

Abstract Submitted
for the MAR14 Meeting of
The American Physical Society

Do the Math - The Role of Physicists in the Climate Movement¹

NATHAN NESBITT, Boston College — “It’s simple math: we can emit 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide and stay below 2°C of warming - anything more than that risks catastrophe for life on earth. The only problem? Burning the fossil fuel that corporations now have in their reserves would result in emitting 2,795 gigatons of carbon dioxide - five times the safe amount.”² Physicists stand in a powerful position to help the world wiggle out of this circumstance: our profession not only has the technical capacity to work on renewable energy development but also is popularly recognized as a source of scientific authority. This ability to influence public perception and politics is arguably even more important than our technological skills in the fight to stop rapid climate change. I will discuss several strategic campaigns presently underway at universities across the country, such as fossil fuel divestment, and how the physics community can become a valuable asset.

¹This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship under Grant No. (DGE-1258923).

²Do The Math Tour, 350.org.

Nathan Nesbitt
Boston College

Date submitted: 15 Nov 2013

Electronic form version 1.4