

Striving for Zero

Guide to More Sustainable AALL Chapter Conferences

Provided by SR-SIS Standing Committee on Environmental Sustainability

AALL chapter conferences and meetings are a great way for law librarians to share ideas and learn from each other. Unfortunately, travel to and from these events is tough on the environment and contributes significantly to disruptive climate change – the pressing social, economic, environmental and security issue of our time. As scientists have explained, higher carbon dioxide greenhouse gas emissions in our atmosphere are increasing the severity and frequency of forest fires, drought, sea level rise, heat waves, floods, acidification of oceans, human migration, national security problems, etc. About 90% of the emissions associated with chapter meetings come from travel to and from conferences. While the pollution cannot be erased, chapter leadership can choose to make a difference to reduce impacts by purchasing offsets for this pollution. Offset projects can help stabilize our climate and provide additional social benefits. Per attendee costs can be as little as the cost of a fancy coffee.

In 2014, the Southwest Association of Law Librarians (SWALL) became the first AALL chapter to “strive for zero” carbon emissions from travel. They purchased carbon pollution offsets using a small fee (about \$4 per attendee) collected as part of the cost of registration for their conference in Boulder, CO. The process to develop a similar program for your next chapter conference does not need to be complex or costly. The new AALL SR-SIS Standing Committee on Environmental Sustainability can help you with the steps below. Together, we can help solve our climate problem and meet the goals of the AALL Resolution on Sustainability in Libraries.

“Striving for Zero” meeting steps:

- 1) **Contact the Committee on Environmental Sustainability** (David Selden, chair – dselden@narf.org) for help tailoring an offset project to meet your chapter’s needs and skip steps below. **OR**;
- 2) **Estimate the average attendee round-trip mileage** for car and air travel. Multiply this mileage by number of people flying or driving to get total estimated flight and driving miles.
- 3) **Calculate the amount of CO2 created from miles travelled** from total estimated round trip miles traveled by car or airplane. Multiply car miles by .7 and flight miles by .8 to get pounds of CO2. (2,000 pounds = 1 ton.) or use calculators such as: <http://www.terrapass.com> or <http://cotap.org/carbon-emissions-calculator/>
- 4) **Look for and contact a CO2 offset project that is certified by a 3rd party** (Or contact Standing Committee for help). See list of offset providers here: <http://www.co2offsetresearch.org/consumer/Providers.html> and select a project to fund. Costs to offset vary (usually \$6 - \$20/ton) so ask about costs. You may wish to find local projects.
- 5) **Make offset payment/donation to the project of your choice!** Publicize your effort to strive for a zero carbon event and its benefits!

Learn more about carbon offsets here:

<http://www.co2offsetresearch.org/consumer/index.html>

Read the AALL Resolution on Sustainability in Law Libraries on the next page or visit:

<http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Leadership-Governance/resolutions/resolution-sustainability.html>

Resolution on Sustainability in Law Libraries

Sponsored by the Social Responsibilities SIS and the Environmental Libraries and Animal Law Caucuses, July 20, 2015

Adopted on September 16, 2015

WHEREAS, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) exists, among other reasons, to enhance the value of law libraries to the public, the legal community, and the world; and

WHEREAS, AALL has a Social Responsibilities Special Interest Section, which addresses issues of social responsibility, environmental awareness, and sustainability that are of concern to all AALL members; and

WHEREAS, other professional organizations such as the American Bar Association and the American Library Association have enacted resolutions, task forces, and programs promoting environmentally responsible publishing, energy efficiency, and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, law library leaders have a mandate to ensure future access to economical library services; and

WHEREAS, law libraries that demonstrate good stewardship of the resources entrusted to them can build their base of support in their communities which leads to sustainable funding; and

WHEREAS, the scientific community has clearly communicated that current trends in climate change are of great concern to all; and

WHEREAS, the people who work in our libraries and access services in our facilities deserve a healthy environment in which to do so; and

WHEREAS, law libraries that demonstrate leadership in making sustainable decisions that help to positively address climate change, respect natural resources and create healthy indoor and outdoor environments will stabilize and reduce their long-term energy costs, increase the support for the library in their community; and reveal new sources of funding;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the AALL on behalf of its members, recognizes the important role law libraries can play in larger community conversations about resiliency, climate change, and a sustainable future; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AALL strongly encourages its membership – and itself – to be proactive in applying sustainable thinking in the areas of their facilities, operations, policy, technology, programming and partnerships.