



### United in Messaging: Insulation Is Good for the Planet

Last month marked 50 years since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm. At the time, it was the largest U.N. event ever held,<sup>1</sup> and the first to specifically include the word “environment” in its title.<sup>2</sup> In observing World Environment Day on June 5<sup>th</sup> of this year, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres released a message that read, in part:

The theme of this year’s World Environment Day, “Only One Earth,” is a simple statement of fact. This planet is our only home. It is vital we safeguard the health of its atmosphere, the richness and diversity of life on Earth, its ecosystems and its finite resources...

Governments need urgently to prioritize climate action and environmental protection through policy decisions that promote sustainable progress...

Businesses need to put sustainability at the heart of their decision-making for the sake of humanity and their own bottom line. A healthy planet is the backbone of nearly every industry on Earth.<sup>3</sup>

With this as a backdrop, it seems fitting that this month we focus on the role of mechanical insulation in preserving our environment. As government and businesses look for ways to reduce carbon emissions, insulation is a clear first-choice sustainability strategy. A well-designed, properly installed and maintained insulation system saves more energy over its lifetime than was spent manufacturing it, making it a green technology from the start. Add to that the energy savings, emissions reduction, and financial return on investment it provides; the fact that it helps preserve the longevity of the equipment and systems it supports; and its ability to enhance worker safety. **It is an investment that pays for itself, improves operational efficiencies, protects human health and safety, and can help preserve the planet!** And the expertise and infrastructure are already well established to support its use. This is a message we need to communicate loud and clear.

Helping to communicate that message is NIA’s Immediate Past President David J. Cox, whose article “An Earthquake—Let’s Hear it for Mechanical Insulation,” explains what building designers and owners need to consider in developing and operating net-zero buildings (see page 18). Ann Hennigan’s piece “Don’t Touch that Light Bulb! See How Insulation Can Be a More Efficient Way to Hit Sustainability Targets,” on page 8, looks at how the fast-growing sustainability market offers tremendous opportunities for our industry to make an impact. She shares insights from Frank Kovacs, President and CEO of NIA member Shannon Global Energy Solutions, on how communicating the energy solutions insulation products and applications deliver is critical to helping decision makers see their true benefits.

NIA continues to communicate the value of mechanical insulation. The association partnered with eight other related industry organizations to develop a

“U.S. Insulation Industry Building Decarbonization Statement of Policy Principles” (see page 24). The goal is to educate government and industry on the importance of insulation as a cost-effective tool to decarbonize buildings. And to help educate those interested in learning more about reducing their carbon footprint, page 32 offers a look at “How Your Organization Can Partner with the U.S. Department of Energy to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions,” provided by Jillian Romsdahl and the DOE’s Better Buildings, Better Plants Program. As Michele Jones describes in this month’s NIA Focus on page 6, your association has signed on to be a DOE Better Climate Change Ally. Please read “NIA Joins Better Climate Challenge as an Ally and Promotes Partnerships” on page 7 for more details.

My theme as NIA President is *Progress through Unity*, and this issue encapsulates that theme on so many levels: progress for NIA member companies, for our industry, for our country in its goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, and for the world to hit that target; and unity in the way it will take all of us to reach that goal, through our actions and by spreading the message of the power of insulation. Another example of unity is how NIA members are sharing their stories in *Insulation Outlook*. If you have a success story to tell, particularly if it will enhance understanding of mechanical insulation’s role in sustainability, please contact [editor@insulation.org](mailto:editor@insulation.org). There is more to come on the topic in future issues, and as the articles in this month’s issue (and world events) show, now is the time to speak out.

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#### REFERENCES

1. Christopher E. Barthel Jr. (1972) The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment Its Implications for Air Pollution Prevention Associations, *Journal of the Air Pollution Control Association*, 22:12, 950-954, DOI: 10.1080/00022470.1972.10469733, accessed online at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00022470.1972.10469733>.
2. Pamela Chasek, Ph.D., September 2020, “Still Only One Earth: Lessons from 50 Years of U.N. Sustainable Development Policy—Brief #1, Stockholm and the Birth of Environmental Diplomacy,” International Institute for Sustainable Development, IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin, accessed online at [https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2020-09/still-one-earth-stockholm-diplomacy\\_0.pdf](https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2020-09/still-one-earth-stockholm-diplomacy_0.pdf)
3. “Urging Action to Ensure Planet Not Only Survives, But Thrives, Secretary-General Says ‘We Have Only One Earth’, in Message for World Environment Day,” United Nations Press Release, 3 June 2022, accessed online at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sgsm21306.doc.htm>