



Align Your Money With Your Values

Take Charge  
of Your Card



# Agenda

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What's the problem?

How do credit cards work?

Taking charge of your card

Responsible credit card guide

# What's the problem?

At its heart, the climate crisis is a spiritual, ethical and moral issue.

We are placing money and profit above all other considerations:

- Our health and well being
- The health of our planet
- Wildlife and other species
- Our democracy and society
- Our children's future



# Banking on Climate Chaos

WORLD'S 60 BIGGEST BANKS HAVE POURED  
**\$5.5 TRILLION** INTO FOSSIL FUELS SINCE 2015

Top four US banks **\$1.36 TRILLION** or **25% of total**  
since the Paris Agreement

1. JPMorgan Chase **\$434.1 billion**
2. Citi **\$332.9 billion**
3. Wells Fargo **\$316.7 billion**
4. Bank of America **\$279.7 billion**



# If your credit card is from one of the “Big 4”

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- The fees you pay for your credit card – annual fees, interest fees, transaction fees – are used to support fossil fuels
- Because these banks disproportionately invest in fossil fuel projects
- **Your credit card could represent a substantial carbon footprint**

# Part of the larger divestment movement

## DIVESTMENT DATABASE

So far:

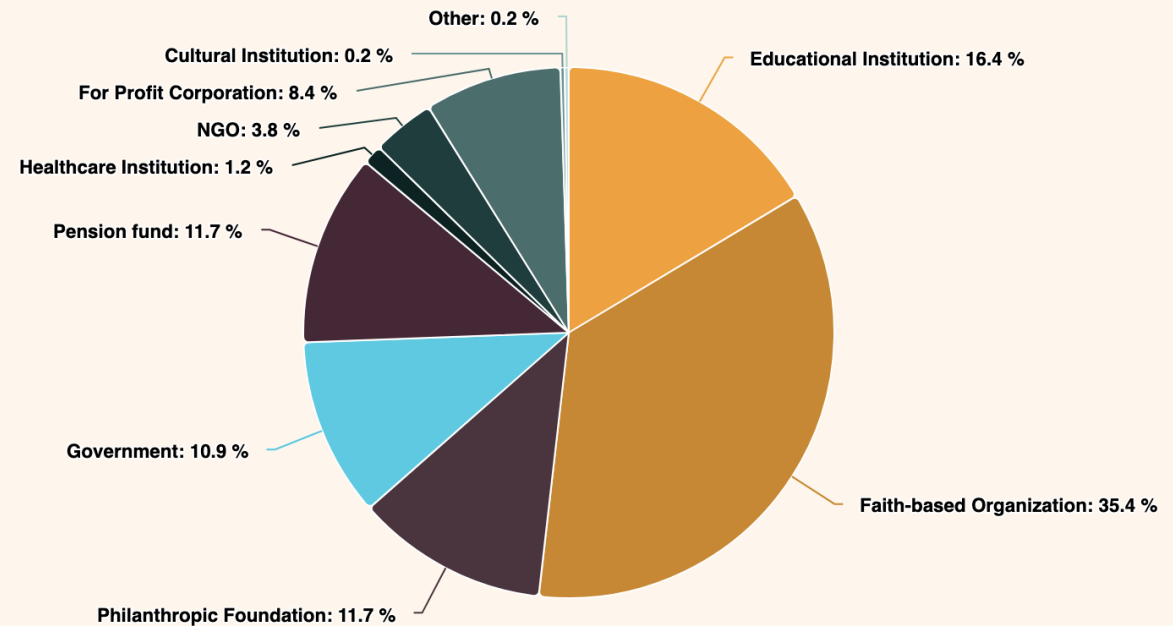
**\$40.76 trillion** divested

by **1,638** institutions

Banks are responding!

HSBC 2022: no new oil or gas

## What kinds of institutions are divesting?





How do credit cards work?

# How Credit Card Issuers Make Money

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## ANNUAL FEE

- Average annual credit card fee is \$128
- Not all credit cards have an annual fee
- Annual fees may include perks like travel assistance
- Banks made \$13 billion in annual fees in 2020

## INTEREST FEE

- Average interest rate was 22.8% in 2023 – highest ever
- 61% of Americans – 3 in 5 -- have credit card debt
- Credit card debt totaled \$1.1 trillion in December 2023
- Americans paid \$133 billion in interest and fees in 2022

## TRANSACTION FEE

- Merchant pays this fee to the bank for every purchase - typically around 3%
- Of that, 1%, 1.5%, or 2% rebated to cardholder
- The rest goes to the bank that issued the card
- Banks made \$126.4 billion in transaction fees in 2022.



# Branding vs issuing

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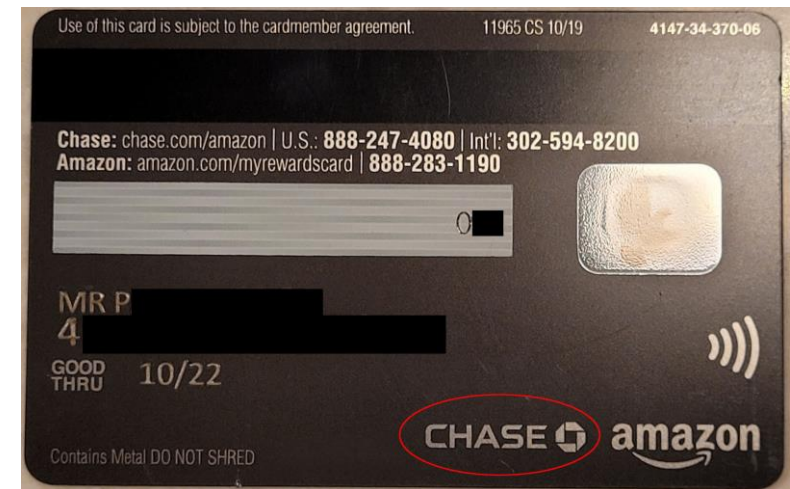
## BRANDING ON CARD

- Usually on the front of the card
- May be a store card or affinity card
- Branding and issuing may be the same



## ISSUER OF CARD

- Usually on the back of the card
- This is the bank the card runs through – and that gets the user fees



# Co-branding credit cards

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## STORE CARDS

- Lowes, Verizon, Sam's Club
- May offer cash back or merchandise
- Most issued by Synchrony or Comenity/Bread Financial - neither involved in fossil fuels
- Some issued through big banks – Costco through Citi, Amazon through Chase

## AFFINITY CARDS

- Support nonprofits through your credit card purchases
- Issuing bank usually donates 0.5%
- Check who the issuing bank is – it's often a megabank

# Credit card networks

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## NETWORK PROCESSORS

- Not a bank but a payment processing system
- Way to move money back and forth on a global network

## FOUR MAIN NETWORKS

- Visa
- Mastercard
- Discover – also an issuer
- American Express – also an issuer

## ASSESSMENT FEES

- Networks collect an assessment fee for each transaction from issuing bank
- 0.14% for Visa  
0.1375% for Mastercard
- Not on the fossil fuel spectrum



Take Charge of Your Card

# Climate-friendly credit cards

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Find an alternative to a megabank that issues its own credit card

- Find a community bank or credit union in your area or online through tools such as
  - [Mighty Deposits](#)
  - [Green America Better Bank Map](#)
  - [Bank.Green](#)
  - [BetterBankingOptions](#)
- If your community bank or credit union issues its own credit card, you're good to go

You'll need to find an alternative source for your credit card if:

- Your community bank or credit union does not issue its own credit card
- Your community bank or credit union offers a credit card issued by another financial institution that funds the fossil fuel industry (ex. Elan Financial – subsidiary of US Bank)

# Best options: Credit unions

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Restricted membership – specific location	Open membership - nationwide
Self-Help CU (NC, SC, FL)	Self-Help Federal CU (CA, IL, WA, WI)
Patelco (Northern California)	Hope Credit Union (MS, LA, AR, AL, TN)
Lower East Side People’s FCU (NYC)	Alliant Credit Union (online only)
Greylock FCU (Western Mass)	Affinity Plus FCU (Minnesota)
Clearwater Credit Union (Montana)	Agricultural Federal CU (DC, MD)

# Credit union options: Notes

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## AGENT CREDIT CARD ISSUERS

- Many credit unions offer credit cards featuring their logo but outsource the issuing and servicing to an “**agent credit card issuer**”
- Three are owned by credit unions and not involved in funding fossil fuel ventures:
  - America’s Credit Unions (formerly CUNA)
  - PSCU / COOP Solutions
  - CSCU – Card Services for Credit Unions

## **ALERT**

- Elan Financial Services is the agent credit card issuer for 300+ credit unions
- Elan is a subsidiary of US Bancorp (aka US Bank) – a major funder of fossil fuels

# Best options: Banks

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<b>FNBO – First National Bank of Omaha</b>	<b>TCM (Total Card Management) Bank / Independent Community Bankers of America</b>
Amalgamated Bank (NYC, DC)	Native American Bank
Community Bank, N.A. (NY, VT, PA)	Cooperative Bank of Cape Cod (MA)
Flagstar (MI, NYC, FL)	Sanibel Captiva Community Bank (FL)
Wintrust Bank, N.A. (Chicago area)	Evergreen Bank Group (Chicago area)
Glacier Bancorp (WA, MT, ID, UT, WY, CO, AZ, NV)	PGA - Professional Golf Association
SEIU - labor union	International Living Futures Institute (non-profit)



# Bank options: Notes

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## TCM BANK

- TCM Bank is owned by Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA), which is a trade group of community banks.
- TCM issues credit cards for over 750 community banks and several non-profits.
- A few climate groups have downlisted TCM due to an ICBA statement on climate risk
- However, there is no indication TCM or ICBA have loaned to or invested in fossil fuels.

## ALERT

- Elan Financial Services is the agent credit card issuer for 1300+ banks
- Elan is a subsidiary of US Bancorp (aka US Bank) – a major funder of fossil fuels
- Elan issues credit cards for even some B Corps and climate-friendly banks

# Corporate credit card options

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- Credit cards issued by large financial institutions where there is no indication of loans or investments in the fossil fuel industry
  - However, the fees from these credit cards are not used to build local communities the way fees that benefit community development banks and credit unions are
  - A significant percentage of shares in these institutions are owned by large institutional shareholders such as Berkshire Hathaway, BlackRock, and Vanguard that invest in fossil fuels
- American Express
  - Discover
  - Diners Club (subsidiary of Discover)
  - Bread Bank - formerly Comenity
  - Synchrony Bank
  - ServisFirst Bank
  - UMB Bank
  - Capital One (minor lender)

# Worst credit card options

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Issued by megabanks that loan to fossil fuel projects and invest in fossil fuel companies; by amount of fossil fuel financing as listed in Banking on Climate Chaos 2024 report

- 1 - JPMorgan Chase
- 2 - Citigroup
- 3 - Bank of America
- 5 - Wells Fargo
- 7 - Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)
- 8 - Barclays (UK)
- 10 - UBS (Switzerland)
- 11 - ScotiaBank (Canada)
- 12 - HSBC (UK)
- 14 - Goldman Sachs
- 15 - Morgan Stanley
- 16 - Toronto Dominion (TD) Bank
- 18 - BMO Financial Group (Bank of Montreal)
- 25 - PNC Financial Group
- 27 - Truist Financial
- 34 - US Bancorp (parent company for Elan Financial)

# Resources

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**Look for a credit union or community bank headquartered in your state or region. Banking locally is a simple yet powerful way to support your community**

- [Credit Union Locator](#) - National Credit Union Administration (NCUA)
- [Community Bank Search](#) - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)
- [Research a Credit Union](#) - National Credit Union Administration (NCUA)
- [Bank Find](#) - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)

If you cannot find a particular bank, it is not regulated by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC). It may be a credit union, state-regulated bank, or other type of institution.