

ALA Council Committee Report Form

TO: ALA Council

DATE: June 9, 2023

RE: Report

CONTACT PERSON: Matthew Bollerman, Chair, Council Committee on Sustainability
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BACKGROUND:

- ALA Council voted to create the Council Committee on Sustainability in January 2021 and, once a roster was established, began meeting in July 2021. Monthly virtual meetings have continued.
- The ALA Sustainability Committee's charge is to provide the necessary leadership and monitoring of ALA strategic initiatives that will infuse the core value of sustainability throughout the policies, procedures, practices of our association and our professional activities, in collaboration with the ALA Board and President, ALA Council, ALA divisions, ALA offices and units, ALA round tables, ALA committees, ALA affiliates and ALA staff so that our association and its members contribute to the development of sustainable and resilient communities. In particular, this committee will maintain a working relationship with several ALA offices and groups to affect meaningful sustainability-related outcomes and model best practices across the association.
- Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, ALA President in her June 25 Committee Chair meeting remarks asked that we focus on her priorities: library worker's rights; partnerships, especially ones outside of typical library ones; intersectionalities; and racial equity in practice.

REPORT:

1. Implement the 2021 Council Resolution to Achieve Carbon Neutrality for ALA Conferences by 2025: **In progress.** ALA Conference Services staff have continued to provide and promote the availability of ethical carbon offsets through conference registration in 2022-2023. MeetGreen was hired in January 2023 to provide an Event Carbon Executive Summary. Their work was completed in April 2023. A report is included at the end of this report. The American Library Association has a robust event sustainability program in place, and best practices are already being used at ALA events. In addition, a proposal to the Executive Board to incorporate carbon offsets into the cost of attending conference has been submitted. Conference Services and the Conference Committee are being asked to review the proposal to answer the financial impact it may have before the Executive Board will make their decision.

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2. Implement the third resolved clause of the 2019 Council Resolution for the Adoption of Sustainability as a Core Value of Librarianship to “Evolve accreditation standards to ensure the topic of sustainability is an inherent element in library school curriculum.”: **In progress.** An Accreditation Team has formed and will be investigating ways to approach achieving this part of the 2019 Council Resolution.
3. Climate Action Summit: **In progress.** Plans are being developed for a Climate Action Summit. The Committee is prepared to help make this event a success in any way the organizers see fit.
4. Exploration of Council Committees and Sustainability Intersections: **In progress.** Committee members are inquiring how the concept of the triple bottom line is being incorporated into the work of the Association. We are examining Council’s own committees first.
5. Promotional partnership between ALA and the Sustainable Libraries Initiative: **On-going effort.**
6. Reviewing other Association’s Sustainability Work: **In progress.** Committee members are investigating what other membership organizations outside of our industry are doing to be more sustainable, seeking best practices for gathering, awards, publishing, and doing the work of promoting their industry.
7. SustainRT Turns Ten Years Old - The Committee would like to recognize SustainRT on their tenth anniversary of being a roundtable. SustainRT provides members of the Association with a place to gather, learn and celebrate the work being done by library staff, librarians, teachers, Board members and others who are working on keeping our species a going concern on our planet.

MeetGreen Findings Compiled

by Matthew Bollerman, Chair, Council Committee on Sustainability

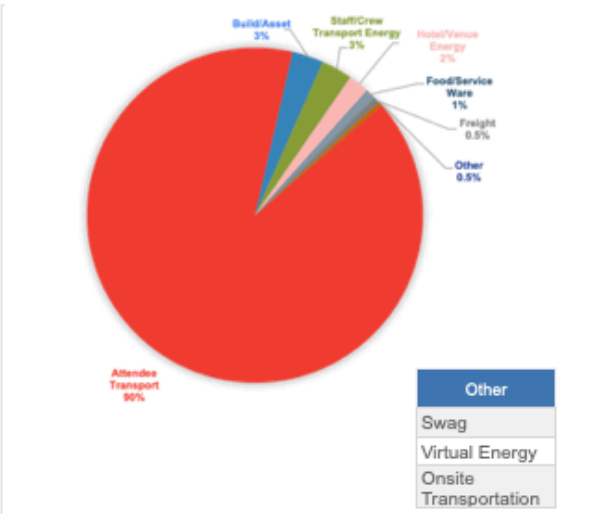
Background

In August 2021 discussion and budgeting to hire a consultant to help understand if there was room for improvement in how the American Library Association could reduce carbon produced by our two annual meetings began. In January 2023, MeetGreen was hired to provide an Executive Summary of actions, trends and ideas we could undertake to reduce our carbon emissions.

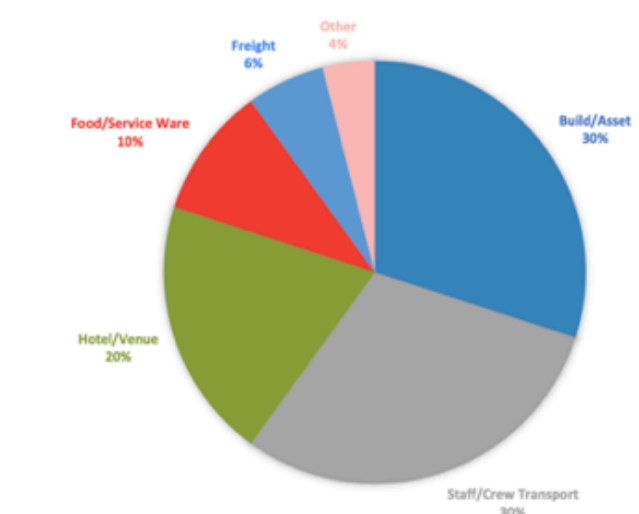
Findings

- MeetGreen provides the following:
- 1) How typical events emit carbon
 - 2) An analysis of ALA Annual and LibLearnX Travel Emissions
 - 3) Emission Reduction Brainstorming

A Typical Event Emissions Story



All Sources



w/out Attendee Transport



Event Travel Emissions Analysis



Attendee Transport Emissions Annual Conference 2022

Emissions

Transport Type	# Trips	%	Avg. Distance per Trip (km)	Total Distance (km)	%	Emissions (kg CO2e)	%	Emissions per trip (kg CO2e)	Emissions per km (kg CO2e)
Air	8,410	60%	3,518	29,589,288	94%	5,110,541	99.8%	607.7	0.173
Ground	5,551	40%	311	1,727,206	6%	8,584	0.2%	1.5	0.005
TOTAL	13,961		2,243	31,316,494		5,119,125			

2 out of every 5 attendees travelled short distances to Annual Conference 2022. This proximity, combined with ease of train transport to Washington D.C. from major cities such as NYC (1,239 attendees), made for a very low carbon event.



Attendee Transport Emissions LibLearnX 2022

Emissions

Transport Type	# Trips	%	Avg. Distance per Trip (km)	Total Distance (km)	%	Emissions (kg CO2e)	%	Emissions per trip (kg CO2e)	Emissions per km (kg CO2e)
Air	2,463	93%	3,540	8,719,646	100%	1,380,353	99.6%	560.4	0.158
Ground	191	7%	150	28,690	0%	4,891	0.4%	25.6	0.170
TOTAL	2,654		3,296	8,748,336		1,385,244			



Emissions Comparison

The chart below shows the total and per attendee travel emissions when compared to the MeetGreen attendee average. Holding events closer to attendees is the highest impact emissions decision an event can make.



Event	Average Emissions per Trip (kg CO2e)	% from MeetGreen Average	Attendees	Emissions Saved against MeetGreen Average (kg CO2e)
MeetGreen Average	1,168	-	-	-
LibLearnX 2022	522	-55%	2,654	1,714,484
Annual Conference 2022	367	-69%	13,961	11,187,323



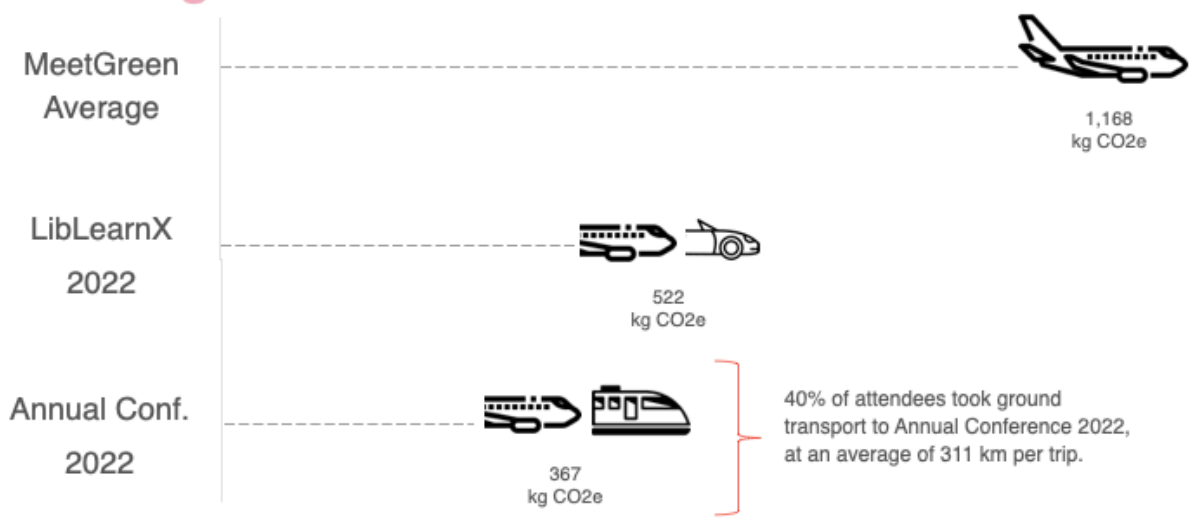
Annual Conference 2022 attendees emitted 69% fewer transportation emissions than the average conference attendee, or

11,000+ MT CO2e saved!

That's like taking 2,500 cars off the road for a year! (EPA)



Average Per Attendee Travel Emissions Average Event vs ALA Events



Assumptions

Emissions Calculations

- Flight emissions were calculated based on average-class with radiative forcing.

Annual Conference

- Train was assumed to be taken over flights if distance was less than 300 km one-way. Train was also used for residents of New York City as this trip is quicker than a flight.
- All Washington DC residents were assumed to travel 20 km round-trip to the event for 2 days.

LibLearnX

- Origin cities within Louisiana and smaller towns without a reasonably close airport were assumed to have driven to New Orleans. This created a drive to fly cutoff of around 300 km.
- All intracity travel was estimated at 20 km round-trip to the event for 2 days.

MeetGreen Average

- Based on 75 events from 2019-2022. These events varied in size from 127 to 56,105 attendees.

References

- [DEFRA Greenhouse Gas Conversion Factors, 2021](#)
- [EPA, Carbon Equivalency](#)



American Library Association

Emissions Reduction Strategy Brainstorm

Goal: Define emissions reductions practices and their relative impacts as they relate to current size/location of ALA Annual Conference and LibLearnX

Overview

American Library Association has a robust event sustainability program in place, and best practices are already being used at ALA events. ALA would like to understand, in general based upon MeetGreen's experience working with similar organizations, what the major carbon impacts are from an event and what might be done to mitigate their effect.

Goal: Define emissions reductions practices and their relative impacts as they relate to current size/location at both ALA Annual Conference and LibLearnX.

(#, #) – a measure of influence and impact for each practice where...

- **Influence (1-10 scale)** – to what extent can ALA exert influence to bring about this change
- **Impact (1-10 scale)** – estimate of relative carbon impact relative to total non-travel related event emissions. Note: qualitative impacts are noted with a “?”

Practice Improvements

- Food & Beverage Influence
 - Reusable service ware (2, 6)
 - Ideas – one meal to start, all staff meals
 - Plant-based options (5, 7)
 - Idea – higher % of offerings

- Idea – promote attendee energy levels and health as well as planet benefits
- Compost BOH (5, 6)
 - Ensure this is done efficiently and as standard during and after event
 - Show benefits as compared to organics in landfill setting (e.g., compost emits 62x more greenhouse gas in landfill setting than in compost setting)
- Sustainability Tour (10, ?)
 - Ask venue if they provide, otherwise select someone to give a sustainability tour. To include all initiatives, front and back of house
- Charitable Giving (8, 7)
 - Food and material donation programs
 - Ask venue for their current program and partners
 - Provide information about local minority-owned, women-owned, sustainable, or otherwise cause-based establishments for attendees to visit
- Materials (7, 7)
 - Reduction where possible, rent where reduction not possible, create from paper-based and FSC-certified materials when reduction and rental not possible
- Exhibitor Sustainability Guide (10, 5)
 - Develop and provide exhibitors with sustainable tips, including advisement on giveaways, shipping, material use, etc.
 - Idea – Green Exhibitor Program – develop ≈5 sustainable practices for exhibitors to follow. Participating exhibitors receive one or more of the following: 1) graphic on their booth sign, 2) recognition in the app, 3) recognition at plenary, 4) recognition in email/ website communications
- Offsetting (10, 7)
 - Information and advisement on what to look for in an offset partner
 - Idea – commit to offsetting a subset of the event’s impacts such as hotel and/or venue energy (easily calculated), ground transport (to/from airport for instance), staff/crew transportation

Resources and Other Ideas

- Proximity Savings (10, ?)
 - MeetGreen to do an analysis of emissions savings from rotating event location catering to more local transportation
 - Needs – a list of anonymized origin cities from attendee registration
 - Benefits – communicate savings to attendees
- Measurement (10, 6)
 - MeetGreen to provide a simple data collection template
 - Communication – easily shared facts/numbers for onsite dissemination
 - Idea – slide with quote “Our events strive to give earth a seat at the table”
- Contract Language (10, 8)
 - MeetGreen to provide templated sustainable contract language to be used in F&B and Venue RFPs/contracts. Meant to align goals and ensure collaboration and data collection strategy

A free [Event Food Carbon Calculator](https://eventfoodcarboncalculator.com/) helps you easily see how various menu choices, whether they be first course, main course, or sides, affect carbon. You can compare beans to veggies, wild caught fish to farm raised, and more. <https://eventfoodcarboncalculator.com/>

Conclusion

In trying to achieve the Council's Resolution to Achieve Carbon Neutrality for ALA Conferences, where the resolved state:

1. pursues a goal of carbon neutrality for all ALA conferences by the year 2025 and will remain carbon neutral for these events thereafter;
2. delegates to the ALA Council Committee on Sustainability to assist and track progress toward this goal; and
3. encourages all divisions, roundtables, chapters, affiliates, and others who work with the Association to consider adopting similar goals to reduce carbon footprints.

Reducing the carbon used would go a long way to helping the Association achieve the goal it set for itself. MeetGreen is confirming we are doing a lot already to reduce. The Council Committee on Sustainability in its meetings with Conference Services and the Conference Committee know the commitment is in place, and has been even before this resolution, to reduce our carbon use. This work, in addition, to the proposal in front of the Association Executive Board to incorporate carbon offsets into the Conference Registration fees should advance the achievement of the Council's resolution by the deadline of 2025. If we were to adopt the more impactful suggestions above and use our influence to educate our members, vendors and partners on the other our annual meetings can become another leadership opportunity for our Association.