CITY OF LOS ANGELES INSTITUTES COMPREHENSIVE FOOD PROCUREMENT POLICY

Mayor and City Council Adopt Good Food Purchasing Pledge to Increase City Purchase of Local, Sustainable, Fair and Healthy Food

LOS ANGELES – Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa and Los Angeles City Council today adopted The Good Food Purchasing Pledge, a food purchasing policy designed to increase the purchase of locally grown, sustainable food, while promoting healthy eating habits, workers’ rights, and animal welfare. By issuing an Executive Directive in support of the policy, Los Angeles implements one of the most comprehensive city food procurement policies in the country.

“Healthy food makes healthy communities,” Mayor Villaraigosa said. “By issuing this Executive Directive to all City departments to adopt the Good Food Purchasing Pledge and its accompanying guidelines, we incentivize other municipalities and institutions to follow our lead, encouraging sustainably produced food, healthy eating habits, respect for workers’ rights and support for the local business economy.”

The Good Food Purchasing Pledge is a commitment from food service institutions to improve our region’s food system through the adoption and implementation of Good Food Purchasing Guidelines. The Guidelines include: environmentally sustainable food production, local sourcing, fair labor practices, animal welfare, and nutrition. The system is the first in the nation to take into account labor practices as part of its guidelines.

“The City of Los Angeles will be the first to adopt this type of program which promotes and rewards progress across multiple food-value systems,” said Councilmember Paul Koretz, who brought the motion to the City Council. "This ground-breaking policy has consequences from farm to fork. By simply guiding the City’s purchasing power, we can make tremendous strides toward a more sustainable, more humane, and more worker-friendly food system.”
While other cities around the country have adopted a variety of local, sustainable, or health and nutrition policies, none have adopted a policy that has all included all five categories represented in the Good Food Purchasing Pledge.

“The Good Food Purchasing Pledge is like establishing LEED Certification for City food providers,” LA Food Policy Council Chair and Mayor Villaraigosa’s Senior Advisor on Food Policy Paula Daniels said. “It is designed to allow easy entry for compliance so as not to be a strain on budgetary resources while allowing institutions to express support for these values.”

In order to gauge program participation and growth, the Good Food Purchasing Pledge has a unique metric-based system of award points with escalating levels of compliance, rewarding progress with a rating of one to five stars. To develop the guidelines, the LA Food Policy Council, founded by the Mayor’s Office, thoroughly examined best practices nationally and vetted the document with nearly 100 experts in various fields. The guidelines were developed by taking into account the viewpoints of stakeholders from all aspects of the food system including farm owners, food distributors, public health departments, food chain workers, restaurants and other large institutional food purchasers, to name a few.

The Los Angeles regional foodshed, which spans the 200 mile and 10 county region around the City, is the largest producer of fruits, vegetables and nuts in the nation. Most produce grown in the Los Angeles regional foodshed is exported outside of the LA region, often at an economic loss to our local small and mid-sized farmers. At the same time, only about half of Los Angeles County residents eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day and the region also faces an obesity epidemic that costs the county an estimated $4 billion annually.

"We are seeing a continued worsening of the obesity epidemic in Los Angeles County, an epidemic that exacts a tremendous human toll in chronic illness," Dr. Paul Simon, Director of the Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health said. "I applaud the City of Los Angeles and the Food Policy Council for their leadership in promoting healthy and sustainable food purchasing practices."

“This policy is a leading example of using market signals to encourage the right kind of food production in a holistic way,” Dana Gunders, Project Scientist for the Natural Resources Defense Council said. “It will sustain local farming, preserve the quality of the City’s surrounding environment, ensure better treatment of animals and get more healthy food to the people.”

The announcement came during a celebration in City Hall marking the second annual National Food Day.

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