

24 September 2012

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra Management
101 Wakefield Street
Wellington

Dear NZSO

“We love the NZSO, but coal is dirtying your good name.”

Would you accept an offer of sponsorship from big tobacco?

In 1985, the New Zealand government banned community sponsorship by tobacco companies. Why? Because the harm done to our communities by smoking was greater than any benefit conferred.

Long before the government acted, community organisations began to refuse offers of tobacco sponsorship on moral grounds. This voluntary boycott went a long way in communicating the public’s stance to the government and paved the way for a positive change in legislation.

This is something to be proud of. It was a significant waypoint in the ongoing development of our society.

Action on climate change is more urgent than ever. Coal is the dirtiest fossil fuel because it emits more greenhouse gases per unit of energy than oil or gas. There are huge quantities left on the planet – enough, by some estimates, to raise the temperature of the earth by 15 degrees! To save the planet from runaway climate change, leading scientists advise that **we must phase out coal to zero by 2030**. Instead, Solid Energy, NZ’s industry head, has plans to massively increase its coal extraction.

If we want our children and grandchildren to inherit anything like the clement climate we have enjoyed, **we must stop burning coal**. It is fair to say, then, that coal is today's tobacco industry. Dirty, amoral and out of line with who we are committed to being as a society.

So we invite you, the wonderful NZSO, to take a stand by declining to accept sponsorship from Solid Energy. It is time.

The NZSO plays to the best parts of New Zealand culture: our appreciation of beauty, dedication and erudition. Your audience is educated and thoughtful. They will be aware that the race against climate change is urgent and will appreciate your commitment to those high values you represent and promote through your wonderful performances.

Securing sponsorship has become even more difficult than usual in the recent economic downturn. When sponsorship from tobacco companies was banned, people were concerned that funding for community organizations would dry up. But it didn't happen; others filled the gap. We support better government funding for the NZSO and are prepared to pay the taxes that would support that. We would be very happy to work with you toward that goal.

Auckland Coal Action was formed by a group of independent, concerned citizens with the ambitious goal of saving future generations from the chaos of runaway climate change. We would love the opportunity to promote the NZSO as a climate hero. A "Coal Free" NZSO would really be something to celebrate!

We will be handing out leaflets to concert-goers in Auckland on Friday the 28th of September. Please feel free to get in touch with us, we would love to hear from you.

With hope and an eye to the future

Yours sincerely

Auckland Coal Action