

Sierra CAMP's Commitment to Climate Justice

The impact of climate change on structurally disempowered and low-income communities can exacerbate existing inequities, but can also create opportunities. For example, climate action can help improve economic, social, and environmental wellbeing through intentional policies and strategies that address climate impacts on such communities directly and empower them to leverage their strengths, local knowledge and existing capacities. In recognition of the challenges and opportunities faced by these communities in the Sierra, Sierra CAMP is working to build climate justice and social equity into all its programmatic areas and supports any action to institutionalize these priorities in local, regional and state policy.

The concept of climate justice builds on the definition of environmental and social justice to encompass the concept of “frontline” communities, or communities that are most at risk to climate impacts, have contributed least to global emissions, and are least capable of adapting - often these communities are low-income, indigenous, people of color, and other structurally disempowered groups. Sierra CAMP is committed to supporting and acting on the [definition](#) advanced by California's Climate Justice Working Group, developed to inform the 2017 update to the state's climate adaptation strategy, *Safeguarding California*:

“Climate justice requires California leaders to ensure that the people and communities who are least culpable in the warming of the planet, and most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, do not suffer disproportionately as a result of historical injustice and disinvestment.”

California as a whole has made significant progress towards addressing social justice. In 2016, after decades of grassroots organizing from social justice organizations and allies fighting to achieve California government recognition, the California Legislature and Governor passed [SB 1000](#), which requires local governments to include an environmental justice element, or related goals, policies and objectives integrated in other elements, that identifies vulnerable communities within the area covered by the jurisdiction's general plan. Environmental justice has also been codified into [California state law](#), and is defined as “The fair treatment of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” Funding from the state's cap-and-trade grants programs prioritizes funding disadvantaged communities. **While these policies are a strong start towards institutionalization, true change requires action on the part of every able individual and institution, including a strong understanding and commitment to climate justice.**

Climate justice means a **just transition** to a more equitable, climate change-resilient world, where frontline communities are given priority in climate adaptation and mitigation actions and access to the resources and opportunities necessary for the pursuit of happiness and well-being. In recognition of the many frontline communities in the Sierra Nevada region, and in support of the goals of other climate justice organizations, SB 1000 and California state law, Sierra CAMP is committed to promoting climate policy, information, resources, partnerships, and initiatives that address climate justice and empower all Sierra communities. Sierra CAMP also actively strives to ensure equitable membership and governance policies, and encourage diversity in its membership and partnerships. Any individual, organization, tribe, or agency in the Sierra committed to working on climate change solutions is welcome to join the partnership for free, and may volunteer to serve on the Leadership Committee.

Sierra CAMP encourages its members and supporters to consider learning more about taking action for climate justice and to adopt similar commitments, and we will strive to demonstrate ways to take action. As our commitment continues to expand and grow, we remain open to ideas for how to carry out this commitment. For more information, resources, to suggest ideas, or to learn more about becoming a member, [contact](#) staff directly.