

Oil giants ignore climate change

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EXXONMOBIL and ConocoPhillips are among 44 US companies to have come under fire by investors for failing to provide greater disclosure on climate change strategies.

US environment group Ceres, Ceres said a record 54 shareholder resolutions were filed by investors in the US for the 2008 proxy season.

Fourteen of these were withdrawn by investors after the companies agreed to disclose potential impacts from emerging climate change regulations and strategies for reducing greenhouse emissions.

But resolutions against companies such as ExxonMobil still stand.

According to Ceres, Exxon has been "unresponsive to investor requests for a decade regarding strategies to meet growing global demand for diversified energy sources."

The three resolutions filed against ExxonMobil call on the board to develop comprehensive emission reduction targets, adopt a policy for renewable energy R&D and sourcing and report on how it plans to establish itself as an industry leader in developing technologies to create energy independence in the US.

Two resolutions were filed with ConocoPhillips, with the first focusing on the company's recently announced plans to become the largest producer of oil from Canada's tar sands.

Citing the adverse environmental impacts of tar sands on water use, biodiversity and greenhouse emissions, investors asked the company to assess and disclose the environmental damage that would result from its expanding tar sands operation in boreal forests of Canada.

The second resolution with ConocoPhillips requests the company adopts specific greenhouse emission reduction goals in its operations and products.

The resolutions are nearly double the number filed two years ago and have been brought forward by a group of investors, many of them part of the Investor Network on Climate Risk (INCR), an alliance of 60 institutional investors with collective assets totalling more than \$5 trillion (\$5.75 trillion).

"Many US companies are confronting the risks and opportunities from climate change, but others are not responding adequately – and they may be compromising their long-term competitiveness as a result," said Ceres president Mindy Lubber, whose organisation helps coordinate the shareholder filings and directs INCR.

"Investors want all companies to understand the business impacts of climate change – and plan for it accordingly."

