

NO TOXIC MONEY: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These are FAQs for candidates and elected officials. FAQs for activists and volunteers can be found in the [pledge toolkit](#).

Why should I take the No Toxic Money pledge?

The No Toxic Money pledge is an important signifier to voters, to potential donors, to the media and the public that a politician is willing to stand with the people, reclaiming our democracy from the undue influence of powerful electric monopolies, Duke Energy and Dominion Energy. It is a public acknowledgment that the climate is in crisis, and that the solutions to climate change do not lie with these electric monopolies. In fact, they continue to block progress toward meaningful solutions. Climate impacts are mounting, and the status quo of insufficient or non-existent action cannot continue. The data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration [shows](#) that carbon emissions from the U.S. energy sector increased by 1.9 percent from 2017 to 2018 largely because energy companies expanded their natural gas projects. Thus the pledge includes the moratorium on Duke and Dominion's new fossil fuel infrastructure projects such as the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Refusing Duke and Dominion's contributions and supporting the moratorium symbolically frees a politician to take bolder stances for real climate action, unbound from ties to dirty energy.

What does it mean to take the No Toxic Money pledge?

Taking the pledge means that a candidate's campaign will adopt a policy to not knowingly accept any contributions from Duke Energy and Dominion Energy's PACs, executives, lobbyists or affiliates. The pledge is forward-looking from the filing deadline for the 2020 General Election (December 20, 2019) but it does not apply retroactively to contributions prior to 12-20-19. The commitment begins the moment a politician takes the pledge.

How does a politician sign the pledge?

In order to sign the No Toxic Money pledge, a politician or their campaign staff should ensure that they understand what they are signing, then provide verification that they have signed and filled out the [webform](#). This verification can come in the form of a scan

of a signed pledge or a virtual commitment (webpage, blog post, stylized graphic, etc.), either sent directly to info@notoxicmoney.org or posted online on a campaign account. A politician or their campaign staff should then fill out the [online webform](#) to alert the No Toxic Money coalition that they have signed, provide verification, and provide contact information in case any further questions should arise.

Many politicians have used the pledge-signing moment as an opportunity to highlight their commitment, by publicly sharing a photo of signing the pledge, releasing a short campaign video explaining their reasoning, or even sending out a fundraising appeal based on the pledge.

What type of contributions does the pledge apply to?

The No Toxic Money pledge applies specifically to contributions from Duke Energy and Dominion Energy's corporate PACs, named executives, and lobbyists. The No Toxic Money pledge intentionally does not apply to the large majority of Duke and Dominion employees, as contributions from rank-and-file workers do not send the same political signal as contributions from company executives and lobbyists. The PAC portion of the pledge does not apply to labor union PACs, only to Duke Energy and Dominion Energy PACs.

What does the pledge mean by "executives"?

The No Toxic Money pledge focuses on refusing contributions from the Named Executive Officers of Duke Energy and Dominion Energy. This is a category of top executive officer legally defined by the Security and Exchange Commission in 17 CFR 229.402, and functionally covers a company's CEO, CFO, and next three high earners at an executive level. These executives are listed annually in a company's 10-K filing or annual proxy statement (DEF 14a). More detail can be found here in the [relevant section of the Code of Federal Regulations](#).

What does the pledge mean by "lobbyists"?

The No Toxic Money pledge includes rejecting contributions from the federal and state registered lobbyists of Duke Energy and Dominion Energy. This includes both "in-house" registered lobbyists who work directly for Duke and Dominion and outside

registered lobbyists at external lobbying firms who are registered to lobby on behalf of Duke and Dominion.

- Federal registered lobbyists of the U.S. House of Representatives are [searchable here](#).
- Federal registered lobbyists of the U.S. Senate are [searchable here](#).
- State registered lobbyists for all 50 states are [searchable from the links here](#).

What should a pledge signer do if they receive a prohibited contribution?

If a politician who has taken the No Toxic Money pledge receives a prohibited contribution, the campaign should act within a reasonable timeframe to address the contribution. The preferred action is for the campaign to return the money.

What is the process for resolving a potential violation of the pledge?

The No Toxic Money pledge coalition is not able to actively monitor all contributions to ensure compliance with the pledge. However, if a politician signs the pledge, they are expected to abide by it fully and to notify the coalition if they have any questions about specific contributions.

If the No Toxic Money coalition is notified that a pledge signer may have violated the terms of the pledge, it will investigate and confirm whether an identified contribution violated the pledge. If a violation has occurred, the coalition will notify the politician and give them one week to return the contribution(s) in question, as noted above. If the politician returns the contribution, they will remain on the pledge. If not, they will be removed from the list of pledge signers.

What if a pledge signer runs for reelection? Or runs for a different office?

It is the position of the No Toxic Money coalition that when politicians take the No Toxic Money pledge, they are taking it as a serious commitment to stand up to electric monopolies and align with people, not polluters. For this reason, a pledge signer is considered to remain a pledge signer indefinitely, though they are welcome and encouraged to re-sign the No Toxic Money pledge during any future election or reelection campaigns.

If a politician runs for office and signs the pledge, they are a pledge signer throughout their campaign, and if elected are expected to remain faithful to the pledge in all future fundraising.

A No Toxic Money pledge signer is considered to remain a pledge signer in any run for an office different than the one they currently hold, unless they notify the No Toxic Money coalition otherwise. Politicians are welcome and encouraged to reaffirm their signing of the No Toxic Money pledge when entering a new race for a different office than the one they currently hold. However, the coalition will assume they remain committed to the pledge unless updated by a signer, or given reason to believe otherwise.

If a politician runs for office but is unsuccessful, they remain a pledge signer in future elections unless the coalition is notified otherwise. That said, we encourage politicians to re-sign the No Toxic Money pledge, whether they are seeking the same office as in prior runs, or a new, different office. A politician will always be listed on the No Toxic Money website with the most recent office they have run for as a signer.