

### ***C. Public Policy: Architects are Environmentally Responsible***

The creation and operation of the built environment is undergoing radical transformation to eliminate climate change pollution, enact environmental justice, and address other crises. Architects are a critical part of leading these transformations.

#### 1. Practice

- a. The AIA advocates for a sustainable built environment that includes healthy physical environments and equitable access for all. The built environment is undergoing a rapid transformation of energy systems, transportation modes, construction materials, cultural shifts, and more. We need to be nimble to prioritize policies that support a cost-effective and equitable transformation.
- b. The AIA values and actively seeks allies and communities to work together on a shared vision for the urgent and critical transformation towards a sustainable and equitable built environment.
- c. We rely on the development, evaluation, and use of codes, standards, and evidence-based rating systems to achieve healthy, resilient buildings and communities for all members of society.
- d. The AIA advocates for and provides resources to help architects and firms meet sustainable goals and standards.

#### 2. Energy Efficiency

- a. The AIA advocates for policies, programs, and incentives for energy efficiency for the planning, design, construction, and operations of homes and buildings. These strategies reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, lowering risks and costs for our clients and the public.
- b. The AIA advocates for carbon neutral new construction and major renovations by 2030 (AIA 2030 Commitment) and a carbon neutral built environment by 2050 (2050 Imperative).
- c. The AIA supports policies that radically reduce carbon pollution, including passive design, energy efficiency, electrification, demand-response, and transportation integration with buildings, as well as the equitable and rapid transition to a carbon neutral electricity grid.

#### 3. Energy Renovations toward Net Zero

- a. The AIA advocates for policies that support existing building retrofits to increase passive performance, resilience, energy efficiency, electrification, demand response, renewable energy, and to reduce carbon pollution.
- b. The AIA advocates for comprehensive consideration of carbon and other benefits of building reuse. Many existing buildings are historically significant or contribute to the character and identity of the built environment. Energy and decarbonization retrofits should leverage these buildings' inherently sustainable features and be appropriate and sensitive to each structure.

#### 4. Materials and Embodied Carbon toward Net Zero

- a. The AIA supports policies and practices that identify and significantly reduce the embodied carbon of construction materials and processes, including transparency using Life Cycle Assessment and disclosure of material ingredients and health risks. AIA supports materials research to develop low-carbon and carbon-negative construction materials.

- b. AIA supports policies and practices that create a more circular economy, including building reuse, deconstruction, product refurbishment and repair, and warehousing of salvaged products to support a materials reuse marketplace. Architects can support this transition to a circular economy through specifications that include salvaged materials, minimal toxins, products that can be reused, and that are de-constructable and recyclable.

5. Equity and Environmental Justice

- a. The design of the built environment impacts many aspects of health, including physical, mental, social well-being, and community health. The AIA advocates for policies and procedures that support equitable design, including underserved populations, to reduce air and water pollution, support active lifestyles and community cohesion, biophilia, and economic benefits.
- b. The AIA provides support to firms to increase diversity in our profession, design teams, and community engagement.

6. Resilience + Land Use

- a. The AIA advocates for policies that increase the resilience of communities to survive and thrive during and after shocks and stressors, especially those that rely on passive and nature-based systems. The AIA supports member training and active involvement in disaster assistance efforts, providing insights and aid to communities before, during, and after a destructive event.
- b. The AIA advocates for policies that promote housing affordability, preserve and restore natural ecosystems, equitably protect human health, and support low-carbon transportation choices.
- c. Land use strategies such as deed restrictions, setbacks, and eminent domain can be a necessary means for the government to retain lands for public safety and benefit for the near and long term. Eminent domain should only be applied in limited circumstances after considering the value of existing land uses and communities, respecting citizens' rights, equity, all community stakeholders, and community history.

7. Water and Site

- a. The AIA advocates for policies that use and reuse water responsibly within buildings and sites, protect aquifers and watersheds, anticipate changing freshwater availability, and protect water quality by managing stormwater runoff, especially those that rely on nature-based systems.