

**VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Staff Report - Item 7

TO: Community Advisory Committee

FROM: Mitch Sears, Interim General Manager
Rebecca Boyles, Director of Customer Care and Marketing

SUBJECT: Request for Feedback on Draft Statement on Environmental and Social Justice

DATE: August 27, 2020

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

In May 2020, the death of George Floyd in police custody was one of many tragedies that sparked protests, rallies and vigils around the United States, as well as countless discussions on racial, economic, and environmental justice issues. In response, many local communities and organizations across the country are examining and taking action to address systemic inequities that contribute to and perpetuate these societal problems.

In June, the VCE Board of Directors appointed a Board working group to work with staff to develop a draft statement on environmental and social justice issues. The Board provided direction that the draft statement should be focused on actions VCE can take to address these issues within the energy sector. The draft statement recognizes that environmental and social justice are intertwined issues and are deeply ingrained in our society. This includes the energy sector, where VCE can have a role in directly addressing the inequities many people in under-resourced or disadvantaged communities face. The draft statement includes specific actions that VCE can take to help address these issues and strengthen the organization and communities served by VCE.

The Board working group and staff have drafted the attached statement and are seeking feedback from the CAC. The draft is scheduled for consideration by the full Board at their September 8, 2020 meeting.

Attachment

1. Draft statement on environmental and social justice issues

Attachment 1 – Draft of Valley Clean Energy’s Statement on Environmental and Social Justice

Valley Clean Energy (VCE) is a mission-driven, community-based, not-for-profit public electricity supplier serving nearly 90% of the electricity customers in unincorporated Yolo County and the cities of Woodland, Davis, and Winters. We supply cost-competitive, clean electricity to everyone who chooses our service, regardless of race, gender, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identification, nationality, religion or political views. We were established to achieve better outcomes for the customers and communities we serve, and are therefore stronger and more effective when the full range of customer voices we serve are reflected in our decisions.

Valley Clean Energy recognizes that environmental and social justice are intertwined issues and are deeply ingrained in our society. This includes the energy sector, where VCE can have a role in directly addressing the inequities many people in under-resourced or disadvantaged communities face. This time of broad awakening across our country challenges us to respectfully acknowledge our role in truly effecting better outcomes for all of the communities and customers we serve.

We acknowledge that historically, not all customers have had equitable access to the decisions that shape and affect their communities. We will do our part to ensure that the decisions we make about energy supply and community reinvestment help to further environmental and social justice. Valley Clean Energy is committed to getting more electricity onto the grid that is produced by renewable, non-polluting sources such as solar, wind and hydroelectric. We are also committed to identifying and improving our systems that could perpetuate institutional barriers. To this end, VCE has made these commitments to further encourage diversity, equity and inclusion:

- We will listen, learn and act.
- We will explicitly integrate and address the concerns and priorities of historically marginalized communities in the design and implementation of VCE’s services and programs – to ensure that *all* of our customers are well served.
- We will work alongside our sister agencies in the Environmental Justice and Equity Committee of the Community Choice Energy trade association (CalCCA) to develop programs and policies that reduce environmental harm in all California communities – especially those with a history of environmental injustice.
- We will invite a more diverse set of voices to the table to effectively advance environmental justice in low-income and disadvantaged communities.
- We will more deeply integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion in our internal hiring, promotion and contracting policies.

Confronting the current challenges of environmental and social justice requires authentic and sustained listening. To that end, we would like to extend the invitation to more deeply engage to all members of our community – especially to those whose voices have not yet have been

fully represented. Please share your feedback, concerns and ideas at our [Board](#) and Community Advisory Committee meetings. All meetings are open to the public. And please consider contributing your expertise to VCE as a member of the Community Advisory Committee. Applications are available [here](#) -- and meeting schedules are available [here](#).