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Engagement of Office President of University of California with ARCHES

2 messages

Bahram Fazeli <bfazeli@cbeval.org>

Sat, Mar 4, 2023 at 10:19 AM

To: Scott Brandt <Scott.Brandt@ucop.edu>

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Dear Dr. Brandt,

I am writing on behalf of Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and thousands of our members and supporters to express my great disappointment with your conduct at the biweekly public engagement meeting with ARCHES, yesterday, March 2nd.

Previously, a number of other Environmental Justice (EJ) and environmental leaders had communicated to me that the Friday meetings are not productive spaces conducive to exploring alternative approaches, and they have characterized your attitude towards environmental justice leadership on this issue as abrasive and disrespectful. However, because of our earlier and honest dialogue at the Long Beach ARCHES Conference in October of 2022, I thought it is my obligation to attend this meeting in good faith and raise our concerns once again. Our main purpose for attending this meeting was to highlight our asks as communicated to you in our January 30th letter (and the follow up email) related to both Governance and Criteria for project selection. We are still waiting for a response on our specific suggestions, and we remain interested to engage with ARCHES leadership and attempt to resolve our differences before your proposal is submitted to DOE on April 7th.

I must say that I find it appalling that a representative of the University of California, especially one representing the Office of the President of the University of California, can have such a hostile attitude towards critical thinking and differences of opinion. Since we have been engaged in the ARCHES discussion, and as you have provided us with limited information, we have responded both verbally and in writing to that information. On the issue of Governance, you made numerous false statements in the meeting yesterday including one that suggested: "[we] did not want to engage on the issue of governance

earlier and now it's too late." We have extensive proof of exchange of emails and meeting notes showing that, in fact, we engaged on this issue as soon as you shared with us your draft Governance format. In fact, almost immediately, we communicated with you and the ARCHES team about our concerns about Governance repeatedly. For example, we told you that you need to have more EJ and public health representatives on the Governing Board. We told you that the meetings of ARCHES Governing Board cannot be clouded in secrecy and must be subject to California's best practices in open meeting laws and public participation protocols. We also told you that revising the proposed draft Governance structure is paramount and is a necessary first step to create trust with the environmental justice communities, which for decades have been subject to neglect by a number of regulatory agencies in California. We went a step further and consolidated our recommendations into a concise letter that we shared with you on January 30th.

Environmental Justice movement in California prides itself in opening up opportunities for public participation as a cornerstone of our work for engaging vulnerable frontline communities, and I will assure you that insulting leaders and representatives of the environmental justice movement is not going to help advance Governor Newsom's mission with the Department of Energy or help achieve our mutual goal of identifying equitable transition strategies away from a fossil fuel economy in California. If you are not comfortable with hearing constructive alternatives and suggestions, I suggest that you step down from the ARCHES leadership and allow someone else to fulfill this important responsibility.

We look forward to working with ARCHES leadership more constructively in future discussions. For your reference, I am re-attaching our January 30th letter along with a draft list of project criteria.

Sincerely,

Bahram Fazeli

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COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

established 1978

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2 attachments

 **EJ Letter to ARCHES on Governing Structure Final.pdf**
100K

 **Draft Priorities for ARCHES_021620 (1).pdf**
122K

Bahram Fazeli <bfazeli@cbeval.org>
To: EJ-CA-H2HUB <ej-ca-h2hub-list@sierraclub.org>

Sun, Mar 5, 2023 at 9:16 AM

FYI

From: Bahram Fazeli
Sent: Saturday, March 4, 2023 10:19 AM
To: Scott Brandt <Scott.Brandt@ucop.edu>
Cc: president@ucop.edu <president@ucop.edu>; regentsoffice@ucop.edu <regentsoffice@ucop.edu>; tyson.eckerle@gobiz.ca.gov <tyson.eckerle@gobiz.ca.gov>; deedee.myers@gobiz.ca.gov <deedee.myers@gobiz.ca.gov>; Yana.Garcia@calepa.ca.gov <Yana.Garcia@calepa.ca.gov>; susan.cochran@ucop.edu <susan.cochran@ucop.edu>; Monica Embrey <monica.embrey@sierraclub.org>; ibrostrom@crpe-ej.org <ibrostrom@crpe-ej.org>; sgersen@earthjustice.org <sgersen@earthjustice.org>; Ari Eisenstadt <ari@caleja.org>; Hasson, Michele <mkabhasson@nrdc.org>; Dawny'all Heydari <dheydari@pacificenvironment.org>; Darryl Molina Sarmiento <dmolina@cbeval.org>; Michele Prichard <mprichard@libertyhill.org>; Sasan Saadat <ssaadat@earthjustice.org>; kkarimi@crpe-ej.org <kkarimi@crpe-ej.org>; mborgeson@nrdc.org <mborgeson@nrdc.org>; Adam Weber <azweber@lbl.gov>; Ross Zelen <rzelen@berkeley.edu>; Shana Lazerow <slazerow@cbeval.org>
Subject: Engagement of Office President of University of California with ARCHES

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