

Committee on the Environment

AIA Knowledge Communities



Letter from the Chair

Hello COTE Community!

In all of the happenings of the month you may have missed this one item. On June 22, 2016, President Obama said "Here in America, folks should have the confidence to know that the laundry detergent we buy isn't going to make us sick, the mattresses our babies sleep on aren't going to harm them" and signed the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act ([LCSA](#)) into law.



This provided, for the first time in decades, a much-needed reform to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The original Act was meant to have the EPA assure Americans that the products we buy and use every day were free of toxicants and harmful chemicals. Today, out of almost 85,000 registered chemicals, the EPA has only reviewed a few hundred and only banned five. And even [asbestos](#), a known carcinogen, isn't one of those five. TSCA absolutely needed to be reformed.

LCSA provides many improvements, including allowing the EPA to prioritize reviews of PBTs and other chemicals based on risk. But there are also many shortcomings. For example, in an effort to create a uniform national standard, LCSA removes the abilities of states to add their own restrictions on potentially hazardous chemicals after EPA begins its reviews, which could take years. As Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders [stated](#), "federal chemical regulations should be a floor from which states are allowed to go above, rather than a ceiling they cannot exceed." I support LCSA as a first step towards providing the transparency and safety that [we've been working for](#) in products. Let's hope it can avoid the loopholes and red tape that so completely stymied the TSCA.

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Thanks for reading,



Paula McEvoy, FAIA, LEED Fellow

2016 Chair, AIA Committee on the Environment Advisory Group

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Features

Learning from the Leaders: Collective Wisdom & Feedback Loops

By Kira Gould



The 9,500-square-foot West Berkeley Library is California's first certified zero net energy public library. Image: ©Mark Luthringer

The “Collective Wisdom & Feedback Loops” section of the AIA COTE Top Ten recognition program has always been one of my favorite aspects of this unique design awards program. It used to be called “Lessons Learned,” and I have always felt that it is the part of the entry that invites reckoning and speaks directly to the realm that is most wanting in this sector. [Read more.](#)

Going Green for Small Firms: Developing In-House Expertise

By Stephanie Horowitz

Developing useful in-house expertise in the area of high-performance buildings can be a challenge for small firms, especially when you're starting from scratch. Here are some suggestions for professional development that can help your firm bulk up its in-house expertise. [Read more.](#)

Education Spotlight: AIA+2030 Course #3 *Accentuate the Positive: Climate Responsive Design*

In this course we cover the key elements of climate analysis. We discuss climatic factors that affect both a building's performance and occupant comfort. We also decipher the "mysterious" psychrometric chart, which allows us to consider both climate and comfort together. Finally, we explore ways in which climate affects design decisions about site and program, as well as where to look for hidden opportunities during this phase to increase efficiency.

[Learn more & register](#)

Upcoming Events

Want more information on these and other upcoming events? Do you have an event you would like to post? Visit our [homepage!](#)



Greenbuild 2016: Iconic Green

Los Angeles / October 5-7

Early registration ends August 1

When we think of icons, we conjure up images of people, places and things that withstand the test of time, symbolizing our beliefs, culture and community. Greenbuild 2016 celebrates the icons of our movement. Those who are working in the trenches today, and those who are in line to take up the banner and lead the way into the future. [Learn more.](#)

Taliesin West Colloquium

Scottsdale / February 10-12

Architects are at work re-using all types and ages of buildings more than ever before. This practice is yielding more dynamic reuse projects, new approaches to the modernization and alteration of buildings and mixing up the once-static lines between cultural heritage, new design, and resource conservation.

Join us at Taliesin West to learn about and discuss inspiring and unexpected case-studies that will make you rediscover the potential within your own community. More details will be available in late-summer.

[Sign-up](#) to receive Taliesin email updates.

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