



Marine Retailers Association of the Americas

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MRAA Statement on Racism

MINNEAPOLIS – June 9, 2020 – Tragedy has fallen upon Minneapolis, Minnesota, the United States and the world. On Monday, May 25, George Floyd was killed by police in an unjust, unfair and deplorable act of violence.

This is one act in a long series of violent acts upon the Black community that signifies the systemic racism that has plagued our society for hundreds of years. The unrest in Minneapolis is a symptom of that racism.

MRAA, being headquartered in the Minneapolis area, no longer has the privilege, ability or desire to remain silent.

Like you, we are disturbed to see the continued systemic racism that affects our families, our friends and our neighbors of color. We are frustrated by the injustices and inequality Black people face in our community and elsewhere. We are saddened by the destruction that has been inflicted — often by outsiders — on area's small businesses, grocery stores, pharmacies, schools, libraries and other organizations, many of which were immigrant- and people of color-owned, and all of which contributed to the well-being of our local community. We're actively deciding to put feelings into solutions.

We have been inspired and encouraged by what we've seen in our communities over the past couple weeks. We have seen people of every race stand up for their Black family members, friends and neighbors in peaceful protest and prayer. We have seen food drives that have had to redirect donations because their stocks are overflowing. We have seen hope. We have seen love. We have seen action.

We have also seen our own team members step up, becoming organizers for their blocks to build safety measures and build community; helping people find emergency housing; donating food, medical supplies, cleaning items and money; and volunteering their time, their compassion and their energy.

Now is a time for change. As the MRAA, we stand against racism and racial inequality. We are learning what it means to be an ally and an advocate, and we are committing to do better in the future to learn about the injustices that Black people face and to stand up to do our part to contribute to the solution, as opposed to remaining silent about the problem. We implore our colleagues across the boating industry to stand, learn, commit and contribute alongside us.

Many in our marine industry community have reached out to us and asked how we're doing and what they could do to help. As a first step to support our community from an organizational standpoint, the MRAA is making donations to, and matching our team members' donations to [Lake Street Council](#), described below.

We ask that you donate alongside us, to support our Minneapolis neighbors in need. Here are a few options you could consider:

[Official George Floyd Memorial Fund](#)

This fund is established to cover funeral and burial expenses, mental and grief counseling, lodging and travel for all court proceedings, and to assist the Floyd family in the days to come as they continue to seek justice for George. A portion of these funds will also go to the Estate of George Floyd for the benefit and care of his children and their educational fund.

[Lake Street Council](#)

Lake Street Council (501c3) will donate 100% of funds to help rebuild Lake Street, the epicenter of the destruction in Minneapolis, starting with direct support to small businesses and nonprofits to help them rebuild their storefronts, reopen their businesses and serve their neighborhoods. A majority of Lake Street businesses are owned by immigrants and people of color, and Lake Street Council is committed to ensuring that support is accessible to all businesses and has an equitable impact. As they work to allocate and distribute these funds, they will focus on helping the hardest-hit and most vulnerable businesses in their community, which disproportionately includes immigrant and POC-owned businesses.

[MTS Secondary School](#)

MTS is a tuition-free, public school with nine options that serve students in the Twin Cities metro area through its brick and mortar school sites, as well as greater Minnesota through online options. The school is hosting a fundraiser for students and families who lack access to basic needs. Once received, a social worker team will discern the needs and meet them.

[Midtown Global Market](#)

Midtown Global Market is a vibrant economic and cultural center where communities gather. It is home to 45 small businesses representing 16 cultures, ethnicities or countries of origin. Helping this organization will keep the market up and running, and also provide a source of food for this community, as this area has become a food desert.

[Pimento Relief Fund](#)

The Association for Black Economic Power is raising funds for Pimento, a Black-owned restaurant, to provide this Black business, without insurance, relief after white supremacists set them on fire during the protests. Their goal is to raise \$1 million to help these businesses recover from the damages done.

All of this being said, a donation shouldn't be the end of your action. We encourage and challenge you to look into your own neighborhoods and support organizations that support the advancement of Black people, Black communities, Black-owned businesses, Black families, civil rights, civic engagement, voter participation and criminal justice reform.

We also ask that you, just like us, continue to learn and listen to those from diverse backgrounds. We encourage you to open your hearts to change your minds and alter your points of view, if needed, as you learn and grow. We encourage you to look at how you can build community trust and connection with your neighbors of color. We support you in using your voice and your business' voice to lift up Black people and other people of color. And we encourage you to work with your employees to give them the space and time they need to process current events, volunteer in your communities and have the difficult conversations we're all having right now.

Our goal is to become better allies and advocates for those in the Black community. Two of our values as an organization are Accountability and Authenticity. We will hold each other Accountable for this change, growth and support, and we hope you will hold us Accountable, too. We want to be Authentic in creating this pledge to help remove barriers that hinder Black leadership and progress, and help us evolve to a supportive society that is better for all.

— **The team at the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA)**

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