

**Resolution 19-11** [Confirm Resolution Number]

Title

**Resolution for Urgent and Sustained Climate Action**

Sponsors

AIA Blue Ribbon Panel on Codes and Standards  
AIA Sustainability Leadership Group

Intent

To provide a framework for the AIA to prioritize and support urgent climate action to exponentially accelerate the “decarbonization” of buildings, the building sector, and the built environment.

Text of Resolution

WHEREAS, in 2017 the AIA Board of Directors issued *Where We Stand: Climate Change*<sup>1</sup> and the *AIA Commentary on Climate Change Mitigation*<sup>2</sup> which state AIA’s position on the science of climate change, the substantial greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and cities, and the vital role architects must play in combatting climate change.

WHEREAS, in 2018 the AIA Board of Directors adopted the revised the *AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*<sup>3</sup> fully updating *Ethical Canon VI, Obligations to the Environment* including:

- *Ethical Standard 6.5: Climate Change. Members should incorporate adaptation strategies with their clients to anticipate extreme weather events and minimize adverse effects on the environment, economy, and public health.*
- *Rule 6.501. Members shall consider with their clients the environmental effects of their project decisions.*

WHEREAS, for many years AIA and its members have invested their resources to be engaged in and informed about climate change by participating in the highest-level national and international conferences and summits including: in 2015, the United Nations Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21) in Paris; in 2016, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador; and in 2018, the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco.

WHEREAS, in 2018 AIA President Carl Elefante FAIA constituted the Blue Ribbon Panel for Codes and Standards which states in its draft report<sup>4</sup>: “...today we observe a rapidly changing world that is not properly reflected in what it means to protect ‘health, safety, and welfare.’ We have observed the devastating effects of climate change throughout the world, growing social inequity, and human health crises that demand the definition of ‘HSW’ now focus on and include the growing bodies of knowledge in resilience, equitable design, and advanced building performance.”

WHEREAS, in 2019 “leaders from AIA’s Board of Directors and executive team described their intention to focus Institute resources and influence for deeper impact on a specific topic. Dubbed the Big Move,

<sup>1</sup> *Where We Stand: Climate Change* (<https://www.aia.org/resources/77541-where-we-stand-climate-change>)

<sup>2</sup> *AIA Commentary on Climate Change Mitigation* ([http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2017-04/AIA-Commentary\\_climate-change-mitigation.pdf](http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2017-04/AIA-Commentary_climate-change-mitigation.pdf))

<sup>3</sup> *AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct* ([http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/2018\\_Code\\_of\\_Ethics\\_0.pdf](http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/2018_Code_of_Ethics_0.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> *Disruption, Evolution and Change*, AIA Blue Ribbon Panel for Codes and Standards, Draft Report, January 2019

*that proposal has been honed to focus on economically viable climate action through buildings' operational and embodied carbon.*<sup>5</sup>

WHEREAS, in 2019 AIA President William J. Bates FAIA charged the Sustainability Leadership Group to “serve as and work in conjunction with other Board level committees for the AIA to maximize impact as the Institute shifts into a greater leadership role mitigating and adapting to a changing climate.”<sup>6</sup>

WHEREAS, in accordance with President Bates’ charge, the Sustainability Leadership Group, composed of leaders of the seven AIA committees focused on issues of sustainable and resilient design, met at AIA Headquarters in February and April 2019 and recommended three actions to the AIA Board of Directors:

1. *Declare an urgent climate imperative for carbon reduction.*
2. *Transform the day-to-day practice of architects to achieve a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient and healthy built environment by adopting the AIA Framework for Design Excellence.*<sup>7</sup>
3. *Align and utilize our external messaging to leverage support of our peers, clients, policy makers, and the public at large.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that commencing in 2019 and continuing until zero-net carbon practice is the accepted standard of its members, the AIA prioritize and support urgent climate action as a HSW issue, to exponentially accelerate the “decarbonization” of buildings, the building sector, and the built environment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AIA engage its full membership; the clients and communities they serve; federal, state and local policy makers and governing bodies; other professional organizations and affiliates, and the public on climate action through a multi-year strategy for education, practice, advocacy, and outreach.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that following the example of the *AIA Guides for Equitable Practice*, the AIA prepare *Guidelines for Ethical Practice on Climate Action* to delineate practices for complying with *Ethical Canon VI, Obligations to the Environment*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AIA revise its *Public Policies and Position Statements* to support urgent climate action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AIA adopt and implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Codes and Standards and the Sustainability Leadership Group.

Sponsor Signatures

AIA Blue Ribbon Panel on Codes and Standards

AIA Sustainability Leadership Group

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<sup>5</sup> *Sustainability Leadership Group, Committee Proposal*, Sustainability & Resilience Leadership Group Directive, April 2019

<sup>6</sup> *Sustainability Leadership Group, Committee Proposal*, Sustainability & Resilience Leadership Group Directive, April 2019

<sup>7</sup> *The AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE) Top Ten Measures* (<https://www.aia.org/awards/7301-cote-top-ten-awards>)