

Proclaiming Food Waste Prevention Week

Los Angeles residents throw away approximately 3.7 billion pounds of food each year. Meanwhile, over half a million Los Angeles County residents are food insecure, which means that they lack reliable access to affordable, nutritious food on a daily basis.

However, food waste is prevalent but preventable. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) has been educating health inspectors and community members about the importance of the United States Environmental Protection Agency Food Recovery Hierarchy, which provides guidance to direct the redistribution of surplus food. Further, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) has a program for businesses in unincorporated areas called the Los Angeles County's Food Donation Recovery and Outreach Program (Food DROP), which provides resources for businesses operating in the County Unincorporated areas to safely donate excess food and reduce food waste.

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Several state agencies, including the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, have recently announced that March 5-9, 2018 is California's first Food Waste Prevention Week. With the Board's support, Los Angeles County will participate in the County's first official Food Waste Prevention Week.

During the Food Waste Prevention Week, all residents, public officials and County employees, as well as community groups, clubs, and organizations are encouraged to join in activities and take action to reduce food waste. Easy ways to reduce food waste include tracking waste, implementing tray-less dining, serving smaller sizes, and using "imperfect-looking" produce. All businesses in the unincorporated areas are also encouraged to participate in Food DROP. Finally, schools, grocery stores, hotels, hospitals, universities, farmers, manufacturers, and restaurants are urged to donate wholesome surplus food directly to individuals and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that serve our most food insecure residents.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim March 5-9, 2018 as "Food Waste Prevention Week" in the County of Los Angeles and urge all residents, public officials and County employees, as well as community groups, clubs, and organizations to join in activities and take action to reduce food waste;
2. Encourage businesses in the County Unincorporated Communities to work with local charities and offer food facility operators a food donation option through the County's Food Donation Recovery and Outreach Program (Food DROP); and

3. Encourage organizations to help support food recovery facilities, such as food banks, that help families and individuals obtain access to quality nutritious meals.

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