



Climate Emergency: Declaration

Our shared daily experience now dramatically confirms what climate scientists have known for years: severe climate disruption is accelerating beyond the most pessimistic predictions. This crisis is the direct result of human activities and must be urgently addressed by all of us, collectively and globally. The current disastrous impacts of drought, flood, wildfire, record-breaking heat waves, and biodiversity loss in California and around the globe are only a prelude to the climate catastrophe that awaits if our society doesn't take immediate, urgent action.

“Avoiding catastrophic climate impacts requires a rapid and far-reaching transformation of human civilization at a magnitude that’s never happened before.” – UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

California architects have an important role to play in this transformation by acknowledging the following:

- **Buildings pollute.** Building construction and operation is currently responsible for roughly 40% of all global greenhouse gas emissions. Rapidly reducing these emissions – particularly carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels – is a critical part of addressing this crisis.
- **Zero carbon design is an imperative.** The California design and construction industry is slowly transforming how we build by reducing carbon emissions and increasing the health of our buildings, communities, and cities. But we all need to do more. We must rapidly transform best practices so that every architect and builder in California is designing and building to zero carbon emissions within the next one to two years.
- **Climate justice is a right.** Low-income Californians and communities of color are experiencing the greatest impacts of the climate emergency. They need affordable, healthy, zero carbon housing now more than ever.
- **Building codes must change.** California state government also has a key role to play by accelerating the transformation of building codes to require zero carbon buildings immediately. We cannot afford the slow pace of change in Sacramento if we are to effectively respond to the surging climate emergency.
- **Design for resilience.** While we design for a hopeful, prosperous future, we must also prepare for the increasing frequency of natural disasters. Every building and every community must be readied to survive the future impacts of climate change, including wildfire, sea level rise, floods, drought and extreme weather.
- **Act locally, impact globally.** As the fifth largest economy in the world and a global center of innovation, the world is watching how California responds to the climate emergency. We have an historic opportunity to help lead the rapid transition to a resilient, zero carbon future – not just for Californians, but for the planet.
- **Time is of the essence.** The time for debate is over. We must overcome complacency, ignorance, and skepticism and act decisively NOW to de-carbonize California's buildings and communities.

We call upon all California architects, allied design professionals, construction industry leaders, and state and local government leaders to immediately accelerate the de-carbonization of the built environment.

AIA California commits to the following actions:

- Actively support Governor Newsom's goals of statewide carbon neutrality by 2035 rather than 2045, and an increase in grid-based renewable energy to 90% by 2030.
- Advocate for accelerated electrification of all new residential and commercial buildings in the state with a target of 2022.
- Advocate for a phase-out of fossil fuel appliances in all existing buildings starting in 2021.
- Advocate for accelerated revisions to the California Building Code and Title 24 to require that all new commercial buildings be zero net carbon, with a target of 2022.
- Housing is a human right. Advocate for affordable, healthy, zero-carbon housing for all citizens.
- Promote policy changes that encourage the adaptive reuse of existing structures over new construction.
- Water is one of our most precious resources. Promote new water saving practices and technologies.
- Rapidly expand zero carbon design literacy among architects and the public across California.
- Promote the reduction of embodied carbon in key building materials such as concrete, steel and aluminum.
- Develop a California Guide to Resilient Design of buildings, communities and cities.