



1401 New York Ave., N.W., Suite 1225  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
202-595-9302  
www.asbcouncil.org

---

#### ASBC MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

---

1% for the Planet  
American Independent Business Alliance  
American Made Alliance  
Association for Enterprise Opportunity  
B Lab  
Buffalo First  
Business Alliance for Local Living Economies  
Business for Shared Prosperity  
California Assoc. for Micro Enterprise Opportunity  
Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence  
Fair Trade Federation  
Fay-Penn Economic Development Council  
Fayette Chamber of Commerce  
Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Council  
Foresight Sustainable Business Alliance  
Future 500  
Green America  
Green Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Connellsville Chamber of Commerce  
Green Parking Council  
Integrated Health Policy Consortium  
Investors Circle  
Local First Arizona  
Local First Chicago  
Local First Ithaca  
Manhattan Chamber of Commerce  
Mile High Business Alliance  
National Cooperative Business Association  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association  
New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce  
New Voice of Business  
Practice Greenhealth  
Progressive Business Leaders Network  
Responsible Wealth  
Social Enterprise Alliance  
Small Business Minnesota  
Social Venture Network  
South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce  
Southwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum  
Stay Local! ( New Orleans)  
Sustainability Association of Hawaii  
Sustainable Business Alliance  
Texas Green Chamber of Commerce  
Think Local First DC  
Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility  
Voices for Oregon Innovation and Sustainability  
Wealth for the Common Good  
World Business Academy

## A BUSINESS CALL FOR A NEW ECONOMY: Toward a Vibrant, Equitable and Sustainable Economy

Over the last number of decades, innovative businesses have realigned their principles and developed a new set of practices that point the way to a more sustainable economy. Now, hundreds of thousands of businesses prove every day that an expanded notion of success is possible. Based on their approaches, we can create the framework for a new and dynamic 21st century economy based on “triple bottom line” principles, achieving economic development that is compatible with shared prosperity and environmental stewardship. From both a pragmatic and moral standpoint we must take this path.

We call on government to empower the engines of our economy—businesses—to be agents of recovery and revitalization. By properly managing markets, accounting for full costs, creating incentives, providing support, and creating a level playing field, government can help create an enabling environment in which restorative, equitable and sustainable economic models can thrive. Let us unleash the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation across all sectors to confront and solve the economic, social and environmental problems we face today.

### Our Principles

We believe that a market-based economy is the most powerful engine of prosperity yet devised and we also believe that the market must be structured far differently than it is today for the good of businesses, for all Americans, and for the seven billion people who share this planet. Only through responsible and comprehensive change can we continue to enjoy the benefits of market capitalism while bringing its destructive tendencies to heel.

Five core principles must be held in balance:

**Market Economy:** A market-based business system must remain the heart of our economy. It can spur innovation and efficiency and allocate resources better than any alternative yet devised. True markets, where the competition is honest, robust and without unfair advantages and subsidies, are part of the solution. Our current market system must be adjusted to account for externalities, the human health and environmental costs that have been passed on to the general public and our government to address. Our system also must include a variety of ownership mechanisms such as cooperatives, community and social enterprises, Benefit corporations and employee-owned businesses.

- **Broad Prosperity:** It is both a moral imperative and a matter of national self-interest to manage the economy in a way that fully develops and taps the

capabilities, creativity, and industriousness of *all* Americans, and provides all with an opportunity to participate and prosper. This means that quality relevant education must be a fundamental right and obligation for all in our society. It also means business development that anchors living wage jobs and wealth in place, creating healthy and vibrant communities.

- **Sustainability:** We must manage our economy to meet the needs of the current generation without impairing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This means stewardship and regeneration of natural resources throughout their lifecycle, and reinvestment in communities that fosters long-term economic vitality. Sustainability is the balance of people, planet and profit.
- **Sensible Measures and Regulations:** Good rules help us tap the power of innovation and are essential to a sound economy. Regulations limit the power of old economy harmful companies and technologies, and by doing so they promote fair competition, innovation and change. They help ensure the stability of the financial system and the adequate flow of capital to develop new opportunities. They protect against the externalization of costs that hurt the environment and the public and ultimately damage the economy itself. A truly successful economy must be measured and based on this set of values.
- **Democratic Control:** Any market is nothing more and nothing less than a set of rules and conventions negotiated by people through a political process. A sustainable market should be structured and managed to be fair, transparent, well regulated, and fully accountable to all participants. Additionally, we must ensure that our democracy in particular our electoral and legislative process, is not controlled by just the wealthiest, but that we encourage and protect the participation of all.

An economy based on these principles would preserve the benefits of capitalism while gaining control over its destructive tendencies toward overuse of resources, instability, extremes of wealth and poverty, underdevelopment of human potential, and concentrations of power that suppress innovation.

To take this mandate seriously, we must take seriously the possibility that we will fail, and if we fail, it will be because we still had the chance to choose and we made the wrong choices. So let us choose wisely. It is time to reinvent our economy, as a vibrant, equitable and sustainable economy, to meet the needs of today and for generations to come.

*American Sustainable Business Council June, 2012*

The American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC) is a growing coalition of business organizations and businesses committed to advancing a vision, framework and policies that support a vibrant, just and sustainable economy. Founded in 2009, today, the organizations that have joined in this partnership represent over 150,000 businesses and more than 300,000 entrepreneurs, owners, executives, investors and business professionals. These diverse business organizations cover the gamut of local and state chambers of commerce, microenterprise, social enterprise, green and sustainable business groups, local living economy groups, women business leaders, economic development organizations and investor and business incubators. Together we are creating the business presence, voice and power for a just and sustainable economy. [www.asbcouncil.org](http://www.asbcouncil.org)  
[contact@asbcouncil.org](mailto:contact@asbcouncil.org)