Open letter to Jacinda Ardern: End oil exploration in New Zealand

Dear Prime Minister,

Your commitment to make climate change the nuclear-free moment of your generation has the power to inspire a nation, and indeed the world. We are calling on you to turn this passion into action, by taking bold and decisive measures to protect our future and our children's future.

Together, we pledge support for the New Zealand Government to end oil and gas exploration now, as a vital step in addressing climate change.

We must apply our ambition, ingenuity, and courage to hasten the transition to a stable and resilient society, powered by clean energy.

The climate science is clear. If we are to avoid catastrophic impacts, the world cannot afford to burn even existing reserves of fossil fuels, let alone seek out and burn new reserves.

Climate change is an existential threat, posing grave danger to our health, homes, communities, food security, culture and livelihoods, as well as the wildlife and wild places with which we share this Earth.

Climate change is an injustice that disproportionately affects our neighbours and kāi in the Pacific, developing nations, indigenous people, people of colour, women and poorer working people. These are also the people who are least responsible for causing this crisis.

But the steps we take to address this threat also provide us with opportunities to move towards a more just and equal society, to boost innovation and employment, create more resilient communities, improve our health, and live in better balance with nature.

Now is the time to back the booming clean energy industries, and invite the transformational economic opportunities that shifting to a low-carbon society can bring. This must be a just transition – one that fairly distributes the costs and benefits across the economy and provides opportunities for those affected to actively engage in determining the future wellbeing of themselves and their families.

More than ever, the world needs bold leadership. We wholeheartedly support your ambition for New Zealand to be at the forefront of this planetary challenge. Not only can we live without fossil fuels, but we must. If our small nation can again inspire the world, as we did in our stand against nuclear weapons, then we would earn our place on the right side of history. Ending the development of new oil, and coal now, is vital to that success.

Yours Sincerely,

Sidney, Fergus, Kate, Anna, and the Global Environment Facility

Dr. Jim Salinger, Climate change scientist
Dr. Terence Lomas, Coordinator, Fossil Fuels Action Research Network (FFARR)
Dr. Bob Lloyd, Associate Professor (ret), Climate Consultant Pacific Region

Prof Jonathan Boston, Professor of Public Policy, Victoria University of Wellington

Dr Kate Daddick, Chair, New Zealand Medical Association
Dr Felicity Dunlop, President, New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine

Warren Lindberg, MNZM, Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Association of New Zealand

Dr Ruihia Jones & Dr Alex Macmillan, Co-founders, OrraTao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council

Dr Aye Senjer, Scientific Advisor Environmental and Human Health Aotearoa

Dr Rev Justin Duckworth, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Wellington
Rev Dr Peter Mathews, Emeritus Professor, Knox Church, Dunedin

Phillip Mills, Managing Director of Les Mills International
Michael Mayell, Founder, Cooke Time
Chris Morrison, Co-Founder, Karma Cola and All Good

Brendan Wimbush, Chair, Sustainable Electricity Association of New Zealand
Malcolm Rands, Founder, Ecotone

Livia Esterhazy, Chief Executive Officer, WWF-New Zealand
Kevin Hague, Chief Executive, Forest and Bird

Mairi O'Reilly, Executive Director, 350 Aotearoa

Rachael Le Mesurier, Executive Director, Oxfam New Zealand

Dr Russell Norman, Executive Director, Greenpeace New Zealand

Rosemary Pearnson, Coordinator, Oil Free Otago

Cindy Bates, Coordinator, Coal Action Network

Emily Bailey, Climate Justice Taranaki

Robyn Harris-Jones, Coordinator, Frack Free Aotearoa New Zealand

Deryn Russell, Peoples of the Earth

Guy Salmon, Ecologist

Gary Taylor, Environmental Defence Society