

09-2326

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MOTION HOUSING, COMM & ECON. DEVELOP.

The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research reports that hunger and the lack of adequate food (food insecurity) not only leads to malnutrition and other health related problems, but also contributes to anxiety and worry. Food insecurity forces people to adjust their household budget to forego other basic needs in order to ensure that one's family is fed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is responsible for monitoring food security in the nation and reports that there are millions of people nationwide who suffer from food insecurity. A recent report titled "Fed up with Hunger" by the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles found that 36.3% of low-income Los Angeles County residents were food insecure in 2007, a figure that is likely much higher today.

Hunger Action Los Angeles (Hunger Action LA), a non-profit organization whose goal is to fight hunger, reports that hunger in Los Angeles exists because of various factors including high utility costs, high healthcare costs, lack of living wage jobs, lack of discount supermarkets in the inner city, and low participation in public assistance programs. Hunger Action LA reports that there are several public assistance programs that alleviate food insecurity including food stamps, school meals, and senior nutrition programs, such as home-delivered meals.

Hunger Action LA states that to further combat hunger the City should donate surplus food from its facilities to help bolster the supply of emergency food in Los Angeles available to low income people. The City's willingness to donate surplus food could also set an example for local businesses to donate. Hunger Action LA proposes that the City adopt an ordinance or policies that would allow City facilities to donate food. Several local groups (Food Finders, Angel Harvest, LA Regional Food Bank, and Westside Food Bank, etc.) would be happy to assist in this effort and even pick up the food.

Hunger Action LA proposes that the ordinance or policies adopted should:

- Emphasize the need for healthy and nutritious food such as fruits and vegetables and non- perishable proteins like dry beans and tuna;
- Include mandatory participation by the largest entities controlled by the City, including the Convention Center, parks and recreational facilities, and golf courses;
- Establish a method for distributing the food, such as an internet database, adopting local food pantries, or using the 311 phone system; and
- Determine the best method to distribute the food to areas of the most need and ensure an equal distribution of the surplus food.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request that City departments that provide food programs or services, including the Convention Center, the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Aging, adopt policies that would require surplus food to be donated to a local food bank, pantry, or other service agency accepting food donations.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council request the Community Redevelopment Agency to report back on how it might work with private business owners in its various project areas to entice them to participate in such a program as well.

PRESENTED BY: 
JOSE HUIZAR
Councilmember, 14th District

SECONDED BY: 

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