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Town of Stowe Electric Department Environmental Justice Resolution

Environmental Justice (EJ) is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean, resilient, and healthful environment. EJ is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

Vermont's communities become more diverse every day. As part of this growth, municipalities around the state and the country are recognizing the need to prioritize equity and social justice. Already, dozens of Vermont's communities have taken steps to be more inclusive. The Town of Stowe, Vermont issued the following Declaration of Inclusion on April 11, 2022:

The Town of Stowe welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, family status, age, or ability, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community. As a town, we formally condemn discrimination in all its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment. The Town of Stowe has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinion.

At the state level, [Act No. 154](#) was signed into law by Governor Scott on May 31, 2022, establishing an Environmental Justice policy for the State of Vermont. The act requires State agencies to incorporate Environmental Justice into their work, rules, and procedures. It establishes the Environmental Justice Advisory Council and the Interagency Environmental Justice Committee to advise the State on Environmental Justice issues. It also requires the creation of an Environmental Justice mapping tool.

The Federal government is also working to define Environmental Justice and establish strategies to address EJ issues nationwide. [Executive Order 12898](#) directed Federal agencies to develop Environmental Justice strategies to help address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs on minority and low-income populations. For the first time in our nation's history, the Federal Government has made it a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved,

and overburdened by pollution. President Biden made this historic commitment when he signed [Executive Order 14008](#).

Stowe Electric Department's role as a community leader is built on our commitment to working cooperatively with diverse stakeholder groups for the overall benefit of our customers and the community. We seek to have a positive economic, social, and environmental impact on our community through good citizenship and equitable access to programs for all customers. SED recognizes that low-income and minority customers, two groups who have historically borne disproportionate environmental impacts, reside in our service territory, despite populations not being concentrated enough to trigger designation under the Federal government's metrics for identifying Environmental Justice census block groups.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Stowe Electric Department supports local, state, and Federal efforts to address Environmental Justice concerns in designated Environmental Justice communities, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Stowe Electric Department is committed to examining ways to improve access to information, programs, and incentives for all of its ratepayers, including its underserved communities, as part of its mission to provide safe, reliable, efficient, resilient electric service to all customers.

Adopted February 22, 2023