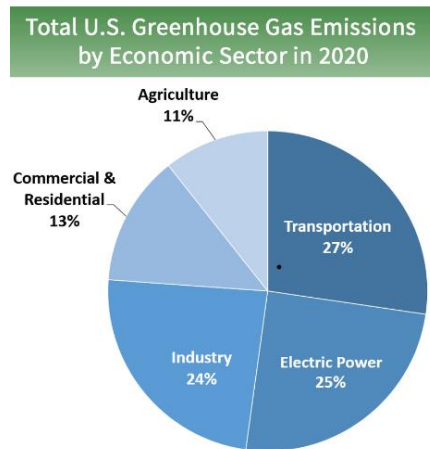


Session III Conversation Starter

Topic: Incentivizing Green Business.

Facilitators: Bridget Washburn and Andrew Hill

Introduction



In 2020, the US generated 5,981 [million metric tons of CO2 equivalents](#), the majority of which stem from transportation, electricity production, industry and commercial buildings – components of the business sector. Countering climate change requires transforming how business is conducted. Fortunately, a recent survey of 400 SWFL residents found that 68% of individuals polled expect the private sector to lead in solving the climate crisis. How can communities incentivize green business?

In recent years, third-party organizations have created sustainable and organic certifications for everything, from coffee beans to denim jeans, allowing discerning consumers to shop their eco-values. More recently, many corporations have committed to measuring and reporting sustainability metrics, including emissions, to develop and maintain an Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) profile- standardized disclosure and reporting metrics that allow investors, consumers, employees, and other stakeholders to assess the company's values and to quantify its green commitments. The Security and Exchange Commission's has even been moving toward requiring large corporations to [disclosure carbon emissions, climate – related risks, targets and goals](#). At the small business scale, municipalities and Chambers of Commerce have innovated Green Business Certification Programs, identifying local stores that have green practices with window decals or awards. Banks have even developed special loan products to finance "green" improvements. The new Inflation Reduction Act will also provide local businesses financial support to reduce energy use and/or switch to clean energy sources. The SWFL Climate and Community Summit asks, what are the most effective ways local government and our communities can help businesses make their operations more environmentally and climate friendly?

Resource Material:

"Why It's Important for Businesses to Go Green": Start-up Nation.com-
<https://startupnation.com/grow-your-business/why-its-important-for-businesses-to-go-green-bonifacio/>

Why and How Business Must Tackle Climate Change Now: Forbes October 2018

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/simonmainwaring/2018/10/25/why-and-how-business-must-tackle-climate-change-now/?sh=424fcc634712>

Pros and Cons of ESG Funds – Forbes Advisor. April 2019

<https://www.forbes.com/advisor/investing/pros-and-cons-of-esg-funds/>

Discussion Questions:

- How can state or local government encourage businesses to identify and address their climate-related operational risks?
- What tools or policies would best increase resilience of local businesses and their supply chains to climate change?
- How can local businesses be encouraged to implement sustainability practices such as recycling, installing energy efficient light-bulbs and appliances or EV chargers?
- When are incentives, such as tax breaks or certificate programs, more appropriate, and when are regulation or penalties, such as disclosure requirements and pollution fees better?

Strategies

- Assess the supply chain: Responsibly source goods and services throughout.
- Assess operations and reform wasteful practices. Examples include: Switching from K-cups to a coffee maker; use of reusable glasses and mugs; replacing inefficient light fixtures/bulbs; buying recycled paper products etc., purchasing carbon off-sets for business travel
- Focus on encouraging commercial property owners to invest in solar power.
- Expedited Permitting: The streamlining the permitting process for building improvements, that achieve specific green measures and certifications.
- Increasing loans and grants for investments in sustainable agriculture, renewable or low-carbon energy sources, energy-efficient buildings, public walkways and cycleways and electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Increased resources and skills of local economic development professionals in local government and Chambers of Commerce to serve as advocates and subject matter
- Reduce employee commuting and subsidize transit options