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To: Member Governments, Board of Delegates, Staff, Funders and Partners
From: Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
Date: June 9, 2020
Re: Racial Disparities in our region

The killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 by law enforcement officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota was inexcusable and offensive to the fundamental promise of America that all people are created equal and endowed by our Creator of certain inalienable rights. While this heinous murder was far away from our home, we acknowledge that our region has significant racial disparities in most every aspect of our society. On average, African American individuals in our region earn lower wages, have less educational attainment, and suffer significant health and criminal justice disparities compared to White individuals. These disparities are unacceptable and are the result of many complex factors including, but not limited to, a history of enslavement and segregation of African Americans in our region.

Land of Sky Regional Council is committed to eliminating racial disparities and supporting disadvantaged individuals and communities. Land of Sky Regional Council employees agree to the following core values:

- We value cultural, gender, racial and ethnic diversity;
- We believe diversity and inclusion make us stronger;
- We will treat all people with dignity, respect and compassion to foster trusting and supportive working environment;
- We will be honest, open and clear in our communication with our co-workers, member governments, funders, clients and our region;
- We will respect diversity of opinion;
- We are committed to a culture of personal responsibility with an appreciation for risk taking;
- We will hold ourselves accountable to our co-workers, member governments, funders, clients and our region;
- And we will develop and implement policies and procedures that are fair, consistent and equitable.

Land of Sky Regional Council will begin to share data based on racial disparities with our region and will promote a regional conversation to help us all more effectively understand these challenges.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited our region in August 1965 for a speech at Montreat and he spoke of “man’s inhumanity to man.” In that speech over five decades ago Dr. King said “we shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice. . . . With this faith we will be able to transform the dangling discourses of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. . . . This will be a great day, it will not be the day of the white man it will not be the day of the black man, it will be the day of man as man.”

We resolve that the promise Dr. King spoke of in that Montreat speech will not be forgotten and endeavor to make his promise a reality in our region.