

**Moore-Love, Karla**

186039

**From:** Alan Hipolito [Alan@Verdenw.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 22, 2013 4:46 PM  
**To:** Moore-Love, Karla  
**Subject:** Testimony, Agenda Item 472, Verde-CCC.docx  
**Attachments:** Testimony, Agenda Item 472, Verde-CCC.docx

Hi Karla:

Thank you for taking the time after this morning's Council hearing to give me a better understanding of second readings and public testimony, I appreciate it. Per that discussion, I am submitting testimony for Agenda Item 472. Please let me know if I can answer any questions or provide further information...

Much obliged,

-alan

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**Verde serves communities  
by building environmental wealth  
through social enterprise, outreach and advocacy.**



*Before printing, think about the environment*

*Antes de imprimir, considere su impacto en el medio ambiente*

5/22/2013



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May 22, 2013, re: Agenda Item 472

My name is Alan Hipólito, I work for Verde, Verde serves communities by building environmental wealth through social enterprise, outreach and advocacy. Verde is a member of the Coalition of Communities of Color, and I present this testimony as Verde's Executive Director and as the Chair of the Coalition's Community & Economic Development Committee.

First, I would like to reiterate the points I made when I testified at the April 11<sup>th</sup> Budget Forum at Montgomery Park.

- I support the Council's decision to continue making investments in clean water and watershed health in FY14, and I support the role of BES in the City's clean water future
- Verde, dba Verde Landscape, is a contractor with BES, planting trees under the Grey to Green Program. This contract is an important part of our social enterprise's customer base, supporting our ability to provide jobs, job training and health insurance to Verde Landscape Crew Members, Crew Members that we recruit from low income and people of color communities
- Thru the Grey to Green Program, Verde has built a strong, long-term partnership with Friends of Trees, planting and watering trees throughout the City. This has been an important part of Verde's growth since 2008, allowing us to bring on new staff to manage Verde Landscape and to leverage new resources for our social enterprise model and our organization.

Over the last few years, Verde's participation in the Grey to Green Program, and in the economic benefits of green infrastructure, has drawn increasing interest from the other groups that represent and organize with people of color and low-income people, including the Coalition of Communities of Color. They began to ask, how do we access these green infrastructure investments, how can they benefit our communities and help us meet our missions? 2012, Verde formally joined the Coalition to work with our peer organizations to improve our collective access the benefits of sustainability, and the Coalition has set sustainability goals as part of its Community & Economic Development Committee's Strategic Plan.

We believe that a great expansion of Grey to Green Program's equity benefits is at hand, and that FY14 is the year we design that Program from an equity-based approach. This approach drives and prioritizes clean water and watershed investments into low-income and people of color communities in response to existing community needs like health, jobs and business opportunities, housing, and education. Further, this approach fully utilizes the equity expertise of Coalition member organizations and other groups that represent and organize with people of color and low-income people in the design of the City's next generation of environmental investments. Lastly, importantly, this approach provides City resources in FY14 to bring that expertise to the table.

I believe there are 2 broad reasons to imagine and realize a future Grey to Green Program that serves and engages equity communities, and that achieves broad and numerous equity outcomes:

- **Equity Values.** Equity is a fundamental commitment of sustainability, of the Portland Plan, and is a fundamental commitment by the City to its citizens. Our shared values of equity and inclusion compel us to work together to ensure that the decision-making processes and benefits of a future Grey to Green Program are greatly accessible to low-income and people of color communities.
- **Environmental Results.** In the early 1990s, Portland was the whitest city in the United States, only 13% of Portland residents were people of color. Today, Portland is a different place, over 25% of Portland residents are people of color, and 44% of students enrolled in Portland Public Schools are people of color. The meaningful participation of these new communities is critical to the future of sustainability – it has to serve these communities, has to prioritize that service, in order to have a broad and meaningful impact. No policy, no business, no government, no movement can stake its future impact on serving a declining market, a declining customer base, a declining constituency.

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So, I'd like to clearly state that the Coalition supports green infrastructure. I'd also like to state that that the Coalition is actively participating in ongoing discussions about green infrastructure – which bureau has the lead responsibility, what green infrastructure initiatives the City should fund in FY14, and how future green infrastructure programs should be designed and implemented. To make it plain, the Coalition of Communities of Color now considers and presents itself as an environmental stakeholder, interested in environmental policymaking, environmental benefits and environmental partnerships.

SEWER AND STORMWATER RATES, CHARGES & FEES

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

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