

VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE

Staff Report – Item 14

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Rebecca Boyles, Director of Marketing and Customer Care

SUBJECT: Ratify Environmental Justice Statement

DATE: November 12, 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Ratification of the attached final Environmental Justice Statement, which reflects the changes directed by the Board at the October 8th Board Meeting.

BACKGROUND

At the October 8th, 2020 Board Meeting, the Board reviewed the draft Statement and approved it to be finalized with additional language that is more inclusive of sex, gender identity and sexual orientation. In addition, the Board suggested that the Statement be reviewed in a year (November 2021).

CONCLUSION

Staff requests that the Board ratify the attached final Environmental Justice Statement, which reflects the additional language of inclusivity as directed by the Board at the October 8th Board Meeting.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Adopted VCE Environmental Justice Statement

Valley Clean Energy's Statement on Environmental 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 Justice (EJ) issues are deeply ingrained in our society. This includes the energy sector, where VCE can have a role in directly addressing energy-related 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 Justice.

VCE has adopted the official definition of Environmental Justice from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is: *“the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies¹.”*

Valley Clean Energy is committed to supplying more electricity 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 emerging and historically marginalized communities in the design and implementation of VCE's services and programs – to ensure that *all* of our customers are well served, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, age, disability or socioeconomic status.
- 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.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice>

- We will invite a more diverse set of voices to the table to effectively advance environmental justice in low-income and disadvantaged communities (DACs). We will reach out to DACs through targeted outreach campaigns to more thoroughly involve them in VCE workshops, program design and meetings of the Board of Directors and the Community Advisory Committee (CAC).
- We will more deeply integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion in our internal hiring, promotion, leadership (Board and CAC) and contracting policies.

Confronting the current challenges of environmental justice requires authentic and sustained listening. To that end, we would like to extend the invitation to more deeply engage all members of our community – especially 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](#).