



## SUSTAINABLE WESTCHESTER Statement on Environmental Justice

Dear Sustainable Westchester Community,

Sustainable Westchester pledges our support to all members of our diverse County who suffer racial injustice and inequality. The horrific murder of George Floyd and other recent incidents of violence and oppression underscore systematic issues of racism and discrimination.

New Rochelle Mayor and Sustainable Westchester Board of Director member, Noam Bramson gave a moving speech at his community's demonstration in which he referenced the need to "look at all the rooms in our house." Environmental justice is one of those rooms.

We understand that justice and equality in our communities is a conversation that is interconnected. Polluting energy facilities and activities are often located in low-income neighborhoods. Energy costs are a disproportionate economic burden for low-income families. The recent COVID-19 crisis has magnified the environmental divide in issues related to health. The resulting correlation between environmental inequities, financial hardship, and serious health impacts is a deadly threat to our communities of color.

We are committed to working and fighting harder to play a pivotal role in environmental justice by bringing sustainable, socially, and fiscally sound programs that increase access and benefits for all. We know that energy efficiency and renewable energy development will make our communities less susceptible to adverse health conditions. We have seen the possibilities for access to skills training and better-paying jobs that can result from clean energy project development. We have seen the value of lending our voice and leveraging our position in the energy sector across the County and State to affect measurable change in legislation and the next generations of solutions.

As agents of change, it is incumbent on us to affect a decisive shift toward environmental equity in our communities of color. We pledge to increase collaboration with our municipal partners by gaining a deeper understanding of each community's DNA, its strengths and needs, and the gaps that exist to find the place where we can play a significant role in offering greater access to environmental benefits. We believe that resilience is born from strong communities. With that, we pledge to deepen our investment in underfunded communities by providing environmental resources that will foster greater strength and resiliency.

While we have endeavored to make a positive environmental impact through our programs in all communities, we hope that our increased efforts, going forward, in support of the most vulnerable of those can make a measurable difference in the health and economic outlook for their residents.

We often speak of our organization's goal to create a resilient, healthy, vibrant, sustainable Westchester. We understand that the cornerstone of a genuinely sustainable Westchester is an equitable one.