

NEWS

FROM THE OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER
PAUL KORETZ
FIFTH DISTRICT



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LA Councilmembers Koretz and Bonin's #RegenerateLA Approved to Use Food Waste to Drawdown Greenhouse Gases *As Reports of Climate Breakdown Continue to Intensify*

Los Angeles - June 15, 2021 – Following the release of the United Nations World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) urgent climate warning, Los Angeles City Councilmembers Paul Koretz (CD5) and Mike Bonin (CD 11) got approved by City Council today a [motion](#) institutionalizing their Regenerate LA healthy soils initiative, which they are calling “an antidote to global warming.” The legislative action will help to “drawdown,” or pull greenhouse gases from the atmosphere through a holistic, comprehensive effort by using the City’s annual estimated 280,000 tons of food waste to build healthy soils on parklands and open space. In the wake of the COVID-19 economic crisis, the additional goal is to create jobs throughout the City, particularly in the areas that need it most.

The WMO’s May 2021 report warns that the odds are increasing that the annual average global temperature will likely rise beyond the 1.5 degrees Celsius target agreed on by the Paris Agreement signatory countries within the next five years. RegenerateLA aims to help with climate resilience, reduce the use of toxic pesticides and herbicides, train staff to manage City land for biodiversity, watershed function and health, native plant care, and rehydration during our worsening drought.

“We’ve been so busy surviving COVID-19 these past 15 months that many of us may not have noticed the climate disaster continuing to unfold much faster than expected. The WMO’s report is more than disturbing. If we are to be successful in preventing permanent changes that could threaten life as we know it, we must hasten our efforts in every way,” **said Councilmember Koretz**. “In addition to moving off fossil fuels as fast as possible, we need to actively engage in the drawdown of greenhouse gases, which is why I’m pleased the City Council unanimously approved #RegenerateLA today. Inspired in part by the [documentary, “Kiss the Ground,”](#) RegenerateLA will actively use our food waste from compost and anaerobic digestion ‘cake’ to create healthy, carbon-sequestering soil in our parks, playing fields, and medians and, most importantly, create good healthy jobs.” [Click here to view the vote and Councilmember Koretz’s entire speech on the Council floor.](#)

The new RegenerateLA program will use Los Angeles City’s food waste, and therefore compost and digester cake, to regenerate City parklands and open space from dirt and dust to rich environmentally valuable earth. Today, soil scientists estimate that 30% of the planet’s topsoil is acutely degraded, with fertile soil being lost at an alarming rate of 24 billion tons a year through intensive farming. With threats like increased erosion, desertification, soil compaction, nutrient imbalance, and loss of soil organic matter, **scientists estimate that our Earth may have only 60 harvests left.** Los Angeles has 469 square miles of parkland and miles of road medians and produces 300,000 tons of food waste annually.

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The legislation addresses the daily activities of the City from managing food and green waste to nourishing our parks and medians in order to reduce global warming. It includes planting trees, harvesting methane from landfills and from food waste with anaerobic digesters, and, turning food waste into healthy compost that can be used throughout City lands to create healthy carbon-sequestering soil.

“A better healthy soils policy in Los Angeles will have direct benefits to our neighborhoods, especially in LA’s food deserts, where fresh produce is lacking. It will also show that change is possible and that the second-largest city in the nation can create jobs, improve our local climate, and thrive through better stewardship of our soil locally,” added [Councilmember Mike Bonin](#). “I am proud to work with Councilmember Koretz and these great grassroots environmental activists to move forward this legislation and to work to avert the worst damage that will be done by the climate crisis.”

“LA compost is thrilled to support the Regenerate LA initiative which will ensure that soil health and human health are prioritized across the city,” said [Michael Martinez](#), Founder and Executive Director of LA Compost. “We look forward to collaborating with both city agencies and community members to ensure that compost creation and application is the new normal moving forward”

"Regenerating our soil health is a pathway forward to helping balance our climate while simultaneously being a means for water and food security, increased human health, and way to make our land more resistant to flooding, drought, and fire," said [Finian Makepeace](#), Co-Founder, Policy Director, and Lead Educator for Kiss the Ground. "Regenerate LA can set a model for cities across the world not just doing less harm but actually doing more good and making our land functional again."

"To limit catastrophic climate chaos we must both reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and drawdown existing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The good news is that we have new information about soils and their capacity to, in concert with plants, quickly drawdown and store the excess of atmospheric carbon. Composting both reduces emissions and is the fastest acting way support soils and plants sequestering carbon, re-hydrating the landscape and reducing need for chemical use. Kudos to Councilmembers Koretz and Bonin for being leaders in ushering in a new regenerative, local economy that is healthy for people and planet!, said [Calla Rose Ostrander](#), Climate, Agricultural Policy and Science Advisor People, Food & Land Foundation.

“Everyone has a role to play in our climate crisis,” said [Doniga Markegard](#), Regenerative Rancher, Markegard Family Grass-Fed. “You can grow your personal soil, purchase from farmers and ranchers that are building soil, adventure to the source of your food and make your decisions based on the health of the planet for the future generations.”