Architects Advocate
Action on Climate Change

TALKING POINTS FOR MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

updated September 22, 2016

Mission

Action on Climate Change – enacting meaningful legislation/policy to mitigate Climate Change

Initiative Core (Elevator Speech)

We believe a healthy environment is a civil right.
We need to enact meaningful legislation to mitigate Climate Change.
As architects, speak out publicly and share how your knowledge and actions create livable communities.

What is Architects Advocate?

Architects Advocate is a public outreach initiative that gives voice to an important issue that affects healthy and livable communities and cities. Currently, it consists of **114 firms** (92 Chicago and 14 U.S. architecture companies and 8 industry-related firms), which are speaking out publicly in support of action on Climate Change.

How was Architects Advocate started?

Architects Advocate started on July 22, 2016 when the 4 partners at Krueck + Sexton Architects unanimously agreed to launch the initiative. Over the next 6 weeks, leading up to the public launch on Sept 1, 2016, Krueck + Sexton collaborated with Peter Exley with Architecture is Fun, the campaign's first supporter, by combining professional network connections and reaching out to fellow Chicago architects with an invitation to join. This week, the campaign is formally launching nationwide.

Why Climate Change?
Because the potentially irreversible negative impacts of Climate Change overshadow all other environmental threats. It is the defining issue of our time.

If the only global home we have – mother Earth – becomes uninhabitable, our children's children will have no future.

We believe it is important for the general public and those who are entrusted to legislate and govern to hear from professional groups, because a scalable solution to Climate Change will come from a combination of meaningful policy and businesses taking action.

Architects Advocate does not accept the relative lack of progress on the policy level. We can and must do better.

Why now?
We are experiencing a time of unprecedented transformations in how businesses, the public, the media, and politics, interact and influence each other. For the foreseeable future, political partisanship and gridlock will likely result in needed policy changes being implemented too slowly, even though significant majorities of the electorate are supporting action to mitigate Climate Change (see Policy and Voter Support Section).

Why architects?
Architects are in the business of creating healthy and livable cities and communities.

In the United States, buildings (114 million households and more than 4.7 million commercial buildings) account for almost 40 percent of total U.S. energy use and associated CO2 emissions, and for 72 percent of U.S. electricity use (USDE).

The architecture community is on the front line addressing Climate Change in a meaningful way. For everyone, we believe this is THE challenge and opportunity of our time.

The Architects Advocate collaboration reinforces all architects' commitment to designing prosperous and verdant communities, and securing the future for coming generations through architecture.

What are the near term goals of Architects Advocate?

1. To keep growing the movement. Initiative supporters help expand the initiative to other US cities and states
2. To make the voice of the architecture community heard by the general public and those who are entrusted to legislate and govern. Initiative supporters speak out and to share their stories on social and print media, as well as to appear on radio and TV shows.

What are the long term goals of Architects Advocate?

1. To expand the movement to other professional groups as well.
2. To enact meaningful legislation to mitigate Climate Change. When this kind of legislation is enacted, our work will be done.

Background

Multiple studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals show that 97 percent or more of actively publishing climate scientists agree: Climate-warming trends over the past century are extremely likely due to human activities. In addition, most of the leading scientific organizations worldwide have issued public statements endorsing this position. Source: NASA

Warming in the climate system is unequivocal, and it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. Source: IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)

This century has seen 14 out of the 15 warmest years ever recorded.
Source: IPCC

Policy and Voter Support

According to a National Survey by the Yale Program + George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, (conducted March 18-31, 2016, with 1004 adult registered voters who support either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump)

More than 4 out of 5 registered voters support

- funding more research into renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power
- providing tax rebates to people who purchase energy-efficient vehicles or solar panels

3 out of 4 registered voters

- think global warming is happening
- support regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant

Almost 7 out of 10 registered voters

- support requiring fossil fuel companies to pay a carbon tax and using the money to reduce other taxes such as income taxes by an equal amount
- support setting strict carbon dioxide emission limits on existing coal-fired power plants to reduce global warming and improve public health, even if the cost of electricity to consumers and companies would likely increase

More than 6 out of 10 registered voters

- think the U.S. should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, regardless of what other countries do

10 "in practice" ACTIONS:

1.
Households In Ashton Hayes, England have banded together to cut greenhouse emissions — they use clotheslines instead of dryers, take fewer flights, install solar panels and glaze windows to better insulate their homes. In 10 years they have reduced their energy use 24%, with some homeowners who have participated in the grassroots project since its inception by up to 40 percent. In striving to be Britain's first Carbon-neutral village, with grant incentives to install photovoltaics on public buildings, they estimate they can reduce their carbon footprint to 80%.
New York Times/Science Section - Tatiana Schlossberg 2016

2.
An alliance of corporations known as the We Mean Business Coalition is advocating businesses to adopt sustainable practices in kind. From Ikea to Sony to Coca-Cola, the coalition has organized more than 400 businesses to commit to sustainability on top of whatever regulations are enacted by governments worldwide. Between adopting science-based emission reductions targets and increasing reliance on wind, solar, and other renewable energy sources, they're aiming to be a driving force toward a carbon-neutral future. Far from being a purely altruistic cause, these businesses have joined the fight against global warming because recent studies have revealed that sustainability aligns the world's long-term future with their own self-interest.
Morgan Stanley - The Investors Guide To Climate Change 2015

3.
Portfolio managers have pledged to steer $2.6 trillion in investments away from fossil fuels in an effort to prevent catastrophic climate change. That's a 50-fold increase from the cumulative total a year ago, $50 billion, as environmental groups increased pressure on universities, insurance companies and individual investors to abandon stocks tied to coal, oil and natural gas…Of the groups that agreed to divest from oil and coal companies, investors with $785 billion in assets have also agreed to shift money into climate solutions like solar and wind energy.
Bloomberg 2015

4.
Wind and solar power could provide 80 percent of US electricity without price increases or the need for electricity storage, given better interconnection between regional power grids
Nature magazine study 2016

5.
Given the uncertainty of exactly how fast sea level will rise over the course of this century, but noting that effects are already being seen in low lying coastal communities, as a general guideline, [Florida architects] recommend that building designs, codes, and infrastructure accommodate three feet of sea level rise for projects in all low-lying areas, even those farther inland and up tidal rivers.
AIA Florida Position Statement 2015

6.
MIT has launched a multifaceted five-year plan aimed at fighting climate change, representing a new phase in the Institute's commitment to an issue that, the plan says, "demands society's urgent attention." Citing "overwhelming" scientific evidence, "A Plan for Action on Climate Change" underscores the "risk of catastrophic outcomes" due to climate change and emphasizes that "the world needs an aggressive but pragmatic transition plan to achieve a zero-carbon global energy system." The plan includes research to further understand climate change and advance solutions to mitigate and adapt to it; the acceleration of low-carbon energy technology via eight new research centers; the development of enhanced educational programs on climate change; new tools to share climate information globally.

MIT.edu

7.
The design team of China's tallest skyscraper, the Shanghai Tower, relied on software to simulate and then optimize the building's shape. The double-skin façade is asymmetrical, tapering and round, which reduces wind loads on the building, facilitates the collection of rain water for heating and cooling units, and insulates the building. The result is a 35 percent reduction in materials used, amounting to over $58 million in

construction cost savings, and ongoing energy savings of 20 percent and water savings of 40 percent. This is the future of buildings and infrastructure– modeling and optimizing the full impact of a building and capitalizing on significant savings as a result.
Wired magazine 2015

8.
Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's Comprehensive Plan for a Sustainable Coast, Louisiana first launched in 2007, and updated continuously since, calls a dizzying array of flood prevention measures that call out just how many systems play a part in protection from natural disasters. Just a few include new or restored levees, pumps, coastal habitats, barrier islands, marshes, and shores. The plan also calls for raising and flood proofing buildings, and government acquisition of structures or entire communities built in particularly threatened areas.
Wired magazine 2016

9.
New York City has committed to cutting greenhouse gases by 80 percent by 2050. The centerpiece is refurbishing old buildings to use less energy because old and new construction together are responsible for 75 percent of New York City's emissions.
Scientific American/NYC.gov One City, Built to Last: Transforming New York City's Buildings for a Low-Carbon Future 2014

10.
The Better Buildings Challenge enlists cities, states, utilities, manufacturers, school districts, and businesses to improve energy efficiency, targeting heavy users such as data centers and outdoor lighting systems
WhiteHouse.gov
betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov