

# Statement on the Science Museum's Shell-sponsored exhibition

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## Union Notes:

1. Climate change is an urgent threat to humanity's existence.
2. The UN's International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported a 2030 deadline [1] for urgent and drastic climate action to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5C.
3. Fossil fuel corporations such as Shell knew about climate change due to internal research decades ago, and kept it out of the public view, actively promoting and funding climate denialism to protect their profits [2][3].
4. There is a wealth of evidence supporting the view that Shell has been complicit in human rights violations. [4]
5. The Science Museum is running an exhibition on carbon capture, sponsored by Shell, beginning on May 19<sup>th</sup>. [5]
6. Many other museums and public institutions have dissociated from fossil fuel companies, such as the neighbouring Natural History Museum, the National Gallery, and the National Theatre. [6]
7. Due to the relationship between the Museum and fossil fuel companies many people have withdrawn their involvement with the Museum, including ecologist Dr Emma Sayer who contributed to the exhibition, environmentalist Mark Lynas, and journalist George Monbiot. [6] [7] [8]
8. The UK Student Climate Network organised an open letter to the Science Museum expressing dismay, co-signed by numerous environmentalist groups and scientists, and after a response from the Science Museum have proceeded to organise a boycott and a protest for May 22<sup>nd</sup>. [9] [10]
9. The Science Museum is an important neighbour and a partner of the Imperial community, collaborating on matters like the former Science Museum Library and the Great Exhibition Road Festival. [11] [12]

## Union Believes:

1. The actions of fossil fuel companies, such as Shell specifically, in covering up scientific research and funding denialism has been a direct cause of the delay in radical climate action and of the existential threat we face.
2. This behaviour goes against the principles of transparent and open science, and it is unbecoming for the Science Museum to be accepting sponsorship from such companies.
3. Scientists and activists are rightfully withdrawing their involvement from the Science Museum, based on their commitment to open science and expertise on climate change.
4. The response from Roger Highfield, Science Director of the Science Museum Group, has been inadequate and has failed to recognise the damage caused to the exhibition and the reputation of the Museum.
5. As neighbours and partners of the Science Museum, with over a century of shared history, it is right for us to speak out on this matter.

## Union Resolves:

1. To mandate the Officer Trustees to write a letter to the trustees of the Science Museum, in consultation with the author and seconders of this paper,
  - a. Expressing the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for all of us to step up and take action,
  - b. Expressing the Union's disapproval of Shell's sponsorship of this exhibition based on the arguments raised in this paper.
2. To share this letter on the Union's social media channels, raising awareness of the matter as well as our stance.
3. To signpost the UKSCN May 22<sup>nd</sup> protest and associated boycott for interested students.

## References

- [1] [Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments — IPCC](#)
- [2] [Shell and Exxon's secret 1980s climate change warnings | Climate change | The Guardian](#)
- [3] [America Misled](#)
- [4] [Shell: A criminal enterprise? | Amnesty International UK](#)
- [5] [The Science Museum to open UK's first major exhibition on carbon capture and storage on 19 May | Science Museum](#)
- [6] [Science Museum faces backlash over Shell sponsorship of climate exhibition – Culture Unstained](#)
- [7] [Boycott threatened over Shell's sponsorship of Science Museum carbon capture exhibition | Climate News | Sky News](#)
- [8] [Why is the Science Museum still being contaminated by Shell's dirty money? | George Monbiot | The Guardian](#)
- [9] [UKSCN London - Science Museum and Shell Sponsorship](#)
- [10] [https://twitter.com/ukscn\\_london/status/1389626017510313989](https://twitter.com/ukscn_london/status/1389626017510313989)
- [11] [Science Museum Library closes to prepare for new research centre | Imperial News | Imperial College London](#)
- [12] [About Us - The Great Exhibition Road Festival](#)