



# SIERRA CLUB

## VERMONT CHAPTER

April 13, 2018

Dear House Government Operations Chairwoman Townsend and Committee,

To begin thank you for passing Act 54 last year. Act 54 was an important step forward to creating a process to review systematic racism. Given the local and national political landscape, it is quite evident that there is more work to do and that these issues are not going to be solved by passing any one piece of legislation. However, despite the complexity, I believe that there is no wrong time to address racial justice and that anything the Legislature can do this session to move the pendulum of justice forward is the right thing to do.

First, I urge the House Committee on Government Operations to proceed with passing an independent commission, that is funded and staffed as passed by the Senate in S.281 to address systemic racism. Second to continue building on the groundwork from Act 54, I request that the committee considers the provisions as addressed in H.868, An act relating to mitigating statewide systemic racism.

The Sierra Club, although an environmental organization, has evolved over the years in which we believe that in order for all of our complex issues to be solved we need to become a more just, equitable, and inclusive organization internally and externally. To achieve those goals the Sierra Club board of directors adopted the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing in 2014. The Jemez Principles calls organizations to be inclusive, emphasis on bottom-up organizing, allow people to speak for themselves, work together in solidarity and mutuality, build just relationships among ourselves, commit to self-transformation. Our participation with the Racial Justice Reform Coalition is grounded in these principles, and hope that the Sierra Club's presence can help Vermont achieve those goals.

If the committee is inclined I would be honored to testify on the record with specific suggestions. I look forward to working with your committee to ensure there is justice for all Vermonters.

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