

PRINCIPLES FOR ADVOCATING ENERGY, WATER, AND RESOURCE EFFICIENT DESIGN

Policy No. 00-00-13

1. Comprehensive Energy
2. Environment and Architecture
3. Sustainability
4. Livable Communities
5. Urban Design

Related AIACC Policies

1. Incentives for Investing in Livable Communities

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POLICY STATEMENT

By virtue of their central role in the design and construction process, architects are well-positioned to understand the effects of the built-environment on climate change. Architects have both the opportunity and responsibility to protect and enhance the delicate interface between the natural and the built-environment, while charged with the investment and protection of the earth's precious and limited resources as they partner in the creation of the built-environment.

The American Institute of Architects, California Council (AIACC) encourages all architects and related professionals to implement energy and resource-conscious and water-conserving design and technology, and to do so with a design emphasis on total building performance.

The AIACC advocates for environmental responsibility and the sustainable use of water, natural resources, and both renewable and limited energy sources and supports code development and legislation toward that end.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Recognizing through its many contributions California's proven position as a leader in energy efficient design; the Board of Directors endorses the following principles regarding energy, water, and resource efficient design as an extension of the AIACC incentivizing opportunities to seek solutions to the challenges of AB 32, 2020, 2030, and Zero Net Energy. These principles will be used to define AIACC's efforts in advocating for laws and regulations that support energy, water, and resource efficient design, construction and operation.

The Board of Directors further acknowledges that the profession must engage in the development of energy, water, and resource related policies if it is to be considered relevant in future conversations concerning sustainable building practices, livable communities, and in the development of a vision for a climate positive future.

POLICY POSITIONS

PRINCIPLE 1: Cost Benefit

AIACC advocates legislation and regulations that encourage decisions based upon life cycle costing, taking into account the societal, business, financial, institutional and environmental benefits of:

- Encouraging energy conservation, renewable energy systems, sustainable building practices, operational efficiency, and environmental responsiveness
- Reducing “upstream” environmental costs, being cognizant of low energy and low waste manufacturing and distribution methods
- Reducing “downstream” environmental costs, ultimately to eliminate the concept of waste

PRINCIPLE 2: Support of Innovative Practice, Policymaking and Implementation Strategies

AIACC advocates innovation in practice and policymaking in public agencies and the legislature that keep pace with changes in methods, approaches and technology. AIACC supports legislation that:

- Provides informed decision-making to implement energy, water, and resource efficient development practices
- Introduces new measurements of environmental, financial, and human quality of living and/or working that better track long term actual costs, benefits, and impacts, based on rigorous collection of building performance data
- Inspires a culture of collaboration, innovation and implementation throughout the planning, design, construction, and building operation process
- Advocates for innovative public agency, business/professional, and private institutions, which encourage creative public/private partnership opportunities
- Supports and incentivizes the development and implementation of education and training programs which prepare architects, other design and construction professionals, and labor forces for addressing the challenges facing energy, water, and resource efficient design, operation, and construction
- Promotes the power of design to change human behavior for the positive

PRINCIPLE 3: Utilization of Natural Resources

AIACC encourages policies and legislation that promote development of high performance buildings and communities through the use of local, reliable, and renewable resources, such as solar and wind energy, ultimately eliminating sole reliance on non-renewable resources, and until then facilitating the recycling of nonrenewable resources and materials that protect California’s:

- Water supplies and quality, an already scarce and priceless resource
- Natural and agricultural lands
- Air quality and climate

AIACC promotes local and regional policies, as well as State legislation that enable a more sustainable social, environmental and economic future for California by:

- Utilizing water, power, and transit infrastructure to provide more sustainable community patterns, reconciling reduced resources with a growing population
- Planning for environmentally and economically successful urban, natural and rural landscapes
- Advocating for long-term thinking regarding the use of resources in a manner which does not deplete them
- Promoting a higher quality of life for all Californians
- Using alternative sources of energy

PRINCIPLE 4: Promote the Awareness of the Benefits of Energy Efficient Design

AIACC recognizes the importance of education to the profession on all aspects of energy efficient design by providing:

- Effective access to centers of knowledge and resources for learning through partnering with utilities, higher education, and other institutions with vested and invested interests in energy efficient design
- Access to case studies of successful projects demonstrating the tangible benefits of resource-efficient, healthy building and well-designed neighborhoods
- Public education and dissemination of information on the impact to the built-environment by global climate change
- Members as resources to policymakers, decision makers, and agencies
- A positive vision of a sustainable future for California

PRINCIPLE 5: Create Knowledge of State-of-the-Art and future applications

AIACC promotes forward-thinking approaches to energy efficiency that inspire innovation by encouraging or requiring:

- Knowledge of local, regional and international state-of-the-art applications, including technology and practice, as well as agency requirements, mechanisms, and enforcements
- Active cooperation with appropriate bodies at all levels of government and the private sector, where similar efforts are underway to ensure coordination and best utilization of laws, regulations, codes, and standards bearing on the built- environment
- Public-Private partnerships as successful economic and political tools to resolve current energy, water, and resource efficiency problems and maximize future efficiencies

PRINCIPLE 6: Integration of Efforts to Create an Energy, Water, and Resource Efficient Environment

AIACC acknowledges and supports the collaboration, coordination, and communication needed to convey the global climate message to clients, lawmakers, and the public, while understanding the profession's role, responsibility, and skills in the built-environment:

- AIACC architects recognize and respect the interface between the natural and built-environment
- AIACC architects integrate project program elements to create whole, functioning, and high performing environments
- AIACC architects lead project teams and facilitate collaboration between each team member, while understanding the importance of each of their contributions to successful environmental design
- AIACC architects promote the recognition of the critical synergies and disconnects between design, construction, and building operations in order to better promote energy, water, and resource efficient environments
- AIACC architects understand that single buildings do not stand alone in an environment, but affect their inhabitants, support staff, visitors, neighboring buildings and landscapes, infrastructure, communities, and regions.
- The AIACC recognizes, promotes, and honors the design of energy efficient buildings as an integral part of successful architectural design and practice through its awards and recognition programs, all of which value the strategies and metrics for energy, water, and resource efficiency as important as the balance of functionality and form