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Investors file flurry of global-warming resolutions

St. Louis Business Journal - by [Chris Rauber](#) San Francisco Business Times

U.S. investors have filed a record 54 shareholder resolutions with U.S. companies, including St. Louis-based **Arch Coal Inc.**, facing "far-reaching business impacts from climate change," according to a coalition of investors demanding that corporations include tangible responses to climate change in their basic business strategies.

That's nearly twice as many as were filed two years ago, says the Boston-based Ceres coalition of companies, investors and environmental groups.

Companies targeted in this year's proxy season include some of the nation's largest electric power companies, oil and coal producers, airlines, homebuilders and other businesses that the coalition of investors believes are not adequately dealing with climate-related impacts on their businesses, Ceres said March 6. Those impacts could include physical changes such as droughts and rising temperatures, emerging climate regulations or growing global demand for low-carbon technologies and services.

Resolutions were filed with dozens of companies in eight industries, including **Chevron Corp.** (NYSE: CVX), **ExxonMobil** (NYSE: XOM) and **ConocoPhillips** (NYSE: COP) in the oil and gas sector; **Citigroup** (NYSE: C) and **Bank of America** (NYSE: BAC) in banking; car giants **Ford Motor** (NYSE: F) and **General Motors** (NYSE: GM); **Dynegy** (NYSE: DYN) in the electric power sector; **Massey Energy** (NYSE: MEE) in the coal sector; airlines Southwest (NYSE: LUV) and **U.S. Airways** (NYSE: LCC); and builder **Standard Pacific** (NYSE: SPF), among many others.

Ceres said investors want greater disclosure of companies' responses to climate change, including greenhouse gas reduction and renewable and energy efficiency strategies, adding that resolutions have been filed by some of the nation's largest public pension funds, as well as labor, foundation, religious and other institutional investors. Typically most of the resolutions are voted down, but proponents say they raise the issue and put pressure on companies to reconsider their positions.

Many of those environmentally active investors are part of the Investor Network on Climate Risk, an alliance of 60 institutional investors with collective assets totaling more than \$5 trillion. Network members include CalPERS, **CalSTRS**, the California State Controller, the California State Treasurer, **Calvert Group**, Illinois State Board of Investment, the New York

City Employees Retirement System, the Service Employees International Union, and other huge investors.

Given the intensifying scientific consensus on the economic dangers posed by climate change, companies in every industry, "especially energy sectors, should be acting now to assess and mitigate climate change risks," said Jack Ehnes, chief executive officer at CalSTRS, which filed climate-related resolutions for the first time this year.

"Many U.S. 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 Mindy Lubber, Ceres' president. "Investors want all companies to understand the business impacts of climate change -- and plan for it accordingly."

The shareholder resolutions are already getting action from some target companies. Fourteen of this year's 54 resolutions were withdrawn after the companies agreed to disclose potential impacts from emerging climate regulations and strategies for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

This year's filings come on the heels of a record high number of resolutions and record high voting support for such resolutions last year, the coalition said. Investors filed 43 resolutions with U.S. companies last year and average voting support was 21.6 percent.

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