

Communication from Public

Name: PETA
Date Submitted: 09/17/2019 01:50 PM
Council File No: 11-1678-S3
Comments for Public Posting: Attached



September 17, 2019

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Dear Councilmember Koretz,

On behalf of PETA and our over 166,500 members and supporters in Los Angeles, I'm writing to express our support for your motion to require large-scale entertainment venues and other locations in the city to provide at least one vegan protein option. Making vegan foods more widely available would be a win for the environment, public health, and animals.

The demand for vegan meals is already high, so passing this motion makes good business sense. A Nielsen report suggests that nearly 40% of Americans are actively trying to incorporate more vegan foods into their diets and indicates that 23% of consumers want more plant proteins on store shelves. The number of Americans identifying as vegan has increased a whopping 600% in recent years.

California—and especially Los Angeles—is at the forefront of the vegan movement. Google Analytics shows a high interest in searches for local vegan restaurants, cake, breakfast, and ice cream in the state—and this trend has increased significantly, especially over the past five years. Los Angeles has earned accolades for its vegan-friendliness, including by taking the number five spot on WalletHub's list of Best Cities for Vegans and Vegetarians in America and first place on PETA's Top 10 Vegan-Friendly Cities list. It only makes sense that large venues in the city should have options to meet the growing demand for environmentally friendly, healthy, and humane vegan foods.

As scientists and some public officials sound the alarm about a climate crisis, there has never been a better time to pass public policies that steer venues away from serving animal-derived food, which causes widespread environmental devastation. What we put on our plates has a direct—and significant—impact on our planet: A recent study by the University of Oxford found that eliminating animal-derived foods can reduce a person's food carbon footprint by 73%.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, raising and killing animals for food is responsible for nearly one-fifth (18%) of human-induced greenhouse-gas emissions. Another U.N. report concluded that in order to stop the worst effects of climate change, the whole world needs to shift toward vegan eating. Los Angeles has a golden opportunity to be a world leader in combating climate change.

In addition to driving climate change, using animals for food consumes massive amounts of our precious natural resources: For example, it takes up to 13 pounds of grain to produce just 1 pound of meat. Many more people could be fed if we ate grains and other plant foods directly, rather than funneling them through animals first. To put it into perspective, a 10-acre farm can support 60 people by growing soybeans or 24 people by growing wheat but only two by raising cattle. If everyone went vegan, it's estimated that the amount of global farmland needed could be reduced by more than 75%, while keeping the world well fed.

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Vegan meals aren't just better for our planet's health—they're far better for human health, too. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics notes that when people stop eating animal flesh, their risk of suffering from many chronic degenerative diseases and conditions—including heart disease, cancer, obesity, hypertension, and diabetes—decreases. Making it easier for Angelenos to make healthy choices when they dine out would have far-reaching positive consequences for residents' health and well-being.

And of course, offering more vegan meals would spare countless animals and help Los Angeles live up to its reputation as a progressive, animal-friendly city.

Pigs, cows, chickens, turkeys, lobsters, and fish are intelligent, sensitive beings who feel pain just as dogs and cats do. Yet nearly all the billions of those killed for food in the U.S. every year are confined on crowded, filthy factory farms; subjected to routine mutilations without pain relief; and sent to violent, painful deaths.

Mother pigs on factory farms are kept inside barren crates so small that they can't even turn around. They never get to take a breath of fresh air or do anything that's natural and important to them, such as building nests or nurturing their young, who are taken from them a few weeks after birth. Chickens and turkeys are bred to grow such unnaturally large upper bodies that their legs often become crippled under their own weight. Mother cows on dairy factory farms are forcibly inseminated over and over again and kept nearly constantly pregnant. Their frightened calves are torn away from them within hours of birth so that their milk can be sold to humans instead.

These animals' lives are cut short in a violent manner when they're sent to slaughter. Many are scalded, skinned, and dismembered while fully conscious and in agonizing pain. Every vegan meal that Los Angeles serves means that fewer animals will be subjected to this misery.

This motion is a simple commonsense way to combat climate change and pollution, improve public health, and prevent animals from enduring terrible suffering and violent slaughter. It would set a positive example for cities around the world to follow and would establish Los Angeles as a leader in progressive food policy. We urge you to pass this motion without delay.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tracy Reiman
Executive Vice President
PETA

