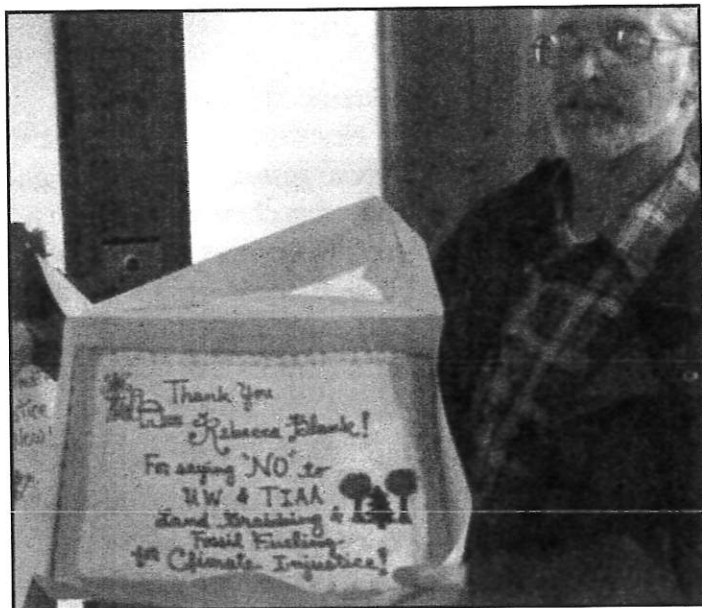


# Don't be Fooled by TIAA'S Greenwashing

by John Peck

Executive Director of Family Farm Defenders



*"Thank You Cake" Delivered to UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank on April Fool's Day*

Climate activists, union members, UW Students, and WI farmers gathered on April Fool's Day 2022 outside UW-Madison's Bascom Hall to deliver a "Thank You" cake to UW-Madison, Chancellor Rebecca Blank, calling on TIAA, the trillion dollar global pension fund, where she serves on the board of governors - to divest from land grabbing, fossil fuels, and climate injustice.

Similar coordinated weeklong actions happened at colleges and universities across the U.S. as students, faculty, and retirees become increasingly upset that their institutions and pensions have been misappropriated to bankroll irresponsible practices without their permission. A petition with 20,000 plus signatures was also delivered to TIAA headquarters in New York City. Other actions took place at Claremont College, CA, Cornell University, NY, and University of Pittsburgh, PA.

Besides being the manager of many WI public employee pension funds, TIAA has also been given charge of the state's \$4+ billion Eduvest fund for future college students - meaning that many young people are now unwittingly implicated in practices that drive family farmers off the land, destroy tropical forests, perpetuate dependence upon fossil fuels, and aggravate climate chaos.

"When I found out that my own retirement money as a part-time college professor was being used by TIAA to gobble up 50,000 acres in Mississippi, making it harder for black farmers to survive there, and also being used for agribusiness deforestation in Brazil's Amazon, threatening the livelihood of indigenous people, I must admit I was pretty upset," noted John E. Peck with Family Farm Defenders, a UW-Madison graduate and one of cake deliverers. "We hope that as Chancellor Blank and her staff enjoy this delicious carrot cake with cream cheese frosting, that they will also reflect upon the Wisconsin Idea and their own leadership role as public servants in averting the demise of our planet."

Way back in Oct. 2017, the WI American Federation of Teachers (AFT) passed a resolution calling for TIAA to "Refrain from further investment and begin a process of divestment from land grabs that are known to have displaced family farmers, triggered deforestation, and aggravated climate change." A similar resolution was passed by the UW-Madison Faculty Senate in April 2019, calling for greater transparency and accountability from TIAA for its investment decisions leading to land grabbing and forest destruction. In May 2021, TIAA announced it would take action on climate change, with a plan to achieve "Net Zero" emissions by 2050. However, over 100 organizations wrote a letter to TIAA in September 2021, calling their plan: "Too little, Too late."

For more info on how to join this effort, Visit: <https://www.stoplandgrabs.org/en-us/> and <https://tiaa-divest.org> Uprooted and Rising has also produced a great story map about the land grabbing issue, check it out here: <https://www.uprootedandrising.org/slg>