA State Investment Board to divest pension funds from coalmining & coal-burning utilities, for the health of WA State employees, pensioners and residents. It's time to 'quit smoking coal'.

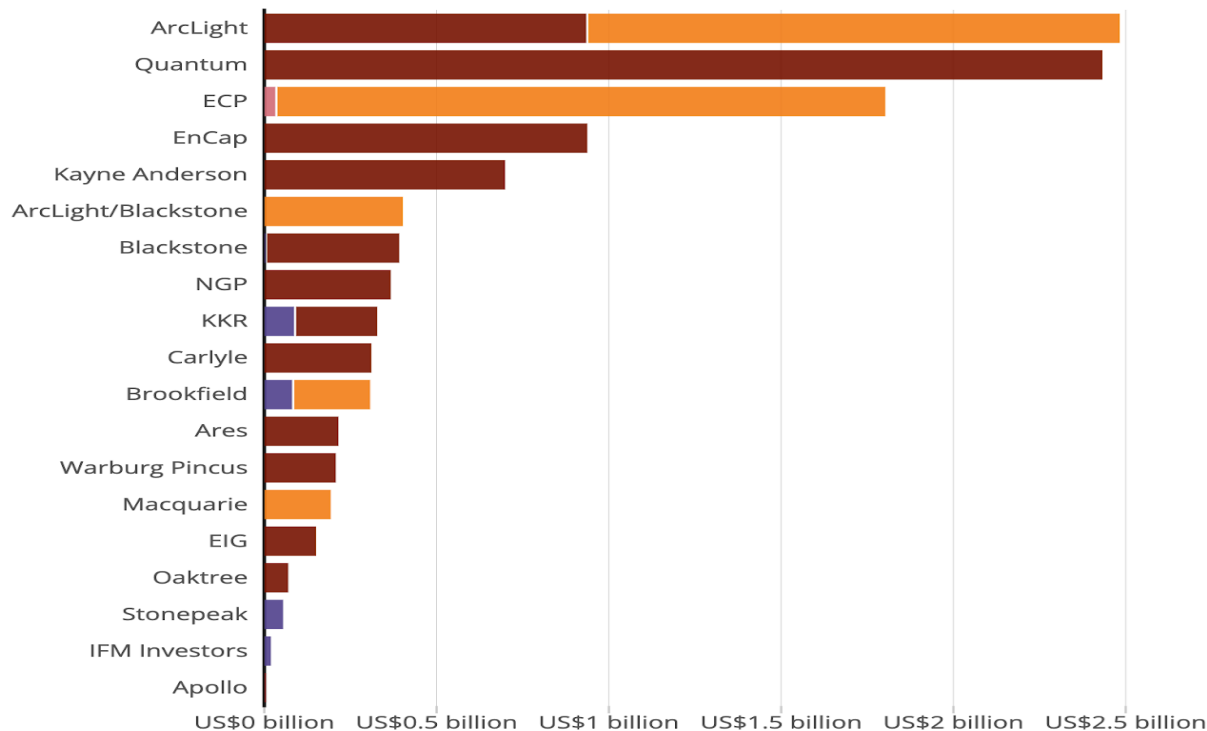
Coal dust continues to cause 'black lung' in miners and handlers. It's not a last-century disease, although there are fewer cases as coal mines have closed. Coal-burning utilities continue to emit multiple pollutants that cause lung and other disease in nearby residents. Those diseases are a drain on state Medicaid resources and private insurance programs.

Pension investments are difficult to track, as companies aggregate holdings, green-wash activities, minimize publicity and shift the health risk of their profits. See the chart below. Please request a deep analysis of the fossil fuel holdings of your plan and divest from them as required by the WA Coal Act & Climate Commitment Act. Dithering is killing us, for real.

Fossil fuel assets held by three private equity firms are responsible for a fifth of all health costs

Health impacts by firm and facility type and count, in US\$ billion

Facility type: ■ Oil and Gas Extraction ■ Coal-Fired Power Plant ■ LNG Terminal ■ Coal Extraction



Source: Private Equity Climate Risks, US EPA CO-Benefits Risk Assessment Health Impacts Screening and Mapping Tool (COBRA)

*Note: ArcLight/Blackstone are involved in a joint-venture in the Big Cajun II coal plant.

PRIVATE EQUITY
CLIMATE RISKS

From: [Breck Lebegue](#)
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Subject: Statement/Testimony for Select Committee on Pension Policy
Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 3:46:41 PM
Attachments: [Divest from Coal Testimony to WSIB.docx](#)

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Greetings, please accept my attached statement to the Select Committee on Pension Policy, advising to divest from coal-mining and coal-burning utilities, for health reasons.

Thank you!

Respectfully,

BL

Breck Lebegue MD MPH

Co-Chair, Climate and Health Task Force

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

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