



March 28, 2023

Dear Chair Xiong and Members of the House Workforce Committee:

The DE amendment to the Workforce Development Finance Budget Bill includes meaningful investment in communities of color at a time of severe economic inequities in our state. We support in particular the inclusion of funding for the Clean Economy Equitable Workforce Program, which would support green career pathways for BIPOC communities.

New Justice Project is a Black-led organizing hub focused on building power for and with low-income and no-income Black Minnesotans by organizing in jobs, housing, and reimagined community safety.

Black Minnesotans have experienced the worst economic outcomes of the COVID pandemic. Unemployment rates more than doubled for Black Minnesotans during the first year of the pandemic, and after modest improvements, jobless rates increased again in late 2022. Many individuals are also not counted in these numbers - including those who have had so much trouble finding work that they have simply given up. According to national studies, Minnesota also has the third worst racial wealth gap in the country.¹

A pathway to a green energy or green construction job is a pathway to a real career and economic mobility. The Clean Economy Equitable Workforce grant program would dedicate resources to meet the state's growing green workforce needs, and do so in a way that builds generational economic stability within Black and brown communities.

Thank you for the inclusion of the Clean Economy Equitable Workforce appropriation in the omnibus legislation. We would urge your continued support for this important provision, as well as other investments in Black and brown communities in the House workforce omnibus bill.

Sincerely,

Rod Adams
Executive Director

¹ <https://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2022/01/25/study-minnesota-racial-wealth-gap/>