



AIA
New York

AIA New York Position Statement: Risk and Recovery

Recent changes in policy and regulations at the federal level—such as withdrawing the United States from the Paris Climate Accord, and the rescinding of water pollution regulations, and the suspending of climate-sensible safeguards at the EPA, to name but a few—are reversing a decades-long course of positive and protective actions in defending the quality of our natural environment. These changes must be countered if we are to continue working towards a reduction of pollutants in our air and water, and emission of greenhouse gases that risk health and livability of our planet, a stable global environment, and strengthening planetary resiliency.

The incidence of natural and manmade disasters will continue to increase as climate change continues. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), between 1954 and 1997 there was only one year when hurricanes and tropical storms exceeded 10 in number (1985). Between 1998 and 2016, there were eight years with 10 or more tropical storms, while in 2005 there were 65 such storms alone.¹

More than a dozen federal agencies conduct climate research, essential work that is now at risk of being curtailed. Those agencies include the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Commerce (DOC, which houses NOAA), Defense (DOD), Energy (DOE), Health and Human Services (HHS), Interior (DOI), State (DOS), Transportation (DOT), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA), National Science Foundation (NSF), Smithsonian Institution, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Vital components of our nation's economy rely on this weather, climate and natural hazard data.

The very presence of this extensive engagement in detailing the facts of climate records among a broad cross-section of industries and agencies reflects a national awareness of the far-reaching implications inherent in climate change. What's more, it subverts the prevailing notion of current federal policy that climate-consciousness—be it manifest through environmental regulations or clean energy production—restrains economic development and growth.

The implications and impact on the profession and practice of architecture and the built environment is also well-researched. The AIA has been actively engaged in the conservation of energy in buildings, reducing reliance on fossil fuels in building-related systems, and the use of renewable energies in the built environment since the early 1970s.

More recently, architects across the nation and around the world have recognized the need and necessity to bring attention to the inter-relationship of climate change and the risks of extreme weather events with the construction methodologies and physical locations of buildings, as well as the evolution of a consciousness of resilience as pertains to all the physical and infrastructural components of communities large and small. The idea that 'nature does not respect political boundaries' is beginning to be generally accepted and will bolster policies that allow for cross-border (city, state, region, nation) planning and design.

Many of New York's resiliency and disaster preparations are developed and managed through local agents and frequently in cooperation with state and federal agencies. Local agencies include the NYC Department of City Planning (DCP), the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR), NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Department of Transportation (DOT), among others. In our current post-Katrina, post-Sandy environment, these agencies have done much to improve

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disaster preparedness programs and responses to new circumstances. For example, FEMA is adjusting its policies to include higher density environments, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is engaged in the design and implementation of higher density emergency housing, and other agencies are stepping up preparedness training in response to perceived threats from many quarters.

Principles

- AIANY supports the Paris Agreement which sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming AIANY supports the belief that human behavior, including the burning of fossil fuels, contribute to rising temperatures, rising sea levels, rising air pollution, and other phenomena that put people, property, and places at risk.
- AIANY will continue to propose and support work that recognizes and reduces all place-based risk while increasing overall resiliency.
- AIANY will continue to help professionals gain the skills and knowledge to design better, more energy-efficient buildings and raise public awareness about the role of buildings in combating climate change.
- AIANY will continue to support our members and constituents with renewed commitment to knowledge-sharing and collaborative work toward a more sustainable future including research, planning, and physical design to address short term and long-term needs.
- AIANY will continue to work with local, state, regional, national, and international partners in pursuing adaptive mitigation strategies including the United Nations and its New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals; Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Green Building Council.
- AIANY believes that it is imperative to identify and explore environmental sustainability and resiliency challenges, including sea level rise, seismic issues, extreme heat, new energy sources and configurations, and global to local water management.

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¹ Federal Emergency Management Agency (2017), Disaster Search www.fema.gov/disasters/