



Association of Environmental Professionals

June 3, 2020

Dear AEP Members,

In April, I sent a message regarding the challenges we face as environmental professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now we are, and have been for many decades, facing another challenge. The challenge of inequality in this Country. Although we are a professional organization and do not get involved in politics, AEP's Leadership agrees that we cannot be silent during this time. We join with millions of other voices in condemning the death of George Floyd and other on-going injustices occurring in this Country. As urban planners and environmental professionals, we are uniquely qualified to bring about positive change in our communities. Our profession has been doing so for decades by tackling issues such as environmental justice, affordable housing, and protecting the natural and built environment for all Californians. During this pivotal moment in history, I would like to highlight some of the changes AEP has made, and plan to make, to address these issues.

- In June 2019, the Board voted to amend our Code of Ethics and Bylaws to prohibit harassment of any kind and provide a method to dismiss any member who violates our Code of Ethics.
- In January 2020, we added creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Initiative to our 2020-2021 Strategic Plan. This will be completed very soon and will be shared with AEP Membership.
- AEP's Legislative Review Committee continues to work with our Lobbyist Matt Klopfenstein in Sacramento to promote and support legislation that addresses environmental justice, affordable housing, and promotes economic development within disadvantaged communities.

As part of the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, our Directors-at-Large Marie Campbell and Claudia Garcia have developed several steps that AEP will be considering to promote justice and equality within our communities and our profession:

- A statement on AEP's Website reiterating the General Responsibilities of public agencies, pursuant to NEPA and CEQA:
 - The stated purposes of NEPA are: To declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between humans and their environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of humankind.
 - CEQA recognizes that in determining whether and how a project should be approved, a public agency has an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors and in particular the goal of providing a decent home and satisfying living environment for every Californian. An agency shall prepare a statement of overriding considerations as described in Section 15093 to reflect the ultimate balancing of

competing public objectives when the agency decides to approve a project that will cause one or more significant effects on the environment.

- This statement should state that while environmental professions focus on the physical environment, embedded in the language of NEPA and CEQA is the presumption that all people should share equally in the ability to enjoy a healthful environment and economic prosperity.
- A statement that AEP actively promotes diversity and inclusion within our membership as part of the update to our Public Policy Program.
- Develop a program to educate and inform high school and college students from disadvantaged communities about our profession.
- Develop other ways to attract people of color to our profession through various means including, but not limited to, scholarships and internships.
- Provide a platform for organizations that work on social justice issues in community development to speak to our members through participation in our State Conference, AEP Institute and webinar programs.
- A statement that AEP supports and promotes inclusive communities offering various transit options and housing opportunities at all income levels.
- Recognize that diversity and inclusion make our organization stronger and reiterate that AEP welcomes and encourages all environmental professionals to participate in our organization.

On behalf of AEP's Executive Committee, we would like to make a statement that our organization is focused on improving diversity, equity and inclusion. We are committed to creating a more sustainable and resilient future for all Californians and hope to be part of addressing the challenges ahead.

Sincerely,

William Halligan, Esq.
AEP President

Mindy Fogg
Executive Vice President

Konnie Dobрева
Administrative Vice President

Marie Campbell
Director-at-Large

Claudia Garcia
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Executive Director