March 18, 2022

Alma Mater Society Council
University of British Columbia

Re: A.M.S. Advocacy Committee motion urging the UBC Alma Mater Society to direct the UBC Endowment Fund to divest from nine companies

Dear Council Members,

My name is Daniel Sax, I’m a PhD student in the Faculty of Forestry and a member of the Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) Vancouver Youth Bloc. I am writing to express the IJV Youth Bloc’s full support for the UBC divestment coalition’s motion to divest from six companies complicit in the development of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territories and 3 others that have been cited in violation of Palestinian human rights. In addition, we support calls for the AMS advocacy committee to release a statement condemning the occupation of Palestine.

Independent Jewish Voices Canada is a grassroots organization that amplifies the voices of Canadian Jews in support of justice in Israel-Palestine. It was the first Canadian Jewish group to endorse divestment from Israel and has a long history of holding Canadian organizations accountable when complicit in Israeli oppression of Palestinians.

As a member of the IJV Vancouver Youth Bloc and a Jewish member of the UBC community, I feel it is imperative to speak out about the importance of the motion being brought forth next council meeting. In recent years, UBC has amplified its efforts towards equity, diversity, and inclusion, regularly making claims of its commitment to anti-racism. Although such statements are a beginning, without action to support them, they ring hollow. Divesting from Israel is a tangible step UBC can, and should, make to show its opposition to anti-Palestinian racism and Israel’s apartheid regime. The divestments called for in the coalition’s motion are strategic, targeting only those who benefit from continued Israeli settler colonialism. The vast majority of Jews worldwide do not benefit materially and therefore have nothing to fear from divestment. What’s more, the Jerusalem Declaration on Anti-Semitism states that divestments are a non-violent form of political protest against states and that in the case of Israel they are not antisemitic. I recognize that there are Jewish people on all sides of the divestment question;
however, Palestinian students at UBC are entitled to the same anti-oppressive protections as all other students. This motion reflects that truth.

I urge the AMS Council to vote yes to divest and to condemn Israeli apartheid and the continued oppression of Palestinians.

Respectfully,

Daniel Sax  
Independent Jewish Voices Vancouver Youth Bloc  
PhD student, UBC, Faculty of Forestry