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Contact:

Timothy Smith, Walden Asset Management, 617-726-7155, tsmith@bostontrust.com
Michelle Mussuto, CalSTRS, 916-414-1440, Newsroom@calstrs.com

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Investors Urge Companies on National Association of Manufacturers Board to Oppose Its Attacks on Shareholders NAM Seeks to Curtail Investors' Ability to Question Companies on Climate Risk

Investors led by Walden Asset Management and the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) called on [45 companies](#) sitting on the Executive Committee and Board of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) to end the trade association's attacks on shareholders.

The [investors' letter](#) asks the companies to distance themselves from NAM's recent attempts to discredit shareholder engagement, particularly on climate change. These efforts have been undertaken through NAM's membership in the Main Street Investors Coalition (MSIC) and through a report NAM funded and distributed that wrongly asserts that shareholder resolutions diminish company value.

"The irony is that many companies on the NAM board are active business leaders on climate change," said **Timothy Smith, Director of ESG Shareowner Engagement at Walden Asset Management**. "They understand the very real risk to our environment and have active forward-looking policies and programs on climate. Yet their dues to NAM are funding an aggressive attack against the very investors they meet with regularly to address climate change. We are appealing to these companies to clearly state their opposition to these positions taken by NAM and Main Street Investors Coalition. It is important to do so to protect their company reputations and integrity."

"Environmental risk consideration is part of the evolution of investing. Whether a retail or institutional investor, assessing the risks of investments is a standard practice," said **CalSTRS Portfolio Manager in Corporate Governance Aisha Mastagni**. "NAM appears out of touch with its own constituents. Over the last decade more than 75 percent of the environmental-related proposals CalSTRS filed were withdrawn because the companies were willing to negotiate a mutually agreeable outcome."

NAM is a trade organization that represents and advocates for manufacturers across industrial sectors. Many NAM members are taking active steps on climate issues as a result of shareholder engagement. Nevertheless, NAM has established significant ties to MSIC, which purports to speak for investors, but which instead appears to be engaged in an attempt to undermine shareholders' rights by denouncing ESG-related shareholder proposals and by suggesting shareholders' concerns are politically motivated.

The investors' letter noted that, "The emergence of MSIC and the release of this report come at a time when investor support for shareholder proposals is growing" because the "business case behind them is clear and convincing." The signatories requested that the companies explain their views on MSIC's public attempts to discredit investor engagement and shareholder proposals.

Over [80 institutional investors](#), including state and city pension funds, investor trade associations, investment firms and mutual funds, foundations and religious investors added their organization's names in support of the letter.

Investors are actively engaging companies in their portfolios as concerns over climate risk grow. Most recently, [investors representing approximately \\$30 trillion](#) urged some 150 companies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, disclose their assessment of climate risks, and explain what actions they plan in response to climate risk.

Investors like BlackRock, Vanguard and State Street have made it clear that they want the companies in which they own shares to address climate risk.

“It is extremely bad timing for NAM and by implication the members of its board to be attacking investors addressing climate change at a moment when we desperately need to work together,” said Smith.

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