

Renewable Hydrogen Alliance Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Renewable Hydrogen Alliance’s (RHA) founding document states as a first value “equity and respect for the community and the environment.” We are proud to have adopted this value, and every day we strive to live up to it. For RHA, some examples of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) include making sure our programs and work are directed and available to diverse audiences and participants, that we ensure that the environmental benefits of reducing climate change are equitably distributed amongst diverse populations and that all communities affected by climate change have a role in programs and policies to reduce fossil fuel use. Our DEI approach also incorporates those values promoted by the Black Lives Matter and Environmental Justice movements, and the affirmation of the rights, lives and livelihoods of all Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC).

The news continues to be full of tragic injustices against black people and other people of color on top of the the racism, oppression and denial of equal opportunity that continue to persist in our financial, economic, educational and social institutions, and government programs, from the federal government to the neighborhood level.

RHA is first and foremost an organization whose vision is to move energy, transportation and other sectors off of polluting fossil fuels that are destroying our planet and have caused the devastating effects of climate change. We see a direct line between RHA’s work and the well-being of people of color. It is well documented that low income and communities of color have suffered the impacts of pollution and climate change at exponentially greater rate than other populations.

To illustrate where RHA’s work intersects with the effects of pollution and climate change on disadvantaged communities, the National Institutes of Health recently published a study citing evidence that environment justice groups already knew – that people who live near heavy traffic areas have increased rates of asthma, cardiovascular disease, dementia and other adverse health effects.¹ And, those who live in these areas have historically been economically disadvantaged and minority populations and consequently, share a disproportionate burden of air pollution exposure and risk because they experience higher residential exposure to traffic related air pollution than non-minorities and persons of higher socioeconomic status. Further, children in particular, are more susceptible to air pollution exposures than adults due to immature immune systems, developing lungs, higher breathing rates, and more outdoor activities.

One of RHA’s environmental priorities is to eliminate the use of fossil fuel for all types of transportation from passenger cars to semi-trucks to public transit. We do this by promoting

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7794885/>

government policies that support and incentivize the use of zero-emission fuel cell vehicles that run on hydrogen made from clean renewable energy. We believe that simply replacing the diesel trucks that expose these communities to health damaging, asthma causing soot and air pollution with clean, non-polluting trucks would have a dramatically positive effect on the air quality and health of these communities². To RHA, this is a critical equity issue.

We recognize that RHA's responsibility to the Black Lives Matter, Environmental Justice and BIPOC movements must go beyond merely fulfilling our vision and our mission statement. Accepting that the country's racism is systemic is to accept our own complicity as part of that system, compelling us to take responsibility for doing something about it.

We urge members and all reading this to reflect on their own responsibility and capacity to contribute to positive change. RHA has committed to reaching out to organizations representing communities of color, and those promoting equity and social justice. We pledge to make our platform, our most influential asset, available to diverse communities and work with these organizations to boost voices and perspectives historically sidelined in our society.

RHA is in the business of re-imagining the future for both people and the environment. What can each of us do? We can listen and educate ourselves. We can donate to organizations fighting racial injustice. We can spend our dollars at minority owned businesses. We can speak up and take action when we witness injustice.

Minority businesses in the environmental and climate change communities interested in posting announcements, resources and other information on our website, in our newsletter or amplifying your messages in other ways can reach us directly at info@RenewableH2.org.

We encourage everyone to please reach out to RHA with questions or suggestions about how we can do better using the same email address above.

Take care and thank you.

² Heavy duty vehicles represent just 2% of vehicles on our roads, but are responsible for 23 percent of all on-road greenhouse gas emissions; the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality estimates that diesel pollution kills 460 Oregonians every year.