



Sophie Hahn
Councilmember District 5

CONSENT CALENDAR
July 13~~27~~, 2021

To: Honorable Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Sophie Hahn and Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Authors)
Subject: Accelerating the City of Berkeley's transition to Plant-Based Foods

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a ~~resolution establishing a~~ goal to achieve a 50% decrease in animal-based food products served by the City of Berkeley by 2024, and refer to the City Manager to report to the City Council on progress towards reaching this goal by January 31, 2022.
- ~~1.2.~~ Adopt an eventual goal of a 100% shift to plant-based food products served by the City of Berkeley and refer to the City Manager to report to the City Council by June 30, 2022 on potential feasibility and timelines to transition to 100% plant-based foods.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time to research and manage a transition to alternative food purveyors and/or menus across several departments and regulatory landscapes. Potential change in costs reflecting a decrease in meat and dairy purchases and/or for plant-based menus that meet mandated nutritional standards.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Streamlining the City of Berkeley's transition to plant-forward¹ and plant-based² meals advances the City's Strategic Plan Priority of being a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment and supports the Climate Action Plan goal that a majority of food consumed in Berkeley be produced locally (i.e; within a few hundred miles).

Municipalities across the country are using their economic clout, political power and cultural influence to fight climate change. Like Berkeley, they are establishing ambitious

¹ Plant-forward¹ refers to a style of cooking and eating that emphasizes plant-based foods and fewer animal products.

² "Plant-based" refers to a diet or food that is wholly derived from plants, including fruits and vegetables; whole grains; beans, other legumes (pulses), and soy foods; nuts and seeds; plant oils and herbs and spices.

greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets and pursuing aggressive strategies such as the purchase of 100 percent renewable energy, fuel efficient vehicles, and energy-efficient computers and lighting. Berkeley has been a leader in addressing climate change, passing and implementing numerous measures that reduce our GHG emissions and improve the environmental quality of our community, region and world. One critically important sector that accounts for about 25% of global greenhouse gas emissions and significant emissions here in Berkeley is our food.

A diet higher in plant-based foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds, and lower in calories and animal-based foods is more health promoting and is associated with less environmental impact than the current U.S. diet. A wealth of scientific research underscores the urgency of substantially reducing meat and dairy consumption, which accounts for more than half of all food-related GHG emissions. It is clear that the world cannot meet global greenhouse gas reduction targets without significantly curbing consumption of animal products. High-meat-eating nations like the United States, which consumes 2.6 times more meat than the global per capita average, must help shoulder this responsibility.

Cities have a critical role to play in helping shift consumption towards foods that generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions. Berkeley, which has a long history of vegetarian and vegan eating and both farmer's- and fixed- markets rich in local, seasonal, plant-based foods is well positioned to take leadership to increase plant-based and plant-forward eating. By reducing the amount of animal products purchased with City funds and serving more plant-based and plant-forward options, we can cut GHG emissions and our water footprint, and provide important leadership for the rest of the community.

Hundreds of U.S. cities, including the City of Berkeley, have pledged to help achieve the Paris Climate Accord goal of lowering greenhouse gas emissions enough to keep average global temperatures at no more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.³ Projected global emissions from food production alone – largely driven by consumption of animal products – could nearly exceed the 2°C limit established in the Paris Agreement. Compared to other climate mitigation strategies, increasing plant-based food is a relatively simple, cost-effective strategy that can downsize the City's carbon footprint while improving the health of residents.⁴

³ Reaffirming Support for the Paris Climate Agreement and Other Efforts to Combat Climate Change: https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2017/06_June/Documents/2017-06-27_Item_31_Reaffirming_Support_for_the_Paris.aspx

⁴ [MEAT OF THE MATTER: A MUNICIPAL GUIDE TO CLIMATE-FRIENDLY FOOD PURCHASING](#)

BACKGROUND

This item consolidates and restates previous Council direction to facilitate implementation of the City's efforts to reduce the purchase and serving of animal-based products and increase plant-forward and plant-based options. The resolution highlights the simple but bold goal of reducing by 50% the amount of animal-based products served in city-provided meals by 2024. All of the already-adopted resolutions, items and frameworks still remain in effect and can serve as important resources to guide the City's efforts to reduce the amount of animal-based products served by the City of Berkeley.

The City Council has passed a number of items to encourage reduction in purchasing and consumption of animal-based products, both for the City as an organization and in the broader community, including:

- February 24, 2015 - Councilmember Max Anderson's item in support of "Meatless Monday." The Council declared all Mondays as "Meatless Mondays" in support of comprehensive sustainability efforts as well as to further encourage residents to eat a more varied plant-based diet.
- September 13, 2018 - Councilmember Harrison's resolution "Establishing Green Monday" declared the city would coordinate with Green Monday US to 1) Have City owned and operated institutions serve plant-based food on Mondays (or another day); and 2) Educate residents on the impacts of food choices on climate change.
- April 30, 2019 - Councilmember Hahn's Good Food Purchasing Program resolution adopted a resolution in support of GFPP's core values of supporting local economies, improving nutrition, and valuing our workforce and referred to the City Manager to incorporate the vision and standards into City of Berkeley Food purchasing practices.
- March 9, 2021 - Councilmember Davila's item to Support Vision 2025 for Sustainable Food Policies:
 - Adopted a resolution supporting Vision 2025 for Sustainable Food Policies
 - Joined the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact
 - Supported adoption of Friends of the Earth's Climate-Friendly Food Purchasing Policy;
 - Referred to the City Manager to track animal-based food that is replaced with plant-based food; and

- Referred to the City Manager to use Friend of the Earth's Municipal Guide to Climate-Friendly Food Purchasing to purchase plant-based food.

The four already-passed items and the numerous organizations, declarations, and resolutions they encompass are evidence of the City Council's desire to address the impacts of animal-product consumption on health, the environment, working conditions, and animal wellbeing. Programs and policies of numerous organizations that support transitioning institutions such as the City of Berkeley, and entire communities, away from consumption of animal-based food products are referenced or incorporated in these items, including

- [Green Monday USA](#)
- [Good Food Purchasing Policy](#)
- [Milan Urban Food Pact](#)
- [Friends of the Earth Climate Friendly Food Purchasing Policy](#)
- [Friend of the Earth Municipal Guide to Climate Friendly Food Purchasing](#)

All of these excellent resources have significant overlap in their goals and approaches. But referring to the City Manager to integrate the many policies and recommendations included across all of these resources ultimately provides direction that is too diffuse to be effectively implemented. These resources do, however, provide excellent background, strategies and information to guide efforts to transition towards plant-forward and plant-based diets.

Berkeley does not purchase a large amount of food, but does supply meals at senior centers, summer camps, and the jail, as well as in other limited settings. It is important to note that much of the food procured by the City of Berkeley is subject to nutritional regulations, including state and federal criteria, that will need to be reviewed and considered in planning a 50% reduction in animal-based products and a transition to plant-forward and plant-based meals.

While nutritional standards typically promote more fruits and vegetables, less fat and sugar and smaller portion sizes, Berkeley can work within and build on these standards to reflect the emerging scientific consensus that a healthy diet also requires consuming fewer animal products. Berkeley's efforts will thus generate direct benefits for community wellness, local economies, workers, farmers and the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

The food sector is a significant contributor to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with livestock production accounting for 14.5% of global GHG emissions, and the United

Nations recognizing that "Livestock are one of the most significant contributors to today's most serious environmental problems." The City of Berkeley can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and improve health and wellbeing by purchasing and serving less meat and more plant-based meals.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

- 1: Resolution
- 2: Meat of the Matter: A municipal guide to climate friendly food purchasing, Executive Summary.
- 3: Green Monday USA
- 4: Good Food Purchasing Policy
- 5: Milan Urban Food Pact
- 6: Friends of the Earth Climate Friendly Food Purchasing Policy

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

To Accelerate the City of Berkeley's transition to Plant-Based Foods

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has a Strategic Plan Priority of being a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley's Climate Action Plan includes the goal that a majority of food consumed in Berkeley be produced locally (i.e; within a few hundred miles); and

WHEREAS, scientific analyses have shown that one of the most effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to transition to plant-forward or plant-based diets to reduce or eliminate the consumption of animal-based foods; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has previously adopted policies in support of reducing our carbon footprint by decreasing consumption of animal-based foods including resolutions in support of Green Monday USA, the Good Food Purchasing Policy, the Milan Urban Food Pact, and Friends of the Earth's Climate Friendly Food Purchasing Policy;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley establishes an official goal to accelerate the City's transition to plant-based diets by implementing a 50% decrease in animal-based food served by the City of Berkeley by 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley refers to the City Manager to report to the Council on progress towards reaching this goal by January 31, 2022; [and](#)

[BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley adopts an eventual goal of a 100% shift to plant-based food products served by the City of Berkeley and refers to the City Manager to report to the City Council by June 30, 2022 on potential feasibility and timelines to transition to 100% plant-based foods.](#)