



The California Food and Justice Coalition submits the following recommendations to the Land Use Climate Action Team for their submission to the California Air Resource Board Scoping Plan on Local Government, Land Use and Transportation.

BACKGROUND

The California Food and Justice Coalition is a statewide membership based coalition of organizations working in urban communities to improve access to healthy local food and rebuild their local food economies. We envision a California food system in which all activities, from farm to table, are equitable, healthful, sustainable, regenerative and community-driven. Our coalition consists of over 300 members and allies, including grassroots, advocacy and direct service organizations, businesses, health advocates and representatives from government agencies. Members and allies include: the California Alliance for Family Farmers, the Organic Research Foundation, the Californian Association of Food Banks, the Californian Association of Farmers Markets and the Alameda County Food Bank.

As stated in the LUSCAT report to CARB “How Californian communities are designed and built has large consequences on the state’s greenhouse gas emission levels, and as a result, has an impact on global climate change. “ The food system is a significant aspect of our built environment – from the use of land for food production, to the transportation channels used to bring food from field to table, to the range businesses involved throughout and the role they play in a community. As such is it essential that the production, distribution and access to food within a community be integrated in to land use planning and be included when developing land use recommendations to reduce green house gas emissions.

Localization, increased food access and sustainable organic food production have been shown to reduce carbon and other pollutants, particularly by reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled. They have also shown to create many co-benefits for communities in the areas of public health, job creation, economic activity and community revitalization.

Currently, our food travels on average 1,500 miles to reach our plate - much of that food is flown and shipped in and out of California. Local food travels far less - and thus releases less pollution - than non-local food. According to a WorldWatch Institute study, a typical meal bought from a conventional supermarket chain including some meat, grains, fruit and vegetables consumes four to 17 times more petroleum for transport than the same meal using local ingredients¹.

Seventy percent of U.S. agriculture is processed before it reaches the consumer. In the U.S. much of this processing has been consolidated resulting in food traveling around the state or country before arriving back to the region of its origin in a processed format to be purchased by consumers. The consolidation of processing and other food system infrastructure has made it more difficult for small and mid-sized farmers interested in

¹ Hal Walweil, "Home Grown: The Case For Local Food In A Global Food Market" 2002, Worldwatch Institute.





regional and direct marketing to process their products and access regional markets. The localization of regionally oriented food system infrastructure reduces GHG and helps keep near urban farmland in production by ensuring markets for the small and mid-sized growers that are most often farming along the urban fringe.

In addition, the more miles our food travels the more our food system disproportionately impacts poor communities and communities of color. The resulting pollution from the transportation of food is heavily concentrated in transportation hubs, such as West Oakland and Long Beach - regions that are largely composed of poor communities of color. The health impacts of the increased pollution are significant. Recent studies have shown unacceptably high health risk levels of pollutants near major rail yards and port terminals. Diesel pollution which tends to be highly concentrated at cargo facilities from trucks, trains, heavy equipment and ships, contributes most to public health risks from air pollution. The California Air Resources Board estimates that in 2005 alone, 2,400 premature deaths and 2,800 hospital admissions from asthma and other diseases were attributable to direct and indirect exposure to diesel pollution from freight transport activities within the state.

A study conducted by NRDC linked pollution levels with food imports into major ports along California's west coast; they found that almost 250,000 tons of global warming gases released were attributable to food imports, as well as 6,000 tons of nitrous oxides and 300 tons of sooty particulate matter. Approximately 950 cases of asthma, 16,870 missed school days, 43 hospital admissions and 37 premature deaths were attributed to worsened air quality from food imports according to freight transport.²

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the opportunities to reduce GHG emissions through food system localization we call on LUSCAT to include the following in their recommendations to the CARB.

1. Promote wherever possible measures that preserve and expands land for sustainable food production geared towards feeding nearby populations. We ask that LUSCAT issue special priority on farmland preservation that is connected to production methods that reduce carbon emissions (using a life cycle analysis). This include supporting and incentivizing organic farming and other production methods that reduce carbon emissions, opposing bio-fuel production (which does not necessarily reduce carbon emissions when a lifecycle analysis is applied, is one of the drivers behind our global food crisis as its responsible for rising costs of corn and other food stuffs) and supporting regional marketing of farm products. From an environmental justice perspective, CFJC also believes it's critical that farm land protection measures prioritize land that would be accessible to urban farmers, people of color, small and beginning farmers, as well as farmers that market in communities and to institutions that serve low-income communities that often have less access to healthy affordable food compared with more affluent communities.

2. Support investment in regionally oriented food systems infrastructure (packing, processing, distribution and retail) that increases consumer and institutional access to healthy locally grown food. This includes expanding access to retail outlets (from farmers markets to farm stands to small community-owned grocery stores) in low-income communities that often have limited access to healthy food retail. Such an approach would facilitate people walking or driving shorter distances to access healthy food as well as mitigate

² NRDC Policy Fact Sheet, "Food Miles: How far your food travels has serious consequences on your health", Page 2, NRDC, 2007.





the negative health impacts of the high concentration of fast food restaurants and low concentration of healthy food stores in low-income areas.

These recommendations should be integrated fully into LUSCAT's work and areas of influence, including the Department of Conservation, the California Department of Food & Agriculture, the California Farm Land Conservancy Program, AB 857, the Strategic Growth Council, the CEQA process, and all work to provide support and technical assistance to local and regional governments in their work to reduce GHG emissions within the sectors of land use and transportation.

STRATEGIES

Possible strategies include:

- Review and where possible implement local and state tax policy to identify and create mechanisms for encouraging farmers to grow sustainable food for local markets, and distributors and retailers to buy locally.
- Incentivise the preservation and expansion of land for food production, and disincentivise the conversion of agricultural land to low-density housing.
- Have the Department of Conservation provide tax incentives to land users and land holders who are generating sustainable food production for local markets.
- Integrating food sector issues into all support state agencies provide to local and regional governments to develop carbon reduction strategies, including developing simple, low-cost, efficient carbon monitoring systems that are accessible for both small and big governments and businesses and where possible prioritizing the implementation of peer-reviewed scientifically-based strategies that are known to reduce carbon.
- Support the integration of all food system planning into all local general plans, regional blue prints and similar regional land use, climate change response and planning tools.
- Provide permitting easements, support and incentives to farmers who invest in alternative energy generation on their land, such as wind and solar.
- Coordinate and build upon the variety of Federal and State funding available for food system reform to ensure that efforts complement and support each other. Currently there is funding available for farmland preservation (through the Department of Conservation), regional market development for farm products, and improving access to healthy food and obesity prevention within a region. A coordinated approach ensures that cities, states and the public understand the many co-benefits to food system localization beyond just GHG reduction.





- Push for regional food processing and distribution in industrial center planning in order to ensure that food does not have to travel around the state or country before arriving back to the region of origin to be purchased by consumers in a processed format.
- Push for cities to develop policies that remove barriers and incentivize community-driven food production for local consumption on public land, particularly urban land, including green ways, utility land, parks and other under utilized public land.
- Have the Department of Conservation develop a program to measure “Food Miles” that cities can use to measure the impact of increasing the purchase of local foods by institutions and consumers.
- Use “food miles” calculator to protect agricultural land based on an accounting of potential transportation-related carbon emission reductions by growing food near population centers.
- Require government facilities to develop and implement plans to source farm products from local or regional farms.

We look forward to working with LUSCAT and CARB to further define and implement these programs.

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