

LAWYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE

Mr Adrian Cartwright, Global Senior Partner
Mr Michael Bates, UK Managing Partner
Clifford Chance,
10 Upper Bank Street
London
E14 5JJ

13 February 2024

By hand and by email

Dear Mr Cartwright and Mr Bates,

Clifford Chance's responsibility to withhold its legal services in relation to any new projects to extract fossil fuels.

We write on behalf of Lawyers Are Responsible following our letter to you dated 18 July 2023 in which we requested that **Clifford Chance does not accept any further instructions in relation to developing new, or the expansion of existing, fossil fuel infrastructure; that it refuses any such instructions for the foreseeable future and that it terminates the provision of its services to any clients in respect of any current instructions that will lead to developing new, or the expansion of existing, fossil fuel infrastructure.**

These are serious and also urgent matters.

We are disappointed that we have not received a reply to our letter of 18 July 2023, unlike other prominent law firms, who have engaged with this necessary conversation. We request that you do now reply within 7 days of this letter.

We set out in our letter of 18 July 2023 the reasons why we consider that Clifford Chance should desist in this work and provided evidence from reputable international sources to support our request.

Since we last wrote to you, the UN Secretary-General has declared that “we are living through climate collapse in real time”.¹ On 8th February 2024, we learned that for the first time, global warming has exceeded 1.5C across an entire year.² Two days in late 2023 saw average temperatures that surpassed 2°C.³

Last year saw the hottest summer ever recorded. Wildfires burned millions of hectares across Canada and Europe. Heat-related deaths in Phoenix Arizona surged by 50% in 2023.⁴ Heavy rains and flash floods caused devastation in the US, China, India and Japan. 2023 saw the lowest levels of Antarctic sea ice ever recorded.⁵

According to leading scientists, 2024 has started as 2023 ended, with “exceptional temperatures and many extreme events”.⁶ On 1st February 2024, a state of emergency was declared in Catalonia as the region faces its worst-ever drought. Similar droughts have affected areas of northern Africa and southern Europe since mid-January.⁷ Early this year our oceans reached unprecedented average temperatures, this has severe implications for marine life, and will lead to an increase in extreme weather on land.

The evidence is clear – we are not facing a climate emergency, *we are in one*. The actions of firms like Clifford Chance will shape whether the planet remains liveable. This is an urgent threat with an urgent decision required on your approach to new fossil fuel projects.

We note that your most recent Responsible Business Report only references reducing Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. We re-iterate that these emissions are miniscule in comparison to the Scope 4 emissions resulting from and enabled by the matters on which Clifford Chance advises. Such commitments therefore completely ignore the devastating impact your client work is having on climate breakdown, and the prospect of us being able to inhabit a liveable planet in future.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/nov/30/climate-collapse-in-real-time-un-head-antonio-guterres-urges-cop28-to-act>

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-68110310>

³ <https://climate.copernicus.eu/copernicus-2023-hottest-year-record#:~:text=Global%20surface%20air%20temperature%20highlights%3A&text=2023%20marks%20the%20first%20time,than%202%C2%B0C%20warmer.>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/nov/11/phoenix-heat-deaths-record-climate-crisis>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/04/everyone-should-be-concerned-antarctic-sea-ice-reaches-lowest-levels-ever-recorded>

⁶ [https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/06/world-not-prepared-for-climate-disasters-after-warmest-ever-](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/06/world-not-prepared-for-climate-disasters-after-warmest-ever-january#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20record%20temperature%20and%20extreme,temperatures%20and%20many%20extreme%20events%E2%80%9D.)

[january#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20record%20temperature%20and%20extreme,temperatures%20and%20many%20extreme%20events%E2%80%9D.](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/06/world-not-prepared-for-climate-disasters-after-warmest-ever-january#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20record%20temperature%20and%20extreme,temperatures%20and%20many%20extreme%20events%E2%80%9D.)

⁷ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/european-and-global-drought-observatories/current-drought-situation-europe_en

Next steps

We ask, again, that you please respond within the next 7 days substantively to our letter of 18 July 2023 as to your proposed actions to address your advised emissions.

If we do not hear from you, we will be taking steps to escalate our actions drawing attention to the threat posed to human and environmental survival by your continued services enabling fossil fuel infrastructure projects.

We reiterate that we would welcome meeting with you to discuss these critical issues and available steps to address them.

Yours faithfully,

Lawyers Are Responsible
LAWYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE