

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

B of T Report 25-A-24

Subject: Environmental Sustainability of AMA National Meetings. Supporting Carbon Offset Programs for Travel for AMA Conferences (RES 603-A-23 and 608-A-23)

Presented by: Willie Underwood, III, MD, MSc, MPH, Chair

Referred to: Reference Committee F

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1 At the 2023 Annual Meeting, Resolutions 603- Environmental Sustainability of AMA National  
2 Meetings and 608 - Supporting Carbon Offset Programs for travel for AMA Conferences were  
3 introduced. Both resolutions received testimony in favor of referral. Testimony also suggested that  
4 our American Medical Association (AMA) lead the health care profession by example and that a  
5 strategic plan to address environmental sustainability be developed with attention to fiscal impact.  
6 This report is in direct response to the two referred resolutions addressing AMA’s commitment to  
7 sustainability of AMA National Meetings and exploring supporting carbon offset programs for  
8 travel for AMA Conferences  
9

10 DISCUSSION

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12 The AMA recognizes the imperative to lead by example and play a proactive role in promoting  
13 environmental stewardship within the health care community. Resolutions 603 and 608 calls for the  
14 AMA to commit to reducing carbon emissions and fostering a more sustainable future. Resolution  
15 603 calls for the AMA to commit to reaching net-zero emissions for its business operations by  
16 2030, and advocates for the reduction of emissions within the broader health care system.  
17

18 Resolution 608 focuses on the importance of mitigating carbon emissions related to AMA events  
19 and calls for exploring opportunities for attendees to offset their environmental impact. While these  
20 resolutions highlight AMA’s dedication to sustainability, it is also crucial to develop a  
21 comprehensive plan, considering all related implications and ensuring effective implementation.  
22 After initial research and consultation with relevant stakeholders, we are sharing an update on  
23 AMA’s progress towards achieving carbon neutrality within our AMA and encouraging similar  
24 efforts within the broader health care system. Below is a summary of our findings and the next  
25 steps.  
26

27 *Net Zero Emissions for Business Operations by 2030*

28  
29 AMA is committed to progressing towards reaching net zero emissions for business operations by  
30 2030, by continuing to execute against the current initiatives and expanding upon them. Our team  
31 has already begun implementing measures to reduce our carbon footprint, including but not limited  
32 to:  
33

34 Renegotiating the Chicago headquarters’ lease with a LEED-Gold certified building and  
35 advocating for sustainable practices with our corporate partner vendors.

1 Making multiple energy efficient upgrades within our facilities:

2  
3 New HVAC systems (including Merv-13 filtration) were added on each floor, resulting in a 35  
4 percent energy reduction.

5  
6 Lighting retrofits, including adding LEDs and a daylight harvesting feature in the lobby to  
7 automatically dim the lights according to the amount of sunlight entering the building), produced a  
8 savings of two million kilowatt-hours per year, or 70 percent less energy.

9  
10 Water conservation programs:

- 11 • A restroom retrofit to incorporate low-flow fixtures (e.g., toilets that use 1.60 gallons  
12 of water per minute (gpm), urinals at 1 gpm and faucet aerators at 0.5 gpm).
- 13 • A 20 percent energy savings by re-landscaping with low-water plants like native  
14 perennials and sedum.
- 15 • Adding meters on all hoses, and a green-roof water supply to monitor usage and detect  
16 leaks.
- 17 • 50 percent of AMA Plaza's roof houses a green vegetable garden, which not only  
18 reduces carbon dioxide emissions but also slows the amount of rainfall runoff that goes  
19 to Chicago's sewer system. The roof at AMA Plaza is also home to a vegetable garden  
20 and bee program, which harvests honey twice a year.

21  
22 AMA utilizes a shuttlebus service, bike area, on-site Zipcars and scooter and hybrid vehicle  
23 parking: all of which contribute to nine metric tons of carbon emissions reduction (the shuttlebuses  
24 alone save an average of 65,000 pounds in carbon dioxide emissions per month).

25  
26 AMA's HQ café sources local food and participates in the building's compost program, which  
27 collects 70 percent of its waste; AMA staff and visiting members/meeting attendees can charge  
28 their electronics using solar-powered benches in AMA plaza.

29  
30 AMA reduced its waste generation (paper and otherwise) and implemented enhanced recycling  
31 programs.

32  
33 Leadership has encouraged telecommuting and virtual meetings to minimize travel emissions.

#### 34 35 *Evaluating Feasibility of Carbon Offsets and Sustainable Meeting Practices*

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37 Investing in projects to increase AMA's energy efficiency can contribute to reducing AMA's  
38 carbon emissions at a relatively low cost. Partnering with vendors that use renewable energy  
39 sources can also offer a cost-effective way to offset carbon emissions, and we continue to explore  
40 new vendors who generate clean energy, displacing the need for fossil fuel-based electricity and  
41 effectively reducing overall carbon emissions.

42  
43 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is the world's most widely used green  
44 building rating system, providing a framework for healthy, efficient, cost-effective buildings  
45 offering environmental, social, and other benefits. The AMA has tenancy in three locations  
46 (Chicago, DC, and Greenville) that have implemented varying sustainability best practices  
47 including LEED Green Certification, light sensors, recycling, etc. within their building guidelines.  
48 The AMA also instituted a requirement to contract exclusively with LEED-certified conference  
49 centers for Annual and Interim meetings in 2030. The Annual and Interim meetings have been  
50 contracted through 2029 with Hyatt and Marriott: AMA has committed to Hyatt Regency Chicago,  
51 a LEED-certified building, for AMA's Annual meeting through 2029; Hyatt's World of Care

1 program is committed to advancing environmental action. AMA has contracted with Marriott  
2 properties through 2029 for Interim meetings; Marriott is integrating sustainability across their  
3 properties and is committed to mitigating climate-related risk, reducing environmental impact,  
4 building and operating sustainable hotels and sourcing responsibly (Gaylord National Resort and  
5 Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, recently announced a partnership with Unison  
6 Energy to commission a six-megawatt combined heat and power system to reduce its carbon  
7 footprint).

8  
9 AMA is also pleased to announce that the forthcoming 2027 and 2029 Interim Meetings will be  
10 held at the prestigious Gaylord Pacific, currently under construction. Gaylord Pacific is being  
11 meticulously designed to adhere to California's stringent energy code Title 24, surpassing even the  
12 standards set by LEED certified buildings. The project incorporates all coastal development  
13 mandates, positioning it as one of the most sustainable hotel and resort destinations in the United  
14 States; this commitment to environmental sustainability aligns seamlessly with the AMA's values  
15 and underscores our dedication to hosting events that prioritize sustainability and environmental  
16 stewardship.

## 17 18 CONCLUSION

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20 In conclusion, the AMA is committed to continuing to execute against our current initiatives, and  
21 expanding upon them, to achieve environmental sustainability. These resolutions reflect our  
22 proactive stance in reducing carbon emissions and championing sustainability initiatives within our  
23 organization and the broader health care sector. Through our efforts, we demonstrate our dedication  
24 to mitigating the environmental impact of our business operations. Additionally, our commitment  
25 to limiting carbon emissions generated by AMA events and researching opportunities for attendees  
26 to offset their environmental impact, highlights our holistic approach to sustainability. Through  
27 these initiatives, the AMA reaffirms its commitment to environmental stewardship and welcomes  
28 the opportunity to drive meaningful change within the health care ecosystem and beyond.

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30 RECOMMENDATION: The Board of Trustees recommends that the following be adopted in lieu  
31 of Resolutions 603-A-23 and 608-A-23, and the remainder of the report be filed:

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33 1. Our AMA is committed to progression to net zero emissions for its business operations by  
34 2030, by continuing and expanding energy efficiency upgrades, waste reduction initiatives, and  
35 the transition to renewable energy sources (New HOD Policy).  
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37 2. Our AMA will prioritize sustainable organizational practices to reduce emissions over  
38 purchasing carbon offsets (New HOD Policy).  
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40 3. Our AMA will continue to prioritize collaboration within the health care community by sharing  
41 the learnings from our sustainability initiative to inspire our peer organizations to follow suit  
42 and adopt similar environmentally conscious practices (Directive-to-Take-Action).

Fiscal Note: \$20,000