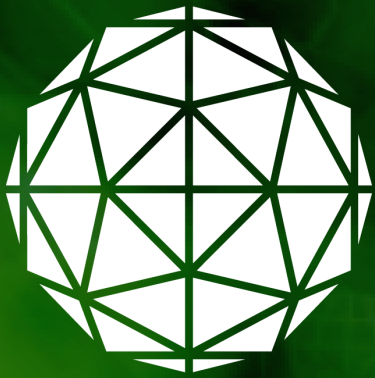


2022



**American Sustainable
Business Network's**
2022 ANNUAL REPORT



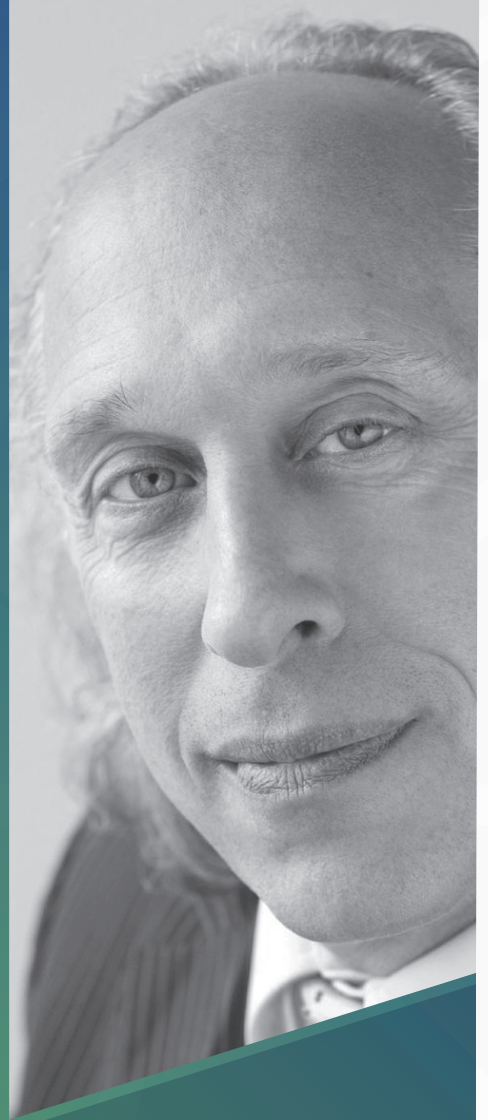
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Reflections

2022 was a year in which the American Sustainable Business Network (ASBN) got bigger, smarter, more diverse and stronger than ever before. We are in a better and healthier financial position than we have ever been, a year after the merger of Social Venture Network (SVN), Investors Circle and the American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC).

2022 brought growth in our staff and scope, enabling the organization to go deeper in the work, increase its impact, and reflect on how to best serve our members and our mission. The past year also saw the return of in-person events after a two-year pause due to the pandemic. We were able to hold our annual conference in San Diego, and it was wonderful to be in the same room with so many of our members, partners and stakeholders. We were also able to once again organize meetings on Capitol Hill, bringing our message of a just and sustainable economy to legislators and cabinet officials.



David
Levine

CO-FOUNDER ASBN



When SVN and ASBC merged, there were noticeable differences in governance and culture, prompting the organization to look at how to best weave together the best of each group. It is critical that we continue to build and strengthen the business-to-business community, move capital, and support systems change through advocacy and public policy.

ASBN recognizes that our internal and external work is a process of learning and continuous improvement. We are committed to regularly revisiting and revising our policies and practices to ensure transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in achieving our mission and goals.

In these short pages you will find highlights of our accomplishments for the past year and see some of what is coming next.

Visit ASBN's [website](#) for our latest reports, updates, and opportunities to join us in action. Let's continue to do good business and ensure that business is a force for good.

David Levine & Jeffrey Hollender
Co-Founders of ASBN



Jeffrey
Hollender

CO-FOUNDER ASBN

As I reflect on the past year, I believe that ASBN has been able to achieve great things as a result of our successful merger. Our renewed commitment to galvanizing our membership, which consists of incredible leaders, impact investors, and capacity builders, has strengthened our sense of community and fueled our passion to innovate.

The success of our annual conference, where I had the privilege of interviewing Ryan Geller, CEO of Patagonia, allowed us to gain valuable insights into our new structure in practice and how we can continue to drive the movement forward. Looking towards the future, I remain hopeful and inspired by the collective power of our members to make a positive impact.

I would be remiss to not address the recent and loud backlash against socially responsible investing and the vilification of ESG. With social ills and climate change growing threats to our lives and livelihoods, it is essential that individuals and businesses take up these causes regardless of their political affiliation. ASBN and the Board will continue to work together to ensure a just future for our businesses and fellow Americans.

Seungha Jeong

ASBN Board Chair
President & CEO of MPowerd



Seungha
Jeong

ASBN BOARD CHAIR
MPOWERD PRESIDENT & CEO

Welcome

American Sustainable Business Network's (ASBN) mission is to create a movement for a new economy for all by empowering diverse and values-based business organizations, companies, and leaders to work together for systemic change. Our strategy involves building a broad business infrastructure at the local, state, national levels, mounting information and communication campaigns that promote responsible and sustainable solutions, and advancing policies that protect people and the planet with legislators across the political spectrum.

TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS, WE WILL

- Continue to showcase the business case and vision for systemic change through case studies, thought leadership, and education.
- Advance business policies that guide and regulate sustainable business practices.
- Advocate for public policies that incentivize market paradigm shifts.
- Use the power of our investors to move capital to ensure a more sustainable inclusive and just economy.
- Use earned and paid media to help us drive the narrative of a just and sustainable economy.
- Continue to create a community of like-minded businesses and foster connection to support the business goals of our members.

By working with businesses, government, and the media, we will support each other in driving for systemic change and catalyzing victories for a new economy.

Overall, ASBN's strategic actions are designed to unite and aggregate businesses and business leaders, build community, train and prepare those leaders to become effective advocates, and promote the responsible business perspective. Through our collective efforts, we can build a more sustainable, just, and equitable economy for all.

Who we are

ASBN is a movement builder in partnership with the business and investor community. ASBN develops and advocates solutions for policy makers, business leaders, and investors that support an equitable, regenerative, and just economy that benefits all stakeholders. As a multi-issue, membership organization advocating on behalf of every business sector, size, and geography, **ASBN and its association members collectively represent over 250,000 businesses across our networks.**

Our vision is a sustainable economy that is stakeholder-driven, regenerative, just, and prosperous.

MISSION

VISION

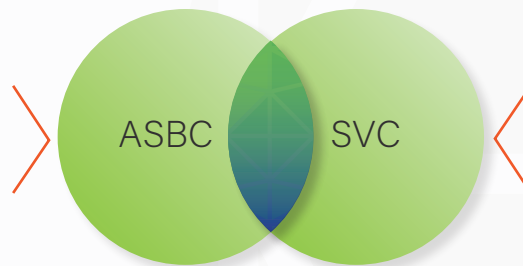
VALUES

Our mission is to inform, connect, and mobilize business leaders and investors to transform the public and private sectors toward a sustainable and just economy.

ASBN believes that justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion must be at the foundation for how we conduct ourselves, our public policy advocacy, and our businesses and investment activity, as we cultivate and grow our community and programs. With clear intent and earnest effort, we will engage our community, and seek leaders in the field to ensure that our impact matches our vision.



A Year into the Merger



Now we are one year into the merger of the American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC), Investors Circle and Social Venture Circle (SVC) with the goal of creating a larger and more effective organization to advance the interests of sustainable and socially responsible businesses in the United States.

The merged organization, which operates under the name of the American Sustainable Business Network, combines the advocacy and policy expertise of the ASBC with the impact investing and social enterprise focus and business-to-business community building of the SVC. The merger aims to leverage the strengths of both organizations to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth, move more capital, and advance public policies that promote social and environmental responsibility.

Since the merger, the American Sustainable Business Network has continued its efforts to advocate for policies that promote sustainable business practices, support responsible businesses, and address pressing economic, social and environmental challenges. The organization has also expanded its membership and outreach efforts to engage a broader range of businesses and stakeholders in its work.

Over the last year we have been awarded a \$35MM USDA Grant; deployed \$6.8 M in funds via Investors Circle; hosted an amazing annual Conference; advanced key legislation (CA SB-54, SB-1407, AB 2849 (details forthcoming)); led voter registration and voting rights initiatives; received a Skoll grant, hosted 37 ASBN Live Webinars, and were tapped for a Public Private Partnership Agreement with the Department of Interior announced by Secretary Haaland.

We are excited about all we have accomplished over the last year and look forward to what we can do in 2023!

The Stats!



\$35M >>

USDA GRANT

SUCCESSFULLY HOSTED THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

DEPLOYED

\$6.8 M

IN FUNDS
VIA INVESTORS CIRCLE

ADVANCED KEY
LEGISLATION
(CA SB-54,
SB-1407,
AB 2849)

RECEIVED A
SKOLL GRANT

Tapped for a
Public Private
Partnership
Agreement with
the Department
of Interior

HOSTED
37
ASBN LIVE
WEBINARS

600+ COLLABORATIONS
with campaigns & initiatives

LED VOTER REGISTRATION AND VOTING
RIGHTS INITIATIVES



Event Programming

“I’ve spent the last few days since my return from San Diego reflecting and having follow up calls with the many wonderful humans I met at the conference. I’m humbled and thankful to have been so warmly welcomed into this special community.”

— 2022 ASBN CONFERENCE ATTENDEE

In 2022 we continued our 2021 programming strategy of putting on ASBN Live webinars and the in-person ASBN Conference.

ASBN Live is our hour-long educational webinar series that occurs on Wednesdays at 1pm ET and gets marketed to our email list of 40k as well as our social media followers. In 2022, we put on 37 ASBN Live webinars and 1 Master Class, which can be viewed [here](#) at your leisure in our content library. Our most popular webinars in 2022 were *Learning From Indigenous Leadership for Regenerative Economies*, *How Business Leaders Drive Change — Leading the Way on ‘Circularity’ from Within*, and SEC’s Director Renee Jones on *Climate-Related Disclosures for Investors*.

We returned to Paradise Point in San Diego, CA for our ASBN Conference from November 30-December 3, 2022. We hosted four main stage sessions featuring Ryan Gellert (CEO, Patagonia), Dr. Carmen Rojas, PhD (CEO, Marguerite Casey Foundation), and Anand Giridharadas

(NYT Best selling Author). To round out the program, we held 49 breakout sessions, 3 local San Diego community tours, and entertainment and joy at the Hospitality Sweet.

Our commitment to JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) principles can be seen in our speaker demographics: 56% female, 50% BIPOC, and a Local Track with San Diego speakers & projects featured.

In June, we were fortunate to bring our team together in Philadelphia for our first staff retreat since the merger, where we welcomed new team members, many who had not met their colleagues in-person. It was important for our remote-first colleagues to have this opportunity to connect face-to-face and do collective visioning.

In 2023, we are moving towards more in-person events and less virtual events. We are reducing the frequency of ASBN Live webinars to host regional in-person member meet-ups, a Policy Summit in DC, and the winter conference. We look forward to seeing you at our **upcoming events**.

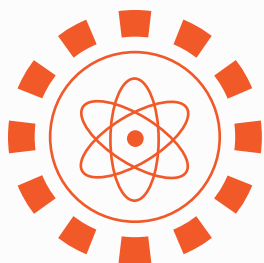


Campaigns, Initiatives & Public Policy

ASBN's Policy, Advocacy, and Government Affairs (PAG) team is proactively seeking out opportunities to position businesses as vital partners in local and state government, on Capitol Hill, and with U.S. federal agencies. Our dedicated team is working tirelessly to shape new policy alternatives and business practices that will pave the way towards a more sustainable, just and prosperous economy. We are proud to have a staff that are both strong issue experts and skilled collaboration builders, and we remain committed to advocating for policies that promote sustainability and justice and empower businesses to be catalysts for positive change.

Our Businesses for Conservation and Climate Action (BCCA) initiative and our Climate, Energy & Environment campaign portfolios showcase our ability to inform, connect, and mobilize our business and investor movement on key environmental issue areas in policy and advocacy, while also prioritizing justice, transparency, and accountability. We have successfully created strong, diverse and broad collaborations involving over 600 organizations working together on campaigns related to climate and energy, conservation, regenerative agriculture, clean water, circular economy, and safer chemicals.

We have made progress by increasing our capability to share data and information for climate solutions, leading collaborative efforts, and taking part in many national and state level coalitions, often as the sole business organization. This has resulted in important policy wins in renewable energy, the reduction of fossil fuels, regenerative agriculture, the use of safer chemicals and the protection of clean water.



Climate, Energy & Conservation

CLIMATE & ENERGY CAMPAIGNS

In 2022, we focused our attention to the broader opportunities to advance climate action by organizing strong business support for the successful passage of the Infrastructure bill and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). ASBN was **recognized by the White House** among organizations that supported the passage of the IRA.

On other fronts, the EPA sits at an important time in history where we can take bold action to further cut community based pollutants and support the transition to a more sustainable energy system. Several key clean air policies are under consideration by the EPA administration. These policies deal with some of the most flagrant pollutants (i.e. super pollutants) such as ground level ozone, soot, carbon dioxide and methane pollution. Some of these toxins have overly loose policies while others may not be regulated at all. In order to meet the Administration's commitment to climate change and environmental justice goals, air quality must be at the forefront.

We mounted strong campaigns in response to the draft rules to regulate methane and soot pollution, including collecting hundreds of comments from businesses in favor of the EPA proposed rules on **methane regulation** and **soot regulation** as well as assembling a **business case** for methane emissions regulation. We can already see progress being made from early results. The EPA has already addressed several outstanding issues including the dangerous practice of flaring (a high-temperature oxidation process used to burn waste gases containing combustible components such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), natural gas (or. methane), carbon monoxide and hydrogen) in response to this push from the business community. We will continue to mobilize business support to advance administrative actions and policies that protect our health and are good for business.

Our climate and energy working group continues to provide a forum for diverse stakeholders to work together to share the principles that guide our work as well as the collaborative strategies to address the engagement of interconnected environmental issues.

CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE ACTION CAMPAIGNS

Our Businesses for Conservation and Climate Action (BCCA) initiative is an indigenous and community-based business network advancing conservation and a just economy in key ocean and land policies. Since April 2021, BCCA has developed a robust internal structure and provides an opportunity for vibrant community building and networking for its Indigenous and community-based business members. Our membership has expanded to include SicanguCo, the Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance, Patagonia, the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Tribal Consortium, and numerous small businesses.

To shape policy, BCCA has led or joined numerous **public comment letters** to the Biden Administration urging action aligned with our policy platform. Our agency engagement leadership has focused on equity and environmental justice engagement at the Department of Commerce and Interior, support for Indigenous and community-based businesses in the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the America the Beautiful program, and various other public comment opportunities focusing on land and ocean conservation. Elements of BCCA's policy platform have become key initiatives under the America the Beautiful program and the Biden Administration's strategy for regulatory reform for the benefit of people, economy, and planet. Key examples include the EPA's decision to prevent the construction of the Pebble Mine in Alaska, forthcoming rule-making on fishery management guidelines (the "10 commandments of US fisheries"), and the engagement of Tribal businesses (including via the ASBN/ DOI MOU) to support regenerative grazing and community-led agriculture initiatives. ASBN was also selected by the US Department of Interior in late 2022 to enter into a **Public Private Partnership Agreement** to provide support for Tribally led community economic development with Tribal Nations across the country.



Regenerative agriculture, water, & safer chemicals

In 2022, ASBN achieved several policy and advocacy campaign milestones as a result of its movement building in regenerative agriculture, clean water, and safer chemicals.

In tandem with our flagship group, Investor Circle, our investors and business members at ASBN have also had impactful success in raising capital for sustainably centered early-stage businesses. In the agricultural, safe chemicals, clean water and renewable energy spaces, these businesses include Pittmoss, Mimikai, Gridless Power, Aquacycle, Victory Hemp, Raise Green, Verity Packaging and many others. In our Inclusive Economy work, we have also identified key CDFI (Community Development Financial Institutions) partners including the Native CDFI Network and Appalachian Community Capital as collaborators to drive greater impact for underserved communities through joint efforts.

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE & JUSTICE CAMPAIGNS

ASBN's Regenerative Agriculture and Justice Working Group established a **set of priorities** for the 2023 Farm Bill and sent those priorities to Congress in the Fall of 2022 with endorsements from over 200 businesses, farmers, trade associations, and organizational partners. To reflect its justice-centered approach, these priorities address how in the past smaller farms and BIPOC farmers were excluded by the legislation. Leading with an inclusive JEDI mindset means it is of primary importance to the inclusive economy to shift land management practices in a more equitable fashion. ASBN will be working hard to ensure Congress

includes our priorities towards these ends in 2023, meeting with policymakers in February and June to advocate for its priorities on the Hill.

In 2022, ASBN and its partners also secured a landmark \$35M grant through the **USDA Climate Smart Commodities program** to support thousands of Cattle and Bison producers to transition to regenerative practices.

CLEAN WATER CAMPAIGNS

As part of our active campaign to protect Clean Water, we worked with the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Small Business Committee on hearings to provide business testimony in favor of strong clean water protections. We built a stronger alliance of business organizations and companies regionally and developed the **business case for protecting the Delaware River Watershed region** (DE, NJ, NY, PA) with state and federal legislators.

PROTECTING BRISTOL BAY

We also worked with Businesses for Bristol Bay to successfully advocate leading to the Environmental Protection Agency to prevent the building of the **Pebble Mine at Bristol Bay**.

WATER OF THE U.S.

We organized business to support the EPA in the **Sackett vs the EPA** Supreme Court Case which threatens the scope of WOTUS, which included **submitting a business amicus brief**, holding a press event, and writing op-eds.

We also sent comments with **over 300 business sign-ons** to the EPA and the Army Corps calling for implementation of the science-backed Waters of the US rule that enforces the Clean Water Act and reversed the previous administrations' Dirty Water rule, pushed US Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy to stop promoting the limitation of WOTUS, connecting them with small businesses that support a strong Clean Water Act, and are currently planning to send in early March sent a business sign-on letter opposing efforts to use Congressional Review Act to vacate the Biden-Administrations new WOTUS rule.

ASBN is tackling PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) to protect the safeguards in place and prevent regulation rollback, specifically in issues of Clean Water and PFAS, we have mounted several successful campaigns. We organized a round table with 20 business leaders and the Environmental Working Group to push for effective federal procurement of PFAS free products with White House CEO, GSA, EPA, and DOD. This was followed up with a sign-on letter to the GSA, which led directly to a presentation and meeting with the GSA procurement team. We elevated the business case for PFAS regulations and alternatives to Congress and supported the EPA's proposal to ban and require clean-up of PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) from drinking water.

SAFER CHEMICALS CAMPAIGNS

Our Safer Chemicals campaigns continued to advocate for new federal legislation and rule-making to protect consumers and communities from the use of toxic chemicals and drive innovation towards safer chemicals and products.

Through the Childhood Cancer Prevention Initiative that we co-founded, we mounted engagement campaigns with Pediatric Cancer foundations, health professionals, business leaders, investors, and environmental justice organizations & offered our prevention narrative through conferences, webinars and other forums to the scientific, health and foundation community to help shift them towards a prevention perspective.

We also worked on the **successful reintroduction** by Senator Booker of the Protect America's Children from Pesticides Act (PACTPA) along with participating in an advocacy day engaging over 20 Senate offices; and gathered **support from investors through a letter** for this legislation. We also supported the state and federal elimination of PFAS policies through testimony, briefing and direct engagement with legislators.

In related work, our Circular Economy Working Group hosted experts educating leaders on circular economy and policy including national collections standards, national bottle bill legislation, and the international plastic treaty negotiations. In order to advance policies and help support the larger movement, the Working Group collaborated directly with members of the Break Free from Plastic Coalition as one of the few business representatives advocating for legislation and regulation that reduces or eliminates the use of single-use, problematic, and toxic plastics and increases for reuse, repair, recycling, and the use of sustainable materials. We delivered a substantive **report** and a collaborative briefing defining Sustainable Chemistry to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and its inter-agency task force. We also provided comprehensive **guidance** for the General Services Administration on how to shift from single-use plastics to a more circular and sustainable procurement strategy. We were also called upon to deliver **written** and verbal testimony at the Energy and Climate Change House Subcommittee Hearing on Recycling after lobbying in support of federal action on plastic pollution.

On the state level, the Circular Economy Working Group also supported passage of California SB-54 Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act through letters of **recommendation** and **support** to key legislators to demonstrate business support for strong extended producer responsibility legislation.

Inclusive Economy

ASBN recognizes the importance of building an inclusive economy that serves the needs of small and local businesses, women-owned, BIPOC-owned, community-based entrepreneurs, as well as the unique needs of communities as articulated by local leaders. Building peer networks, strengthening place-based financing, advancing worker ownership and advocating for restorative investments are some of the ways we work with communities. At the intersection of climate and economic justice, ASBN's projects have made significant impacts on growing sustainable communities and economies and are often the bridge between small to large investments and long-term sustainability.

In 2022, ASBN invested in growing and strengthening our Inclusive Economy portfolio including our initiative, **Catalyzing Community Well Being** exploring opportunities for Restorative Investing and Just & Sustainable Infrastructure & Communities. This will position us to build and advocate for durable stakeholder solutions, continuing community power building, increasing capital deployment, increasing entrepreneurship in under-resourced communities and powering local economies.

Based on the significant need for those greatly ignored, underfunded, and undeserved across the country, ASBN has identified 6 communities (3 urban & 3 rural) through this initiative and is working with each of them to bring together their key stakeholders through a Participatory Action Research process. Our project aims to bring scalable best practice observations in order to catalyze capital access, investment, deployment, and support for inclusive and community-supportive entrepreneurship; including alternative ownership opportunities, alternative capital raising, alternative lending and deployment methods across all areas of local economy and community planning.

The proposed research process will help address root causes and systems change by discerning outcomes based on engagements with present entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs-to-be, community leadership, business and investor leaders, funders, and decision-makers. Communities include Downtown Crenshaw, Los Angeles, Rosebud Sioux, SW New Mexico, Trenton NJ, Little Village, Chicago and a community to be determined in Appalachia.

Along with the leadership of our member the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce, we also built and led **Reform the Small Business Administration**, an alliance involving 13 business organizations to put pressure on the SBA. We developed a **key set of recommendations** that we pursued with the collective power of the coalition in areas such as research, access to capital, small business needs, regulations, and procurement. In this letter, we encouraged SBA to encourage CDFIs to make loans to small and particularly BIPOC owned businesses along with an increase in federal funding for loan loss reserves, in federal funding guarantees, and in federal low/no cost capital to lend. We advised the SBA to provide more federal funding for operating costs such as servicing and for mandatory technical assistance, training, and coaching (pre- and post-loan) and others.

In late 2022, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced a series of actions to support Tribally-led conservation, education, and economic development through a new Office of Strategic Partnerships — including signing an MOU with the American Sustainable Business Network (ASBN) to support Tribally-led community-based economic development and entrepreneurship. Since then we have continued to chart out our joint work with the Department of Interior while Identifying and convening dozens of key stakeholders as part of an ASBN-led working group. As a result, we have begun charting our direct collaborations with the 4 other organizations that entered into partnership agreements with DOI including Native Americans In Philanthropy, Oweesta, Native American CDFI Network, and Enterprise Community Ventures.

Democracy & Governance

SEC DISCLOSURE

ASBN led a policy, advocacy and government affairs strategy around the SEC's proposal to enhance and standardize climate disclosure. By building a strong relationship with the Office of the Chair of the SEC, we were able to effectively communicate and collaborate throughout the process. Within 24 hours of the proposal's announcement, we issued a media release supporting it and secured a diverse set of ASBN member quotes to demonstrate the broad support for the initiative. This quick response helped to establish ASBN as a leading voice in the conversation around climate disclosure.

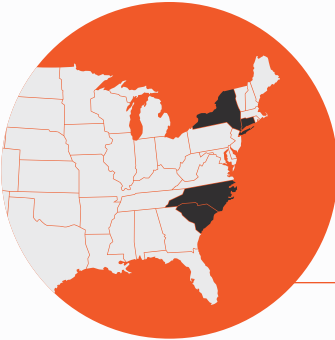
To demonstrate our widespread support for the SEC proposal, we created a **sign-on** letter campaign that received 400 sign-ons, making it the largest sign-on campaign for ASBN in 2022 and the second-highest in the history of the organization.

Overall, our leadership and advocacy were instrumental in ensuring that ASBN played a prominent role in the conversation around climate disclosure and that the SEC proposal received broad support from stakeholders across the industry.

DEMOCRACY

In March 2022, we launched a Business for Democracy (BfD) working group campaign to build small business collaborations in eight targeted states. The mission was to use the trusted voice of small businesses to elevate the issue of protecting democracy to be one that voters in the midterms would consider when casting ballots. The message emphasized that a strong democracy was essential for a vibrant entrepreneurial economy and warned of the negative economic consequences of the country sliding into an autocracy. The collaboratives consisted of individual businesses and business organizations in North Carolina, Wisconsin, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, California, Arizona and Nevada.

The BfD campaign worked to educate the business community and the public about election integrity, promoting voter participation, and advocacy for Congressional reforms. We used various tools such as press releases, radio talk show interviews, opinion editorials, letters to the editor, webinars, business networking, press conferences, and a Congressional candidate survey. We asked all Republican and Democratic candidates for the U.S. House and Senate to complete a short survey assessing their support for three Congressional reform bills, serving as a litmus test for candidates to be publicly recognized for their support for protecting democracy. This was not a candidate endorsement. The three bills were the Electoral Count Reform Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and the Freedom to Vote Act.



State Affiliates

ASBN continues to collaborate with and support campaigns by our existing state organizations including the Ohio Sustainable Business Council, New York Sustainable Business Council, New Jersey Sustainable Business Council, North Carolina Business Council, Connecticut Sustainable Business Council and others.

CONNECTICUT

The Connecticut Sustainable Business Council has been focused on the creation and leadership of Connecticut Energy Future (CEF), a joint project of The Nature Conservancy and the CT Sustainable Business Council in collaboration with the Connecticut Green Bank.

The Connecticut Sustainable Business Council has led the engagement of business leaders from various sectors to exchange ideas and explore pathways, barriers, and challenges facing businesses that want to see a reliable and cost-effective clean energy future and in many cases, incorporate clean energy into their own business operations. These businesses believe that a clean energy future is both desirable and inevitable. The result of these discussions was the creation of the group's Clean Energy Policy Principles, which over 40 businesses had a hand in creating. CT Sustainable Business Council hopes these will help shape the public policy landscape as Connecticut ramps up its commitment to clean, reliable, and affordable energy. Learn more [here](#).

NEW YORK

The New York Sustainable Business Council (NYSBC), with their partners and businesses across New York, celebrated many groundbreaking wins including the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Act; the Moratorium on Crypto Mining Bill; PFAS in Apparel Bill; Cumulative Impacts and Carpet EPR Bills.

NYSBC partnered with food packaging manufacturer Emerald Brand on the first webinar to educate food service companies on the new PFAS in Food Packaging Law. The webinar was attended by over 80 business leaders from coast to coast. New York and California were the first to pass bans on PFAS in Food Packaging, which went into effect on January 1, 2023. A dozen other states are now passing the same or similar bans. NYSBC was pivotal in the passing of the ban in New York.

NORTH CAROLINA

In 2022, the North Carolina Business Council (NCBC) engaged hundreds of business leaders to amplify their voices through sign-on letters, public comments and business round tables on issues relating to voting rights, redistricting reform, and environmental justice. One major accomplishment resulted from their efforts in working with North Carolinians for Redistricting Reform. NCBC's executive director was directly involved in drafting fair criteria that was applied and implemented in composing the final district maps that were approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court and were used in the 2022 primaries. This resulted in the election of congressional leadership that reflected the state's demographic make-up resulting in a 7-7 Republican-Democratic split of congressional representation.

The North Carolina Business Council co-chaired the North Carolina Small Business task force — a collaboration of more than 20 business organizations — that successfully advocated to get millions of dollars designated to grow and support small companies across the state including a \$5 million small business lending

NCBC created fact-sheets that highlight the equitable and economic cases for addressing climate reform for marginalized businesses to use to shape their messaging. This information along with call-to-action was disseminated to NCBC's statewide business network of nearly 6,000 contacts in our e-newsletter CRM database. On September 13, 2022, the North Carolina Business Council facilitated and led a round table with Senator Thom Tillis and several key stake-holders in discussions surrounding key pieces of legislation, such as the Inflation Reduction Act and The Electoral Count Reform and Presidential Transition Improvement Act. The key focus of this round table was to understand how these major bills can be leveraged and best used by local small businesses.

SOUTH CAROLINA

The South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce (SCSBCC) 2022 State Activity focused on Health Insurance, Medicaid Expansion and Electricity Rates.

The cost of health insurance is still a top concern to small business owners. The SCSBCC continued its partnership with the SC Primary Health Care Association in promoting affordable health insurance to small business owners and their employees via the federal Health Insurance Marketplace with its premium assistance.

South Carolina has not expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act resulting in many workers in small businesses that do not offer group health insurance to be uninsured. The SCSBCC has supported Medicaid expansion since it became available to states and is part of the Cover SC Medicaid Expansion Coalition advocating for necessary legislation. Since 2002 SCSBCC has been the only chamber of commerce to oppose proposed electricity rate hikes on small businesses by intervening in the SC Public Service Commission rate hearings. This year Duke Energy Progress had proposed a 12.1% rate hike on small businesses and an even greater rate hike on residents.

OHIO and APPALACHIA

Other course of our work, we have also identified a strong opportunity to support the Just Transition in Appalachia. To do this work, we have partnered with Reimagine Appalachia to identify and convene key stakeholders to support the formation of the Appalachia Sustainable Business Network. We have provided expertise in sustainable business practices, new ownership models and innovative technologies, via a joint webinar with Reimagine Appalachia featuring ASBN leadership as presenters. In parallel, we have collaborated series with Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service and our state affiliate Ohio Sustainable Business Council to explore opportunities around the decommissioned Piketon facility. We have also worked to strengthen the Ohio Sustainable Business Council and begun work to form a Pennsylvania Sustainable Business Network.

New Business Members

Membership continues to be the backbone of ASBN. We are proud to have attracted 56 new members in the past year, representing diverse backgrounds and industries. These new members have come from different parts of the country, reflecting our commitment to promoting sustainability across all geographies.

The mix of new members includes both business and association members, showcasing our commitment to engaging with a broad range of stakeholders in the sustainability space. Among the new business members are some notable names, such as Dr. Bronner's, a leading manufacturer of natural and organic personal care products, Pacifica Beauty, a clean and vegan beauty brand, Geno, a startup developing sustainable animal feed, Inspire Clean Energy, a renewable energy company, Okeanos, a company that produces biodegradable and compostable products, Ecovative, a materials science company, and Tristatz, a natural fiber manufacturer.

We are also thrilled to have new association members, including the Buffalo Nations Grassland Alliance, a group of Native American tribes working to conserve grasslands and bison

populations, Green Business Engagement National Network, a network of business organizations promoting sustainability, Carbon Business Council, a coalition of businesses working to reduce their carbon footprint, New Mexico Community Capital, a community development financial institution supporting sustainable economic development, Coalition of Large Tribes, an organization representing large tribes in the US, and Buffalo Horse Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to promoting the cultural and ecological significance of the buffalo.

We believe that this diverse mix of new members reflects the broad appeal of our mission to promote sustainability and just business practices across all sectors of society. We look forward to working with all of our members to advance our shared goals and make a positive impact on people and the planet.

Investor Circle

Catalyzing Impactful Investments for a Better Economy

2022 IN REVIEW

Investors Circle catalyzed almost seven million dollars into 33 impactful early-stage startups, funds, real estate projects, and CDFIs. Key investments went to the following startups: Triton Wind, Navajo Power, Both&, AnaOno, and Honeycomb Credit.



CHAPTER UPDATES:

- The New York chapter has merged with the national chapter for a broader impact.
- The Philadelphia chapter has re-adopted a place-based focus and expanded its investment pipeline to include various asset classes.

INVESTORS CIRCLE FINANCING TRENDS:

Revenue based finance is a financing model that is gaining popularity among investors, including the investors at Investors Circle. Unlike traditional debt financing, revenue based finance allows companies to repay investors based on a percentage of their revenue, rather than fixed interest payments. This makes it a more inclusive financing option for companies that may not have the collateral or credit history to qualify for traditional loans. Additionally, revenue based finance is a newer funding method, which allows investors to diversify their portfolios and potentially earn higher returns than they would with traditional investments. Overall, revenue based finance has emerged as an attractive financing option for both investors and companies, and its popularity is likely to continue to grow in the years ahead.

PORTFOLIO COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS

- Triton Wind: Developed a new, lower-cost, faster-to-install, and less environmentally damaging anchor for the offshore wind industry, catering to the rapidly growing deep water offshore wind sector.
- Navajo Power: A Public Benefit Corporation that develops utility-scale clean energy projects on tribal lands and maximizes economic benefits for local communities.
- Both&: Award-winning clothing brand for trans men, revolutionizing fit for transmasculine and nonbinary individuals with a data-backed sizing system.
- AnaOno: A thriving portfolio company creating comfortable bras designed for surgery prep, treatment, recovery, and beyond.
- Honeycomb Credit: Small business loans funded by local investors, promoting local business prosperity while offering competitive returns.
- Firebrand Artisan Bread: Firebrand bakes bread so that they can hire people using fair chance hiring. Firebrand specializes in wood-fired breads, pastries, and specialty items.

INVESTORS CIRCLE PARTNERSHIPS

Investors Circle has forged strong relationships with a number of strategic partners, including FOOD FUNDED. Together, we recently co-hosted a virtual summit that delved into the crucial intersection of food, agriculture, and JEDI - justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. This groundbreaking event provided a dynamic platform for entrepreneurs, investors, and experts to come together and explore innovative solutions to some of the most pressing challenges currently facing the food industry. Attendees were also treated to engaging presentations by food and agriculture startup founders, who shared their unique perspectives and experiences.

Investors Circle has also collaborated with the New Mexico Angels on a variety of investment opportunities and educational programming, further strengthening our commitment to advancing sustainable solutions and supporting visionary entrepreneurs.

Investors Circle has also been involved in various industry events, especially locally in Philadelphia, including the BLab Champion retreat, which brings together leaders from the business and social impact sectors.

Thank you to Ben Franklin Technology Partners and Teresa Rodgers for hosting our IC Philadelphia chapter meetings, as well as Angela Raitzin of First Republic Bank for hosting our national and Philadelphia chapter meetings.

These partnerships and collaborations are important to Investors Circle's mission of promoting impact investing and supporting entrepreneurs who are creating positive social and environmental change. Through these efforts, we are working to build a more inclusive and sustainable economy that benefits everyone.

Financial Outlook & Organizational Health

ASBN experienced record fundraising in 2022 via grant-driven income. Through the generous support of foundations, our members, donors and sponsors, our financial health outlook for 2023 is strong. Through our program work, ASBN and the USDA will be delivering value to American farmers and ranchers. We will continue to focus on building our membership this year and expect to maintain and cultivate new relationships with foundations that align with our mission.

Closing & Call to Action

Reflecting on another year of progress and impact, we at ASBN are deeply grateful for the dedication of our members, partners, staff and supporters.

Together, we have achieved significant milestones in advancing sustainability across industries, promoting environmental stewardship, and empowering communities and changing the rules and public policies to drive positive change the world needs. At ASBN, we believe that business can be a force for good, and we are proud to have played a role in supporting the growth and success of sustainable enterprises that are making a difference in the world.

We know that our work is far from over. As we enter our next chapter as an organization, we remain committed to our mission of promoting sustainability and social and economic responsibility in all aspects of business. We are excited to continue expanding our reach and collaborating with like-minded organizations and individuals to push the boundaries of what is possible and inspire others to join us in creating a more sustainable and just world.

We are grateful for your ongoing support and look forward to working together towards a brighter future for all.



**American
Sustainable
Business
Network**

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