

# Topic: Principles for Advocating a Sustainable Future

Policy No. 01-10-03

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## Principles for Advocating a Sustainable Future

### Policy Statement:

The American Institute of Architects, California Council (AIACC) supports a balanced State energy policy that reduces waste of non-renewable energy resources while promoting environmentally sound production of alternative energy sources. In addition, the AIACC encourages continued public and private research and development in all areas of energy-conscious design and technology, with emphasis on the performance of the total building.

### Related National AIA Policies

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

### Policy Background

The Board of Directors endorses the following principles regarding sustainability as an extension of the "AIACC Incentivizing opportunities to further Livable Communities" policies. These principles will be used to define AIACC's efforts in advocating for laws and regulations that support sustainable building practices, livable communities, and in the development of a vision for a sustainable future.

### Policy Issues & Positions

**Issue 1: Project funders, public agencies and tenants, often do not recognize the economic benefit of "green" building.**

#### Principle 1: Cost Benefit

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

- Encouraging energy conservation, renewable energy systems, sustainable building practices, environmental responsiveness, and self-sufficiency
- Creating healthier workplace and community environments; develop measurements which document tangible benefits of healthier spaces
- Reducing "upstream" environmental costs; selection of materials with low energy and waste associated with manufacturing and distribution
- Reducing "downstream" environmental costs, ultimately to eliminate the concept of waste by designing resources that will utilize one process becoming the waste of another

**Issue 2: Agencies and institutions frequently do not support a culture of innovative application of sustainable design.**

#### Principle 2: Supporting Innovative Practice, Policymaking and Implementation Strategies

AIACC advocates innovation in practice and policymaking in public agencies and the legislature that can stand up to "new tests" for sustainable design. AIACC supports legislation that:

- Provides informed decision making regarding opportunities to implement sustainable development practices
- Introduces new responsible environmental, financial, and human quality of living and/or working measurements that better track long term actual costs, benefits, and impacts
- Inspires a culture of innovation and implementation throughout the planning, design, construction, operation, and building process
- Encourages innovative public agency, business/professional, and private institutions, which encourages creative public/private partnership opportunities



**Issue 3: Sustainable approaches to design and planning are not generally being applied on a consistent, or broad enough basis at city, county, or regional scales (with notable exceptions).**

**Principle 3: Encouraging a Regional Perspective**

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
- Planning for environmentally and economically successful urban, natural and rural landscapes
- Encouraging long-term thinking regarding the use of resources in a manner which does not deplete it
- Promoting a higher quality of life for all Californians

**Issue 4: Current use of natural resources is not sustainable and adversely affects our economy, health, environment, and political stability.**

**Principle 4: 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 the single use of non-renewable resources, and until then facilitating the recycling of nonrenewable resources and materials that protect California's:

- Water supplies and quality
- Natural and agricultural lands
- Air quality and climate

**Issue 5: There is a critical need to educate policymakers and decision makers about the benefits of sustainable design.**

**Principle 5: Awareness of the Benefits of Sustainable Design**

AIACC promotes the benefits of sustainable design by providing:

- Access to centers of knowledge about sustainable design
- Members as resources to policymakers, decision makers, and agencies
- Access to case studies of successful projects facilitating documentation of tangible benefits of healthy buildings, and well designed spaces and neighborhoods
- Public education and dissemination of information
- Creating a positive vision of a sustainable future for California

**Issue 6: Prior to their introduction, new legislation and applications do not reflect knowledge of or take into account the wide body of legislative, administrative, and applications knowledge of existing examples.**

**Principle 6: Knowledge of State-of-the-Art and future applications**

AIACC promotes forward-thinking approaches to policies and legislation that inspires 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 (including but not limited to the US EPA, USDOE, US DOAG, the National Laboratories, and private non-profit organizations such as EPRI, ULI, Alliance to Save Energy, Livable Communities Council, as well as private sector companies, involved in energy, transit, manufacturing, material suppliers, etc.)
- Public-Private partnerships as successful economic and political tools to resolve current problems, such as single-use of non-renewable resources, housing shortages and non-sustainable thinking in our community planning, leading to further degradation of the quality of life in California.