

TWO PAGER - A local ban on fossil ads: why, what & how

1. Why a fossil ad ban?

What is a fossil ad ban

- **Fossil fuels need to be phased out as soon and fair as possible.**
- However fossil companies are still allowed to:
 - promote their polluting products (fossil cars, flights, cruises), and
 - greenwash their image via advertising and sponsorship deals.
- This means they **actively promote additional pollution** and normalize their industry with **misleading claims**.

Damage done by fossil ads

- The purpose of ads is to promote overconsumption by glamorizing ever-shifting and for most people unachievable standards. Huge companies **buy our attention in the streets, in newspapers and online**.
- Fossil companies glamorize ever-larger SUVs and more and longer distance flights.
- This directly leads to **toxic air, water and soil pollution, dangerous climate change and enhanced inequality**.

Pollution & inequality

- Fossil air pollution globally kills more people than smoking. It caused 8.7 million premature deaths in 2018: **1 in 5 deaths are caused by fossil air pollution** [1][2].
- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization has thus named air pollution the “**new tobacco**” [3].
- The **climate crisis** is the greatest threat to human health in the 21st century [4].
- Both the climate crisis and pollution **hits those who have benefited least** from fossil growth hardest. So in the end, the working class of the world pays for the damage done by fossil ads.

Misleading on the climate crisis

- Fossil companies **greenwash** their image. But:
 - they highly contribute to **air pollution** and the **climate catastrophe**,
 - until this day still **continue expanding their fossil activities** [5][6], and
 - their contribution to the energy transition is insignificant: **oil and gas companies only account for 1% of total clean energy investment globally** [7].
 - This is in direct opposition with what their ads tell us.
- Greenwashing ads lead to false trust and are used as a lobbying tool towards decision makers to reduce green policies [8].

2. How to ban fossil ads?

It can be done: tobacco ads are already banned

- We have fought against unhealthy, unsustainable and misleading large companies before. Not long ago, tobacco companies were allowed to glamorize and promote smoking but tobacco ads are now forbidden in most countries.
- **Only after ads by tobacco companies were banned and the misleading messages from tobacco companies were no longer all around us did the full extent of the harmful consequences come into view.** We need to copy this strategy to fossil.
- The ad ban became a major turning point in cigarette sales, lung cancer cases and premature deaths caused by tobacco products [9]. And it finally created space to implement no-smoking zones in schools, public transport and restaurants.

Frontrunners around the world - find an overview on www.worldwithoutfossilads.org

- Already more than **50 municipalities in 10 countries and 3 national governments** have discussed or taken steps against fossil advertising in their public space.
- More and more **sports events, newspapers, cultural institutions and universities** are cutting ties with the fossil industry.
- Progressive political parties in Sweden, France, the UK and the Netherlands have a ban on fossil ads in their party program.
- **UN Secretary General António Guterres called for a global ban on fossil ads in June 2024.**

Scientific, legal and societal support - find an overview in the Factsheet, including:

- recommendations from the **IPCC, behavioral scientists and legal experts,**
- support from **healthcare professionals, the advertising industry and citizens,**
- international examples like Canada, Ireland, Amsterdam, Sydney, Stockholm and
- suggested **definition and scope** of a fossil ad ban.

How can fossil ads be banned in your municipality?

- Local fossil ads bans can include
 - **advertising in public space** (e.g. digital or non-digital outdoor ads, A0-sized signs, roundabout signs, bus stops and metro ads) and
 - **sponsorship deals** with local government bodies and/or events (e.g. in sport stadiums).
- Different ways of banning fossil ads locally are
 - by changing **local law** (find an [example local law proposal here](#) and more on why to consider this more robust option [here](#)),
 - amending **municipal advertising policy** (if this exists, if not creating one is a possibility, see e.g. [Sheffields new Advertising and Sponsorship Policy](#)) or
 - by **adopting a motion** to ban fossil ads in the new advertising contracts (find an [example text for a motion here](#)).

- As the possibilities can be different from location to location, the **first step** is always to find out what the current situation is regarding advertising in your municipality: e.g. What is the current policy? Until when are the current contracts running? What is within the local mandate? Often, council members can **ask such questions to the city board**.
- Find an easy **step by step guide** on how to ban fossil ads in your municipality [here](#).

Sources

- [1] Vohra, K., Vodonos, A., Schwartz, J., Marais, E. A., Sulprizio, M. P., & Mickley, L. J. (2021). Global mortality from outdoor fine particle pollution generated by fossil fuel combustion: Results from GEOS-Chem. *Environmental Research*, 195, 11. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0013935121000487>
- [2] Torjesen, I. (2021). Fossil fuel air pollution blamed for 1 in 5 deaths worldwide. *BMJ*, 372, 406. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33568356/>
- [3] Carrington D. and Taylor M. (2018). Air pollution is the ‘new tobacco’, warns WHO head. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/27/air-pollution-is-the-new-tobacco-warns-who-head>
- [4] Editorial. (2023). Climate change crisis goes critical. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*, 11(3), 213. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(23\)00056-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(23)00056-5/fulltext)
- [5] Figure 1 in B. Roy and A. Schaffartzik. (2021). Talk renewables, walk coal: The paradox of India’s energy transition. *Ecological Economics*, 180. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800920303232>
Global total primary energy supply data in Figure 1 comes from IEA. (2019). World Energy Statistics Balances (Database).
- [6] SEI, Climate Analytics, E3G, IISD, and UNEP. (2023). The Production Gap: Phasing down or phasing up? Top fossil fuel producers plan even more extraction despite climate promises. Stockholm Environment Institute, Climate Analytics, E3G, International Institute for Sustainable Development and United Nations Environment Programme. <https://productiongap.org/>
- [7] IEA. (2023). The Oil and Gas Industry in Net Zero Transitions. <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-oil-and-gas-industry-in-net-zero-transitions>
- [8] Brulle, R. J., Aronczyk, M., & Carmichael, J. (2020). Corporate promotion and climate change: an analysis of key variables affecting advertising spending by major oil corporations, 1986–2015. *Climatic Change*, 159(1), 87-101. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-019-02582-8>

[9] Figure 1 in Max R. (2021). Smoking: How large of a global problem is it? And how can we make progress against it? <https://ourworldindata.org/smoking-big-problem-in-brief>