

Positive Energy Strides 2022 Into 2023  
Together We Build, December 28, 2022  
By Thomas Beck, AIA, NCARB

There is some excellent sustainability news to share as we transition from 2022 to 2023. “According to BloombergNEF (BNEF) new solar or wind are now the cheapest source of electricity in 96 percent of the world; and cheaper than *existing* fossil fuels in 60 percent of the world. The global average levelized cost of electricity for natural gas and coal electricity in the second half of this year is twice as expensive as solar.” ( <https://rmi.org/energy-transition-in-2022/>)

The RMI article goes on to state “We have possibly seen more energy transition policy in 2022 than the past decade combined, as the major economies pushed through ambitious changes. Most notable among them are REPower EU, the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States, China’s 14th 5-year plan, and Japan’s GX Strategy. Interesting too was the emphasis on economic competitiveness throughout this flurry of legislation.”

Another RMI article from December 21, 2022, expands on how The United States Steps Up on Climate. (<https://rmi.org/united-states-steps-up-on-climate/>) Regarding the incentives included in the Inflation Reduction Act “If implemented by states, local governments, and companies in full force, the legislation will fundamentally transform the American economy — creating new clean energy and technology jobs, lowering costs on energy bills, and giving the United States the ability to cut emissions by up to 52 percent.” The act is good for business, good for the economy, good for jobs, good for all of us, but particularly increases access of lower income citizens who previously were unable to take advantage of incentives due to the tax refund structure of those incentives. Funding for research and development will impel us toward creative solutions to deal with our waste, our grid, and our energy needs.

Lots of really good insights are contained in a December 8 article from Inside Climate News. In talking about some of the state initiatives and laws, the reporting reflects that “State and federal energy laws are now more likely to include provisions to ensure that low- and moderate-income consumers receive a share of the benefits.”(<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/08122022/inside-clean-energy-2022-good-news/>) Our ability to make good sustainability choices affordable to all and lifestyle changes easy to adopt will be key to our planetary success in reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs). Our transportation systems, our building codes, our urban planning and rural connectivity will help create opportunities for all of us to thrive.

The impact of our good choices large and small must be acknowledged. We recently attended the AIA Colorado Conference at which one of the seminars had breakout workgroups addressing green issues and biophilic design. It was frustrating to hear mothers tell us that their kids don’t think they’ll live past 30, and that anything they do is meaningless in the face of massive climate disaster. This past March the New York Times published an article addressing this issue, highlighting “a growing cadre of people, many of them young, who are fighting climate doomism, the notion that it’s too late to turn things around. They believe that focusing solely on terrible climate news can sow dread and paralysis, foster inaction, and become a self-fulfilling prophecy.”

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/22/climate/climate-change-ok-doomer.html>) At the AIA conference we focused on things we each can do, however small. In our case, one of the things we do is share meaningful sustainability info every two weeks in this column. One of the young architects’ family has made a pact to ride their bicycles to work and school everyday. One thing we can all do is keep talking about it and identifying actions that we can commit to.

Speaking of taking action and talking about it, another one of our favorite sustainability newsletters shared this entertaining bunch of tips earlier this month. They suggest “A good goal for any conversation about climate change, aside from retaining your sanity, is simply to counter

misinformation, and to do it without shaming people or arguing them down. “

(<https://generation180.org/this-holiday-season-dont-clam-up-about-climate/>)

This year our resolution is to keep presenting good information for people to use when deciding what they can personally do to improve our planetary future. We will work on having conversations, not debates or arguments, with people we would like to win over. We will improve our ability to communicate by improving our listening skills. We will keep looking at our own carbon footprint and identify more ways we can get better at the three R's: reducing, reusing, and recycling.

*Thomas Beck, AIA, NCARB, is an architect based in Estes Park, Colorado, who has been deeply involved in sustainable building practices since he was a student at CU Boulder in the 1970's. [www.twbeckarchitects.com](http://www.twbeckarchitects.com)*

*Beck, Thomas W. “Positive Energy Strides 2022 Into 2023” Estes Park Trail Gazette, Friday December 30, 2022, <https://www.eptail.com/2022/12/30/positive-energy-strides-2022-into-2023/>*