

## Remarks by Board President Cynthia McClain-Hill Regarding Support for the AAPI Community

Delivered during the Board meeting on March 23, 2021

According to Stop AAPI Hate, between March 2020 and February 2021, there were 3,795 documented racially motivated attacks against members of the AAPI community. 3,795. That doesn't account for the thousands of unreported incidents or the ones not characterized as hate crimes. And it doesn't include the tragic events of last week. I simply have no words profound enough to express the horror and despair associated with the slaughter of eight people including six women of Asian descent in Atlanta one week ago today.

Mothers, daughters, grandmothers, each one with her own story, lives centered in aspiration and love fueled by courage and working to manifests the American dream for themselves and their families. Their individual stories, even as they are now part of the painful American through line of racism and xenophobia will live on in the memories of their loved ones and the promise of the children that have been left behind.

I know that this is a meeting of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power commission. And that the kind of racism, hate, violence and misogyny we saw in Atlanta is beyond our jurisdiction. That said, time and time again members of this department refer to themselves as a family. And I am now privileged to be part of that family. There are 1,316 AAPI members of this family in a city that is 11.8% Asian. Families see each other, reach out to each other in times of distress, stand up for each other and when necessary defend each other. If the stress of this past year of the pandemic, unimaginable death and the unrelenting scapegoating of people of Asian descent has revealed nothing else, it shows us how important it is that we, those of us who seek to be allies to the AAPI community make room for the unique stories and experiences of our colleagues, our friends, the AAPI members of our DWP family. Especially now it's incumbent upon us to reach out to check in and to listen.

Before taking my own advice, I want to close with this. if you hear some seemingly small insult or racial or ethnic joke or encounter any form of bigotry directed at a member of this department, or any one in any part of your life as a person of color, I urge you to consider the insight captured by Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1965 at the height of what we commonly refer to as the civil rights movement. He said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends." This is no time for silence.