

Planet Texas 2050 Statement on Black Lives Matter and Racial Injustice

Dear Planet Texas 2050 community,

Black Lives Matter. We condemn the racial injustice, systemic inequities, and outright violence that have been an ever-present feature of life in America since its founding. We stand in solidarity with and support those who have spoken up, organized, and participated in the massive anti-racist protests across the United States these past three weeks in the wake of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Mike Ramos, and too many others. We denounce the white supremacy and white privilege that have for too long defined policies and attitudes in all our institutions, from environmentalism and academia, to policing and housing.

We envision a Texas that is healthy, safe, just, and economically vibrant for all. That version of Texas is not possible without eradicating racism in policy-making, planning, institutions, and resource distribution. To that end, we must focus our efforts on working in solidarity with oppressed communities. We must understand and find ways to interrupt the complicity of the academic and other institutions in which we work. We believe Texas can be a model for our nation and world in healing the wounds of civil injustice and unrest and in finding new ways for inclusive and socially- and environmentally-just growth and policies to help all Texans flourish.

One of Planet Texas 2050's core values is equity. In previous work to define our values, we have noted that "power differentials create inequities based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, wealth, age, ability, sexuality, and nation of origin. We understand that without acknowledging and seeking to address these power differentials, the tools and strategies we co-develop may inadvertently exacerbate inequities. Therefore, reflecting upon the historical, sociocultural, and structural roots of inequity is fundamental to all aspects of our work." But stating this value and interest in self-awareness is not enough. We are committed to confronting and dismantling unjust systems that limit our collective capacity to address the coupled challenges of climate change and population growth. Planet Texas 2050 ultimately aims to be a force for environmental justice that recognizes the histories of racism within environmentalism and environmental planning and policy-making.

In conclusion, we empathize with those in our community who are feeling pain, anger, grief, and disgust in this moment. And we want to learn from and listen to our colleagues within and outside the university so we can live up to our values in this next stage of Planet Texas 2050's life. We'll be in touch shortly with our plans to this end, but we wanted to begin with some areas for self-reflection as people continue taking action by showing up in the streets, donating, and learning:

- How does this moment challenge how we do our work? Some criminal justice activists are cautioning against “more studies” on the issue of police brutality as a diversionary and delaying tactic. How does that sit with us as researchers in a general sense? Is it possible that the pursuit of our work can be used in similar situations not to contribute to justice but instead to delay it?
- How can research within and across disciplines be anti-racist?
- What can we do within our institutions to combat racism? What does solidarity mean?

We have compiled a list of resources on white supremacy and antiracism, which you can view [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-YhNmhmhECNEzrNrT2NtvFIVv1XaC1stnUgSd4XPVEIA/edit#heading=h.nj23sjpj5u97) (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-YhNmhmhECNEzrNrT2NtvFIVv1XaC1stnUgSd4XPVEIA/edit#heading=h.nj23sjpj5u97>).

Respectfully and in solidarity,

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WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT