

Towards a Just & Sustainable • Economy



2023

2023 & Beyond

It's hard to believe, but it's been 35 years since a raucous group of forward-thinking misfits first got together to talk about a new approach to business. Impatient with an economic model that valued profit and growth above all else, they sought to understand how their ventures would support communities, rather than dividing and dismantling them, regenerate landscapes, rather than devastating them, and create equitable prosperity for all, rather than concentrating wealth in the hands of a privileged few.

Those early luminaries built businesses that showed how social purpose and financial success reinforce one another. They worked across sectors—in business, government, academia, and charities—to create a powerful network that shares a vision of a new inclusive, equitable economic model.

The network is strong and still growing, and now a global community of investors, entrepreneurs, and their allies are changing the way the world does business through policy advocacy, capital deployment, and community.

ASBN won't be resting on those successes though, because we must act now to build a regenerative, just, and prosperous economy for generations to come. We have urgent work before us, and need your support to ensure we have the tools and resources necessary to achieve our common goals and shared vision of an economy that works for all.

Circular Economy



ASBN works closely with companies, business organizations, investors, and others to advance a circular economy through public policy and investment in reuse, repair, recycling, and composting. Our current reliance on virgin materials, petrochemicals, landfills, and waste incineration threatens to disrupt supply chains, exacerbate the climate crisis, and contaminate our food and water systems. This is why taking action to eliminate unnecessary single use packaging and support the production of safer chemicals and products will be critical to the future well-being of businesses, investors, consumers, and the environment. We believe business can play a pivotal role in advocating for a shift in investments and policies that enable a sustainable and circular economy in opposition to powerful special interest groups.

Our work in the circular economy focuses on:

- Advocating for circular public policy solutions across the federal and state government and ensuring capital investment in reuse, repair, recycling, and composting infrastructure and the elimination of unnecessary single-use plastics and toxic chemicals in line with our Circular Economy Working Group Principles
- Strengthening the business case for circular economy policy through our research, analysis, presentations, and reporting
- Creation of opportunities for businesses, investors and partners to take action on key circular economy issues and advocacy campaigns
- Educating business, consumers, and government on strong circular economy policy through our external communications, social media and events
- Facilitating ongoing engagement between our business community and members of Congress, the Administration and federal agencies as well as engaging our state affiliates in state capitols through briefings, hearings and direct communications



**American Sustainable
Business Network**

Regenerative Agriculture & Justice

The Farm Bill

ASBN is building the business case for public policies and private-sector coordination to create a more regenerative, just, and equitable agricultural system. Regenerative agriculture is an approach to farming that uses a combination of practices like managed grazing, no or minimal tillage, composting, cover crops, and crop rotations. These practices restore soil health and ecosystem functioning to agricultural lands, providing various benefits for the farmer, the environment, and businesses. For farmers, regenerative agriculture increases crop yields, profits per acre, and resilience to extreme weather events, while reducing input costs and providing multiple revenue streams. For the environment, regenerative agriculture is a key tool in combating climate change. Farming practices that improve soil health sequester global warming-causing carbon dioxide (CO₂). Some studies suggest that regenerative farming practices could sequester more than one hundred percent of annual CO₂ emissions. Lastly for businesses, regenerative agriculture can provide a distinct marketing advantage. Across business sectors, companies are driving the growth of regenerative agriculture to attract new customers and demonstrate their commitment to sustainability which consumers increasingly demand.

- Policy support for regenerative agriculture in the 2023 Farm Bill.
- Land access and support for beginning farmers and ranchers, especially for small-scale farmers, discriminated against groups, and regenerative producers
- Investment in market development, processing, and infrastructure for regenerative, organic, and local and regional farmers
- Redirect USDA incentives away from destructive concentrated feeding operations and towards regenerative systems using managed grazing and reincorporation of livestock in cropping systems
- We aim to ensure that Family farmers receive fair prices that cover the price of production and provide them with a decent livelihood
- All farmers, especially historically underserved Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and women farmers, receive equitable access to markets and government farming programs

Climate & Energy



ASBN is engaging our broad network of business organizations, companies and investors and working closely with other stakeholders to address climate change via a policy advocacy for fossil-fuel free energy solutions, climate change mitigation solutions coupled with environmental justice and inclusive economic considerations. Climate change poses an existential threat to humanity, threatening financial security, our supply chains, modern infrastructure systems and the environment as a whole. ASBN believes that developing policy approaches that are championed by strong business representation and messaging is crucial in order to secure a positive and equitable climate future.

The American Sustainable Business Network positions its policy advocacy through the nexus of thought leadership and coalition building. In all of our work, we deliver through:

- Building the infrastructure to support maximum business engagement across size, sector and geography Working with our diverse business membership to increase awareness of climate and energy issues through our external communications, social media and events
- Advancing the collective private sectors knowledge through our research and analysis, white papers and reports and educational engagements
- Building off of our members' commitment for progressive change, we design action opportunities for businesses, investors and partner organizations to advance these key issues.
- Creating ongoing engagement between our business community and members of Congress, the Administration and federal agencies. Engaging our state affiliates in state capitols through briefings, hearing and direct communications



**American Sustainable
Business Network**

Corporate Transparency



ASBN is working to address the growing concerns about business activities which are unaccounted for, or currently escape disclosure as negative externalities, activities which at this point also do not affect the P&L or balance sheet of corporations. ASBN is calling for policy solutions and other interventions which incentivize the method of True-Cost Accounting or sometimes known as Impact Weighted Accounts. Currently, we believe that policy incentives and or requirements must include considerations of current GAAP standards, regulatory intervention, accounting standards, valuation methodologies, ESG investment criteria, related reporting methods, tax regime reform and an overall increase in transparency and equity in corporate and business governance.

Social and environmental externalities together with poor governance practices most acutely impact BIPOC communities and support systemic racism. ESG standards are a critical tool to use in creating a more just society and economy.

In order to incentivize corporate accountability and support greater corporate disclosure, including ESG disclosure, ASBN will work to advocate for policy solutions which drive:

- Higher levels of transparency across all financial disclosure and reporting
- Inclusive metrics for evaluating real financial risk which include systemic ESG considerations
- Transparency and equity in insurers coverage and investments, as risk is primarily managed currently through the insurance industry
- Progressive tax incentives which encourage transparent and equitable corporate governance
- Overall support for a just and equitable transition

Inclusive Economy



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

ASBN has had great success in supporting the growth and development of small businesses and entrepreneurs, especially those in underserved communities. Our programs provide technical assistance, access to capital, and opportunities for networking and collaboration. ASBN's Working Groups and Task Forces provide members with an ongoing opportunity to shape and engage in our policy work, capital deployment, and business work. Below are a small sample of member-driven groups that have made a significant impact, and an invitation to fund and support the dozen plus groups that create change.

- Transforming Business Ownership Project
- Faith-Based Community Investing
- Restorative Investing Taskforce
- Alternative Investing Working Group
- Main Street Lending & CDFIs



**American Sustainable
Business Network**

ASBN Mission & Vision



The **American Sustainable Business Network** (ASBN) is a movement builder in partnership with the business and investor community. ASBN develops and advocates solutions for policymakers, business leaders, and investors that support an equitable, regenerative, and just economy that benefits all—people and planet. 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. ASBN was founded through the merger of the American Sustainable Business Council and Social Venture Circle.

Mission

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

Vision

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

Values Statement

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.

ASBN Principles

JEDI lens: We acknowledge the historic and systemic barriers to capital and opportunity for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian communities, women, and gender nonconforming as a significant barrier to our collective mission. Our work requires that we place an urgent and immediate focus on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).

Inclusive, accessible and just economy: We believe in a fully participatory economy, that all people must be able to access the goods, services and resources supplied by the economy by way of just labor, consumer, financial and producer markets. A just and inclusive economy must be supported by strong public policy regulatory guidance and guardrails, and a strong democracy.

Regenerative approach: We recognize that environmental and social stewardship is not enough and that in order to have equitable and just access to the resources we all depend on, that our solutions must prioritize regeneration for all people and the planet

Just economic and social prosperity: We advocate for regenerative, restorative and reparative solutions throughout the business and investor movement that ASBN leads. We believe that a thriving and vibrant business landscape and economic system is only durable and long-term if it prioritizes justice-informed access to resources, capital, opportunity and community for all.

Stakeholder Participation in Decision Making: All of the solutions we advocate for, from investment terms to governance to risk assessment and beyond, are best served when co-created by all stakeholder groups having full and participatory access to decision making.

Transparency and accountability:
We prioritize implementing and supporting transparency and accountability, both as an internal standard, and as a democratic public policy and economic imperative for policy makers, businesses and investors.

Systemic Change: We believe that our economy and society are highly complex, dynamic and distributed systems, requiring both bold leadership and long term planning in order to achieve the systemic change we need to see.



**American Sustainable
Business Network**

Building a Just & Sustainable Economy



“The American Sustainable Business [Network] is doing some of the most important work in this country.”
—Sen. Ron Wyden, 2021



**American
Sustainable
Business
Network**