

# Press statement

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## **LGIM to oppose re-election of ExxonMobil board chair**

*Plans to support shareholder push for an independent chair and lobbying transparency*

LGIM has significant concerns about ExxonMobil's (Exxon) approach to climate change, political lobbying and board independence. As a result, in advance of Exxon's Annual General Meeting on 27 May 2020 in Texas (USA), LGIM will be taking the unusual step in pre-declaring its intention to vote against the re-election of the Exxon board chair.

Recognising the urgency of addressing climate change, in LGIM's rankings Exxon was noted for its persistent refusal to disclose its full carbon footprint<sup>1</sup> and to set company-wide emissions targets, even as a growing number of companies in the same sector - such as BP, Shell and Repsol - and countries, including the UK and EU - rally around 'net zero' emissions as a priority.

As a long-term investor, improving governance and sustainability standards have been a priority in LGIM's engagements with companies and regulators. In 2019, Exxon was also singled out in LGIM's second annual rankings of corporate 'leaders and laggards' on climate change, the Climate Impact Pledge\*.

**Meryam Omi, Head of Sustainability and Responsible Investment Strategy at Legal & General Investment Management (LGIM) says:**

*"We remain concerned by the Exxon's lack of strategic ambition around climate change. To remain successful in a low-carbon world, companies must act today, aligning their capital decision with the goals of the Paris Agreement, and setting stretching targets. We are seeing many of Exxon's peers step up, and reaffirm their sustainability ambitions even amid the current testing circumstances. The world, and Exxon's investors, cannot afford the company to fall behind."*

In January, LGIM announced an escalation of its voting policy towards combined Chief Executive Officers ('CEO') and board chairs, with the decision to vote against combined roles at director elections globally. The changes come as part of LGIM's annual review of its global proxy voting policies, which will have particular impact in the United States, France and Spain where combined roles are still common. Despite positive momentum in recent years, combined positions remain common in the US, where 47% of S&P 500 boards still have combined CEO and Board Chair – including at ExxonMobil. In addition to voting against the re-election of the Exxon chair, LGIM will also support a shareholder proposal for an independent chair, as well as a shareholder proposal for increased transparency on political lobbying.

**Omi adds:** *"We believe that the separation of combined CEO and board chair roles provides a better balance of authority and responsibility. In addition, if companies spend investors' money on lobbying governments, we expect them to account for how and why they do this. Such checks and balances are in the best interests of shareholders."*

*As constructive, long-term investors, we believe improvements in ExxonMobil's governance and climate strategy will contribute to its resilience and future success."*

## **Key Risk Warnings**

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<sup>1</sup> Scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions

Reference to a particular security is on a historic basis and does not mean that the security is currently held or will be held within an LGIM portfolio. The above information does not constitute a recommendation to buy or sell any security.

The value of an investment and any income taken from it is not guaranteed and can go down as well as up; you may not get back the amount you originally invested.

**-Ends-**

## Notes to editors

### Legal & General Investment Management

Legal & General Investment Management is one of Europe's largest asset managers and a major global investor, with total assets under management of £1.2trillion (€1.4 trillion; \$1.5trillion)<sup>1</sup>. We work with a wide range of global clients, including pension schemes, sovereign wealth funds, fund distributors and retail investors.

Throughout the past 40 years we have built our business through understanding what matters most to our clients and transforming this insight into valuable, accessible investment products and solutions. We provide investment expertise across the full spectrum of asset classes including fixed income, equities, commercial property and cash. Our capabilities range from index-tracking and active strategies to liquidity management and liability-based risk management solutions.

<sup>1</sup>LGIM internal data as at 31 December 2019. These figures include assets managed by LGIMA, an SEC Registered Investment Advisor. Data includes derivative positions.

### LGIM's Climate Impact Pledge

\*The Pledge represents an engagement programme focused on around 80 of the world's largest companies in key sectors, from energy to financials<sup>2</sup>. If companies are judged to fall behind peers in their climate strategies, LGIM will vote against the chair of their board, and divest the companies from select funds.

More detail and results of the 2019 Climate Impact Pledge can be found here: [Climate Impact Pledge](#)

Following persistent efforts in this area, an independent report found LGIM was the only one of the world's largest 15 asset managers to receive an A+ rating for its climate-related engagement and voting.

More information can be found via the following links:

- [Share Action Report](#)
- [Influence Map](#)

Compliance Reference: [CC277MAY](#)

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