



AIA Virginia

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American Institute of Architects Virginia Joins with AIA on Climate Change

RICHMOND, VA April 21, 2017— “As we experience sea levels rising, extreme weather events and natural resources depleting, we see how climate change threatens national security, human health, our food and water supplies, natural ecosystems and global economies,” says AIA Virginia Executive Vice President Helene Combs Dreiling, FAIA. “With Earth Day upon us April 22, AIA Virginia joins the American Institute of Architects in recognizing the vital role architects play in combating climate change — one of the biggest global crises of our century — and we call on policymakers to join us in this effort.”

As the nation prepares to celebrate Earth Day, AIA has issued eight [principles](#) governing how architects can mitigate climate change and urging the government to protect policies to conserve energy and reduce carbon in the built environment.

“Architecture and design can mitigate climate impact while simultaneously reducing operating costs for building owners,” says AIA President Thomas Vonier, FAIA. “We need the federal government to keep and even expand incentives that are already producing major advances in energy efficient design and cutting the carbon footprint of buildings.”

“These principles reinforce our strong national position on how energy-conscious urban planning and appropriate building design can help meet global climate challenges,” Vonier says. “In fact, the business case for meeting these challenges has never been greater.”

Vonier says design and construction of sustainable and resilient buildings is already creating jobs and growing the American economy:

- From 2011 through 2014, the green construction market generated more than \$167 billion in gross domestic product, supported more than 2.1 million jobs and provided \$148 billion in labor earnings. In 2015, more than one quarter of a billion square feet of commercial property was designed for net zero-projects, contributing nearly \$150 billion to construction [laborers' pockets](#).
- Employers from roughly 165,000 U.S. companies doing energy efficiency work expect employment to grow 13% over the coming year, adding [245,000 more jobs](#).
- Sustainable and energy efficient buildings and homes enhance the value of real estate assets, leading to more property tax revenue for local governments. Sustainable and energy efficient buildings command premiums of 2-8%, occupancy increases of 3-10% and sales premiums of 3-12%.

AIA's Energy Leadership Group recently issued a [commentary](#) calling on the profession to mobilize against climate change and on the United States to honor its commitment to the Paris climate accord.

"Today, more than half of the world population lives in urban areas, with cities generating more than 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions, mostly from buildings," the commentary says. "By 2030, world population is expected to increase by 1.1 billion people, with all of that occurring in urban areas."

About The American Institute of Architects

Founded in 1857, the American Institute of Architects consistently works to create more valuable, healthy, secure, and sustainable buildings, neighborhoods, and communities. Through almost 300 state and local chapters, the AIA advocates for public policies that promote economic vitality and public well-being. Members adhere to a code of ethics and conduct to ensure the highest professional standards. The AIA provides members with tools and resources to assist them in their careers and business as well as engaging civic and government leaders and the public to find solutions to pressing issues facing our communities, institutions, nation and world. Visit www.aia.org.

About AIA Virginia

AIA Virginia is a society of the American Institute of Architects and represents nearly 2,500 architects throughout Virginia. Founded by five architects in 1914, AIA Virginia has represented the professional interests of architects and allied professionals in the Commonwealth of Virginia for more than 100 years. For more information, contact AIA Virginia at [\(804\) 644-3041](tel:8046443041) or visit www.aiava.org.

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