

350 Madison Statement on Climate Justice

Adopted by Board of Directors on September 9, 2020

350 Madison believes that climate justice is not possible without racial justice, and we are inspired by the work of activists striving for racial justice. We stand in solidarity with the #Black Lives Matter movement, those working to achieve justice for people of color, and those demanding action to confront the forces that have allowed systemic racism to persist.

While all members of our society are endangered and harmed by climate change and its impacts, such as polluted water and air, wildfires, floods, new diseases, and extreme weather, people of color suffer disproportionately, largely due to systemic racism.

In a recent interview, Bill McKibben, 350.Org's founder, explained the connection between climate change and climate justice using the three words "I can't breathe".

- "I can't breathe" - the last words of George Floyd and Eric Garner, show the brutality of the police and the racial oppression and injustice in our society. Communities can't breathe because they are stifled by police brutality.
- "I can't breathe" - Coal plants and other fossil fuel facilities are disproportionately located in minority communities, making the air toxic to breathe. Air pollution from these plants has led to asthma rates three times higher among Black people than among the general population.
- "I can't breathe"- It's gotten so hot in some places, that communities literally can't breathe .The temperature hit 114 degrees in New Delhi recently. Imagine being confined to a house due to COVID-19 with no air conditioning in that heat!

It is unjust for so many people of color around the world to suffer the disproportionate impacts of climate change, and to breathe, drink and eat the toxic byproducts of the fossil fuel industry, while facing discrimination in housing, employment, schools and law enforcement. A society that concentrates wealth and privilege with a few, and systemically disadvantages and discriminates against the many, is neither fair nor sustainable. Unless we address past and present environmental and societal injustices inflicted upon people of color, poor and working people, we will not have achieved our goals. To that end, 350 Madison is working to acknowledge the role that white people have played and continue to play in systemic racism, to understand and educate ourselves about how to stop being part of the system that perpetuates racism, and to achieve system change in support of a future that includes:

- Just treatment for people of color:
 - Acknowledging the pervasive and policy-driven discrimination that keeps people of color from reaching their full potential.
 - Reimagining our approach to law enforcement and community well-being, so that law enforcement no longer perpetuates violence on people of color.
 - Removing symbols and landmarks honoring the racism of our country's past.
 - Supporting people of color and other frontline communities through investments in health, education, job opportunities, and community resources, particularly for marginalized youth, whose talents must not be wasted.

- A just and fair transition to a culture and economy of sustainability, including a commitment to restructuring the energy economy. The fossil fuel industry should pay reparations to those who suffer the effects of climate chaos, including the physical, mental, and economic effects of air and water pollution, rising sea levels, wildfires, flooding, disease, drought, famine, and destructive storms.

- A fair and equitable distribution of the benefits of a sustainable society, including:
 - Climate change mitigation projects
 - Access to affordable and renewable energy
 - Access to high quality and affordable education
 - Livable wages, a safe work environment and comprehensive workers' rights
 - Access to plentiful green space
 - A health care system that tackles the effects of decades of pollution and climate change
 - Green investment opportunities and community investment in green initiatives

The assets of the fossil fuel industry, which has largely caused this climate emergency, should be redirected to creating a just and sustainable world. We must address the severe income and wealth inequalities that bestow enormous benefits for the very few at the expense of many.

As 350 Madison does its work, we strive to foster a culture that is open and welcoming to people of all races, ethnicities, religions, sexualities, gender identities, and abilities.

We look forward to working toward a world with a livable and sustainable climate where all can live happy, healthy lives. We invite you to join us in a joyful movement to heal the earth, and all of her inhabitants.