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The Bay Foundation to Work with Restaurants, Compost Hubs, Community to Address Methane through *Table-to-Farm Composting for Clean Air*

LOS ANGELES (December 15, 2016) [The Bay Foundation](#) (TBF) will launch in 2017 its new “**Table-to-Farm Composting for Clean Air**” program, made possible by an Environmental Champions Grant from Southern California Gas. Engaging the community-based Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI) as a partner, TBF’s pilot program will address methane generated by landfills by connecting restaurants with compost hubs, urban farms, and community gardens for a multifaceted food waste reduction program in the City of Inglewood.

This waste reduction program will tackle air quality and food security issues that impact disadvantaged communities by implementing these hands-on efforts: (a) organic waste recovery and composting partnerships with South L.A. farms and gardens, and (b) outreach about local food sourcing and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

TBF will recover wasted food from restaurant kitchens, which will be composted in local, [SJLI](#)-managed community farms and gardens throughout South L.A. Currently, 25% of the produce grown by SJLI is sold through their CSA, a program where people can buy directly from farmers.

TBF will use its unique connection with restaurants to ‘feed’ this program. The Foundation’s well-established [Clean Bay Certified program](#) works with cities to inspect and certify restaurants that voluntarily implement initiatives to protect our environment. The City of Inglewood became a participating city in 2016.

Grace Lee, TBF’s Director of Outreach Programs, states, “Our Table-to-Farm Composting pilot program is so exciting to me. This adds another layer to our CBC program, which focuses on responsible restaurants that are helping address the health of Santa Monica Bay and those who use it for enjoyment or subsistence. Similarly, restaurants engaged in Table-to-Farm can help affect healthier air quality and food access in their community by minimizing food waste to landfills.”

Landfills generate a slew of environmental hazards. They release toxic gases like methane and carbon dioxide, as well as foul-smelling compounds that adversely affect neighboring communities. The U.S. EPA has identified landfills as one of the largest sources of methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more efficient at trapping heat than carbon dioxide (USEPA, 2007).

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Organic waste amounts to a third of the volume tossed into California's landfills. Restaurants are a significant contributor: the average restaurant discards 75 tons of garbage annually, half of which is food waste. In 2014, California's restaurant industry disposed of 3 million tons of waste. Fifty percent of that could have been diverted from landfills, dramatically cutting methane released into the atmosphere (CalRecycle, 2015). Considering there are 30,000 eateries throughout L.A., the diversion potential in this disposal stream is deeply significant.

"The partnership with Social Justice Learning Institute is an expansion of the Clean Bay Certified program and is my favorite part of this project. It enables restaurants to enhance the cultivation of food right here in L.A. This project demonstrates that food waste is only truly wasted when deposited in a landfill," states [TBF](#) Executive Director Tom Ford. "Aside from the methane offset, the reduced transport of the materials, keeping them local, also reduces emissions improving air quality and public health. I am grateful to SoCal Gas for supporting this project and I look forward to seeing the results of this partnership."

The [Southern California Gas Environmental Champions Initiative](#) solicits grant proposals for innovative projects or programs that address clean air, clean energy and/or water conservation with a particular emphasis on supporting underserved communities.

Adds Mike Harriel, SoCal Gas Public Affairs Manager, "SoCalGas proudly supports organizations like The Bay Foundation whose deep concern for the environment and innovative programs reflect a shared commitment to the community and environment."

About The Bay Foundation (TBF)

The Bay Foundation is a 501(c) 3 non-profit environmental group founded in 1990 to restore and enhance the Santa Monica Bay (from the LA-Ventura county line to the Palos Verdes Peninsula) and local coastal waters. The Foundation is the non-profit partner of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, raising and expending funds for research, education, planning, cleanup efforts and other priorities identified in the Commission's Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan. As advocates for the Bay, TBF works collaboratively with a broad group of stakeholders, including government agencies, industry, environmental groups, and scientists, to implement innovative policies and projects that clean up the waterways, create green spaces and natural habitats in the Los Angeles region. The TBF conducts research and mentors student intern and volunteers through its Center for Santa Monica Bay Studies at Loyola Marymount University. <http://www.santamonicabay.org/>

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