



SWEEP Statement on Racial Injustice and Inequality June 2020

With the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others, the scourge of police brutality towards people of color, systemic racial injustice and pervasive inequality have come to the forefront in our nation. Millions of protestors are demanding fundamental reforms in policing practices as well as economic and social policies in order to close safety, wealth and public health gaps between white Americans and people of color. It is a moment where no one can sit on the sidelines, including non-profit organizations such as SWEEP.

SWEEP's mission is to advance more efficient energy use as a means of providing economic and environmental benefits in the states we work in. In fulfilling its mission, SWEEP has focused attention on improving energy efficiency in lower income households and in communities which are heavily populated by people of color. We frequently partner with organizations devoted to the energy needs of poorer communities in support energy efficiency, clean transportation and energy equity initiatives, and we have made significant progress in advancing equity within energy efficiency policies and programs in the region. But we can and should do more.

Doing more starts with better communication with people of color and their representatives. SWEEP works with organizations that represent lower income families and communities. We also have developed relationships with and assisted elected officials of color who have sponsored energy efficiency legislation in part to better serve their constituents. However, we can and will give greater priority to engaging in a dialogue with these organizations and individuals, identifying areas of mutual interest, and soliciting their input on how energy efficiency and clean transportation initiatives can better serve the needs of people of color including lower income families.

Second, SWEEP will redouble its efforts to ensure that energy and climate equity is a priority in the policies and programs we advocate for and support, not just a consideration or even worse an afterthought. We will do our best to ensure that lower income families and communities are well served by energy efficiency, clean transportation and beneficial electrification programs in our region, including receiving a disproportionate share of program resources (funding, outreach, technical assistance, etc.).

There are relatively few individuals of color working in the energy efficiency profession, SWEEP included. SWEEP will step up its efforts to include people of color on our Board and staff, as well as in the energy efficiency profession in general. As we increase our interaction with organizations that represent people of color and lower income families, we will solicit candidates for our Board or staff, as well as ask these organizations to help circulate our job announcements. In addition, we will provide internships to individuals of color so that there is a pathway for these individuals to work in the energy efficiency profession. Going forward, we will provide the majority of our internships to individuals of color.

As we implement these commitments, SWEEP will track progress towards these goals as well as review and update the policies periodically.