

Council Committee Report Form

TO: ALA Council

RE: Information

- ACTION REQUESTED**
- INFORMATION**

- REPORT**

ACTION REQUESTED BY: *(if no action, please leave blank)*

CONTACT PERSON: Jennifer Ferriss, Chair, Conference Committee

STAFF LIAISON CONTACT: Earla Jones, Executive Director of Conference Services

DATE: June 7, 2024

BACKGROUND:

1. At the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference, Council Approved the [Resolution to Achieve Carbon Neutrality for ALA Conferences \(CD #53\)](#). The first resolve clause of the resolution promises that ALA “pursues a goal of carbon neutrality for all ALA conferences by the year 2025 and will remain carbon neutral for these events thereafter.” This goal is one year away.

In January 2023, the ALA Council Sustainability Committee asked the ALA Executive Board to incorporate the full cost of offsetting 100% of the carbon footprint for ALA's bi-annual conferences into the registration fee as the most equitable and efficient method of addressing this issue, therefore achieving the primary goal of the resolution. After consulting with the Executive Committee, it was recommended that this action request be directed to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) due to fiscal implications. In June 2023, BARC reported the following analysis:

“As the Budget Analysis and Review Committee, we confirm there is a cost to the association. Data from past conferences illustrate those costs. We suggest the ALA Council Committee on Sustainability work directly with the ALA Conference Committee rather than BARC for impact assessment. We support coming up with consciously chosen and intentional offsets and encourage actionable steps taken by ALA members in support of the Core Value of Sustainability.”

Council Committee Report Form

- At the 2024 Hybrid Council Meeting at Annual, Council ADOPTED, [ALA CD# 59, Resolution to Investigate Changing Dates for Future Annual Conferences of the American Library Association](#)

Resolve three asked for a progress report and outcomes of this investigation and outcomes of this investigation to be presented to its membership by ALA Annual 2024, ensuring transparency and accountability in its decision-making process.

REPORT:

Carbon Neutral Resolution

As Chair of the Conference Committee I have facilitated the exchange of information between [SustainRT](#) and the [Council Committee on Sustainability](#), to collaborate on various projects aimed at increasing awareness and participation in Carbon Offsets donations. SustainRT's committees, in coordination with the Conference Committee, have assisted in proofreading and sponsoring an Emerging Leaders project dedicated to marketing and promoting carbon offsets at the Annual Conference. Additionally, a [contest](#) for exhibitors to compete for the most sustainable booth through their organizational practices has been established.

Despite concerted efforts to disseminate information through SustainRT marketing channels, Council reports, the exhibitor newsletter (in collaboration with Hall-Erikson Inc.), and collaboration with ALA Conference Services staff to update the dedicated [Sustainability webpage](#) on the conference website, these methods have not significantly influenced attendees to select the carbon offset option on the registration form.

Table 1:

Conference	Attendee Contribution	# of Offsets purchased	Total Registration
2023 AC Chicago	\$2,020	178	15,851
2024 LLX Baltimore	\$555	42	2,006
2024 AC San Diego as of 6/4/24	\$1,750	143	10,755

Due to low voluntary membership participation, ALA will fall short of the resolution goal for 2025 and subsequent years without further action.

Council Committee Report Form

Call to Action:

We recognize that your place of employment may have policies in place that prohibit the contribution towards carbon offsets, or perhaps your organization has another company that they offset travel for staff. This is information that we hope to gather in the survey that everyone receives after conference has ended. Please take the time to answer the survey so that we can gather data to make more informed decisions.

Perhaps you were unaware that carbon offsets were an option at registration because a business manager took care of this process for you. As long as you have access to your account, you can go back in and use your own funds to donate to the Carbon Offset fund. Carbon offset purchases are an acknowledgment that there are limits to an individual's ability to reduce energy use. To make up for the carbon emissions we cannot avoid, ALA uses a third party to take another action to reduce carbon emissions elsewhere. We have once again partnered with [Native](#), a public benefits company and [certified B Corp](#).

While you are in San Diego:

- Please check out the Emerging Leaders' poster session on Friday, June 28, 2024, from 2:30-3:30 pm in the Marriott Marquis – Pacific Ballroom Sections 14-17. Their project entailed creating a multi-year marketing plan for ALA conferences that promotes waste reduction and member purchases of carbon offsets. The marketing plan addresses a strategy for reaching libraries and library staff both within and outside of SustainRT. Part of the plan will include details on how conference attendees can be more aware of strategies to reduce waste at ALA conferences.
- Visit the Sails Pavilion and check out the "ALA Sustainability Efforts" table.
- Use low-carbon transportation options. Use the complimentary shuttles that ALA provides, ride public transportation (buses and trains), or rideshare with people you know.
- Turn in your conference badge at the end of the conference.
- Use any of the more than 25 water refill stations located in the Convention Center.
- Participate in your hotel's green initiatives (e.g., opt-out of daily linen changes, take advantage of paperless check-in/check-out options).
- Download the ALA Mobile App to schedule events and sessions.
- Bring your own reusable mug or water bottle, or purchase an ALA bottle at the ALA Store.

Council Committee Report Form

- When disposing of trash, look for the recycling bins in the Convention Center as well as throughout the city.
- Donate your tote bags! SustainRT is collecting tote bags at the June 30 membership meeting from 3:30–5:00 p.m. PT in the Marriott Marquis Miramar Room. Bring any unwanted tote bags, whether brought from home or your current conference tote. The totes will be donated to local charity organizations that need reusable bags (e.g., SDSU Food Bank).

Future Annual Conference:

I regret to report that there are no significant updates regarding this resolution at present. In August 2023, there was a modest effort to convene a committee by identifying potential invitees to form a working group. This group would include representatives from various divisions, the Rainbow Round Table, ALA staff, an Executive Board member, the ALA Conference Committee Chair, and the Exhibitors Advisory Committee. Additionally, the ALA Conference Services website provides information on site selection criteria and details of upcoming contracted events.

During the past year, the committee primarily focused on assisting the Executive Board and Interim Director in evaluating LLX. Subsequently, the Board established a Winter Events Working Group tasked with bringing stakeholders together to reimagine and ensure the continuity of critical events of the Winter conference post-January 2025. This includes the Youth Media Awards, I Love My Librarian Awards, the Governance Institute, the MLK Sunrise Celebration, Emerging Leaders, the RUSA Book and Media Awards, and the needs of our exhibitors and the publishing community.

We acknowledge the significance of this resolution and its ongoing importance. It is our hope that the next Chair and Committee will be able to provide the Council with a substantive update at the Annual Conference in Philadelphia next year.

References:

ALA LibGuide on Sustainability: <https://libguides.ala.org/SustainableLibraries>

ALA CD#37.1 (AC2023) MeetGreen findings compiled: [Committee on Sustainability](#)

ALA CD#37 (LLX2024) [Committee on Sustainability](#)

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Ferriss
Conference Committee Chair