

BSA Advocacy and Policy Platform for Decarbonization

In June of 2019, the AIA membership overwhelmingly voted to declare urgency of climate action. The AIA urged its members to get fully involved in education, practice, advocacy, and outreach as a means to change design and construction practices to achieve decarbonization in the built environment. In support of that resolution and the need for immediate action around the threats of climate change, the Boston Society for Architecture, on September 17, 2020 adopted the following policy platform:

1. **Increase the stringency of energy efficiency codes**—The BSA advocates for statewide adoption of more stringent energy efficiency requirements, including alignment with passive house principles for thermal load reduction, through adoption in the Stretch Code and other regulatory and legislative policies and processes. Building operations represent 28 percent of annual global carbon emissions. We need to continually raise the bar on minimum acceptable energy performance in Massachusetts and identify incentives to achieve maximum feasible outcomes. Building thermal load reduction is a foundational issue, enabling cost effective implementation of the subsequent agenda items.
2. **Transition to All Electric Buildings**—The BSA advocates for the transition to all electric buildings. Buildings need to wean off fossil fuels and transition to all electric, clean renewable energy.
3. **Power Buildings with Renewable Energy**—The BSA advocates for all buildings to be powered by on-site and off-site renewable energy. To decarbonize our buildings, they need to be powered by on-site renewable energy or new renewable energy sources that result in a direct reduction in grid emissions.
4. **Focus on Embodied Carbon**—The BSA advocates for policies and programs that fully disclose the impacts and reduce embodied carbon in the building sector. Annually 11% of global carbon emissions come from embodied carbon of the materials that we use to construct the building sector.
5. **Select Low-Impact Refrigerants**—The BSA advocates for the policies around refrigerant selection that reduce ozone depletion and global warming potential. In *Drawdown*, Paul Hawken listed refrigerant management as one of the biggest ways to reduce global carbon emissions.
6. **Ensure Buildings Operate Efficiently**—The BSA advocates for policies that support efficient building operations. Building commissioning, energy disclosure ordinances, and other operational actions can help ensure that buildings are operating at the efficiency levels they were designed to achieve.
7. **Address Disparities in Impact of Climate Change on Communities of Color**—The BSA advocates for all climate change policies and initiatives to focus on minority communities where the impacts of carbon emissions and climate change continue to fall disproportionately.



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Through the adoption of this platform, the BSA Board is supporting codes and policies leading to the decarbonization of the built environment. The BSA seeks to achieve this objective within our local communities, and through our representation on the AIA Massachusetts Board of Directors, we seek to achieve this objective across the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts.