

June 15, 2020

Mr. William Halligan, Esq., President  
Association of Environmental Professionals  
--FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE AEP BOARD--

Subject: Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Environmental Field

Dear Mr. Halligan:

The events of the last few weeks have starkly further exposed and rightly shined a spotlight on the inequality, injustice, and systemic racism in our society. We were all gratified to read the statement on this issue that was prepared by AEP's Executive Committee.

AEP states its mission "is to enhance, maintain and protect the quality of natural and human environments." The organization, and the environmental field, have largely focused on the physical and natural environments, but consideration of the "human" environment, of people, has been lacking. As a result, disadvantaged communities have disproportionately suffered the consequences of projects that pollute, displace their homes, divide their communities, and advance inequality and injustice.

We have, therefore, come together, as leaders of many of the statewide environmental and urban planning firms in California, to address this issue. We are the leaders of Ascent Environmental, Environmental Science Associates/ESA, PlaceWorks, Rincon Consultants, and Dudek; together we employ well over 1,500 professionals working in the environmental and associated fields throughout California.

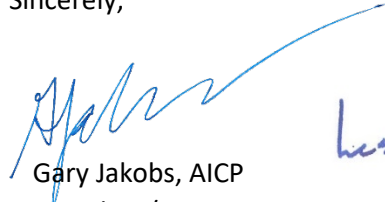
We support the entire message published by AEP, but wish to focus on, and promote, two of its points:

1. **Legislative Changes** - We support AEP in strongly promoting legislation that requires consideration of environmental justice in the California Environmental Quality Act. To that end, we encourage the Legislative Committee and the AEP Lobbyist to engage the California Legislature on this issue. We are prepared to assist AEP in this effort.
2. **Representation** - Our industry is not well represented by people from disadvantaged communities and specifically, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Even with the best intentions for equity and justice, efforts will be unsuccessful until the people that represent these communities are also leading environmental review efforts. This cannot be accomplished unless our industry authentically contains and represents people of color ubiquitously. For this to occur, our industry must make comprehensive strides to promote diversity and equity in our profession. We support AEP's Diversity and Inclusion Initiative and support the actions of developing programs to educate high school and college students from these communities and attracting a more diverse group of people to our profession through various means such as scholarships, internships, and speaking in classrooms. Actions such as early childhood education, partnerships with representative organizations, equity audits, recruitment and referral practices, diversity reports, and more will be critical to achieve the amount of representation that is overdue. Members of our firms would be happy to participate in outreach and speaking, as well as other actions addressed above.

We look forward to working with AEP as it commits itself towards true equity and inclusion as an organization, as practicing professionals, and as individual citizens. Only then can we take an active role in condemning discrimination in all its forms and reshaping our communities to be more just, equitable, and ensure shared prosperity for all.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We are prepared to help you attain your goals.

Sincerely,



Gary Jakobs, AICP  
President/CEO  
Ascent Environmental



Leslie Moulton-Post  
President/CEO  
Environmental Science Associates/ESA



Keith McCann  
Chairman/CEO  
PlaceWorks



John Dreher Jr.  
President/CEO  
Rincon Consultants



Joe Monaco  
President/CEO  
Dudek

cc: Julia Lave Johnston, President, California Chapter APA