TREC TOGETHER RISING AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY

Worksheet: Deciding Whether to Make a Public Statement

This worksheet helps organizations thoughtfully decide whether to issue a public statement or take an action in response to a public event or crisis. It is designed to support values-aligned decisions and reduce reactive responses under pressure. It can be helpful to take some time to personalize the sections of this worksheet to meet the culture of your organization before you need to use it to decide on a course of action.

Note: If your organization prefers to use numbers and scoring, TREC has a corresponding decision-making matrix to help you decide if or when to make a public statement.

Date:

The Issue (briefly describe):

Step 1: Initial Relevance Check

☐ Does this issue align with our mission, vision, values, strategy, or program work?

☐ Are people in our organization directly affected?

☐ Are members, partners, or communities we serve directly affected?

Notes:

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, proceed to step two.

Step 2: Decision-Making Authority

Who is the final decision maker on whether or not the organization will make a statement or take an action (Executive Director, Board, other)?

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How will the decision be made (vote, consensus, delegated authority, etc.)?

What role will staff play?

What role will community members or stakeholders play?

Who will be consulted?

How will disagreements be handled?

Step 3: Alignment With Organizational Values

Why this issue and why now?

Is our motivation aligned with organizational values?

Is this part of a broader strategy for systemic change?

Are we willing to commit resources beyond a statement?

Will we stay engaged beyond the immediate moment?

Examine your responses to these questions and decide if you should proceed to the next step.

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Step 4: Understanding the 'Why'

Have affected communities been asked what support would be helpful?

Is our organization connected to or complicit in the system causing harm?

Where can our organization have meaningful influence?

Would responding strengthen key relationships?

What motivates this response (solidarity, systemic change, internal pressure, reputation, appearance of doing something, etc.)?

Examine your responses to these questions and decide if you should proceed to the next step.

Step 5: Risk and Impact Assessment

What are the risks of making a statement?

What are the risks of NOT making a statement?

How might staff, members, donors, or partners respond?

Are there legal or reputational considerations?

What resources will be required to follow through?

Examine your responses to these questions and decide if you should proceed to the next step.

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Step 6: Additional Strategic Questions

Timing: Is enough information available to respond responsibly?

Credibility: Do we have expertise or legitimacy to speak on this issue?

Movement leadership: Are impacted communities already leading this response?

- If so, should we amplify their efforts or take our own action?

Audience clarity: Who actually needs to hear from us?

Capacity: Can we sustain engagement if the issue escalates?

Internal support: Are staff prepared for potential backlash or criticism?

Examine your responses to these questions and decide if you should proceed to the next step.

Step 7: Possible Actions Beyond a Statement

☐ Advocacy or calling on decision-makers to act

☐ Providing staff a specific amount of time for civic engagement

☐ Matching donations or supporting affected organizations

☐ Holding educational or public events

☐ Direct action or advocacy campaigns

☐ Educating members about the issue

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Other actions:

What action(s) will you take for this issue:

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Step 8: Final Decision

☐ Issue a public statement

☐ Take action but do not issue a public statement

☐ Do not engage at this time

Reasoning:

Step 9: If Proceeding – Statement Planning

What key message do we want to communicate?

Who is the primary audience?

What action are we calling for?

Who drafts the statement?

Who approves the final version?

What communication channels will be used?

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Step 10: If Proceeding – Follow-up and Further Action Planning

You've decided to make a statement. What other things will you do to increase your impact on the change you want to see in the world (e.g. what are you going to do beyond simply making a statement)? How will you hold your organization accountable for living into your statement (e.g. ensure this isn't just a one-time action)?

Are there any key dates or timelines (e.g. when you will have the statement complete and posted; when an action will take place; when your organization expects to have a change made by; etc.)

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