



Architects Advocate Action on Climate Change

Fellow Architects, this is a call to action.

The AIA National statement is flawed in so many ways, and I am grateful to all of you for calling it out. By writing and sharing your opinion, you are taking action. This is the most important thing we must do now.

In taking action, we must also do so smartly. Having been a Board Member of AIA Chicago in the past, and being connected with the broader AIA community ever since, I know, without a doubt, that the AIA statement is a case of a well-intended communication poorly executed. Today, we need AIA more than ever before. This is no time to pick the wrong fight.

By confusing the goal to remain bipartisan with the urgent need to aggressively call out attention to such issues as 97% scientific consensus, the AIA is proving its own limitation. But remember, we are AIA. The ultimate responsibility to figure this out rests with us, the members. We have to take this into our own hands, get organized, and force the change we know is needed. This approach will strengthen all AIA efforts as an added benefit.

Our grass roots coalition, Architects Advocate for Action on Climate Change, revolves around one specific topic for the sake of focus. However, now is the time for our platform to be adopted by any and all of you: I ask you to launch Architects Advocate for Action on Affordable Housing, Architects Advocate for Gender and Pay Equality, you name it. Take it and run with it. Your actions will speak louder than your words.

With regard to Climate Change, we are facing an emergency. The President-elect has called human-caused climate change a hoax, has vowed to dismantle the Paris Agreement that sets targets to reverse the worst effects of global warming - which nearly 200 countries agreed to last December – and has tapped a climate-change skeptic to oversee the transition of the EPA.

In order to get ready and organized to fight the impending assault on scientific consensus, healthy and livable communities, and reason, we urge you to join Architects Advocate for Action on Climate Change: www.architects-advocate.com. Today, there are over 150 architecture firms nationwide in our coalition, but we need 1,500. Fast.

Architects Advocate for Action on Climate Change plans to send a letter to every U.S. Congress member, as well as the President-elect, detailing the case for needed Action on Climate Change, and imploring all elected officials to support the Paris Agreement. We plan to list the names of every supporting company on the letter.

It is important to remember that only a minority of members of Congress, approximately one third, are denying climate science. The other two thirds acknowledge the scientific consensus and already support action or are likely persuadable.

There is a silver lining as a result of this election if we – the architecture profession - are ready to seize it. This can become the moment in time when we architects realized that being apolitical is no longer an option. Being political does not mean fueling the flames of partisanship, on the contrary. It means recognizing the urgent need to engage more effectively where decisions are made that affect us all. We can demonstrate what it means when citizens take their civic responsibilities seriously, and we can model the kind of behavior we wish to see in others.

Onward, upward – by taking action now.

Tom Jacobs, Architects Advocate for Action on Climate Change