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JamesBeard Foundation

NEW JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION CAMPAIGN, *CLIMATE SOLUTIONS FOR RESTAURANT SURVIVAL*, IGNITES CHEF-LED EFFORT FOR FEDERAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change poses immediate threat to independent restaurants; new report from the Global Food Institute at the George Washington University underscores urgent need for federal action

NEW YORK (February 20, 2024) – The [James Beard Foundation](#)® announced today the launch of a new campaign focused on tackling the significant impact of climate change on independent restaurants, chefs, and the local economies they support. Through the ***Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival*** campaign, the James Beard Foundation will unite chefs across the country to raise awareness, educate federal policymakers, and galvanize action to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

“Independent restaurants are not just the heart and soul of our communities—they are also a powerful economic force, providing jobs to millions, generating hundreds of billions in revenue, supporting local agriculture and businesses, and nurturing our cultural identity,” said **Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation**. “The harsh reality is that climate change will create serious challenges for many of these beloved establishments, and it is critical we come together and take action now.”

Today, independent restaurants and chefs stand at a critical juncture—climate change poses an immediate threat to the industry and the millions of people it employs. As part of the campaign launch, the James Beard Foundation and the Global Food Institute at the George Washington University are releasing a new [in-depth report](#) that illustrates the impact climate change is having on independent restaurants and the farmers who supply them.

According to the new report, the independent restaurant industry is the fifth largest employer in the U.S., totaling 3.9 million workers, generating \$75 billion in wages in local economies across the U.S. and over \$209 billion in revenue. In addition to the report, the James Beard Foundation also released a [fact sheet](#) that highlights the economic importance of the industry and lays out policy parameters for federal action.

“As a chef, and in my work with restaurants around the world, I see first-hand the impact of climate change on the ingredients we source, the dishes we prepare, and on the communities and people we serve,” said **Chef José Andrés**, world-renowned chef, author, humanitarian and founder of the Global Food Institute at the George Washington University. “This research is

more than just a collection of data and insights; it's a rallying cry for chefs, restaurateurs, food producers, policymakers, and all actors across the supply chain. And it is just a taste of what's to come from the Global Food Institute at the George Washington University in our urgent journey to shape a better food system."

The *Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival* campaign will bring together chefs from coast to coast in a passionate call to action. It will harness their first-hand experience to make clear that climate change is not only an environmental crisis; it's a clear and present danger to a thriving independent restaurant industry. Through the campaign, the James Beard Foundation will support chefs by:

- **Providing Communications Support:** The Foundation will equip chefs and culinary leaders with essential information, data, and media and advocacy training. It will also provide toolkits and communication assets to assist in educating federal policymakers.
- **Elevating Voices of Change:** The Foundation will create opportunities and platforms for chefs and producers to make their voices heard. This will include testimonial videos, social media campaigns, press engagements, and events. The Foundation will also collaborate with chefs and their suppliers to organize events at the state and local levels, fostering support for federal action from the ground up.
- **Coordinating Direct Engagement with Policymakers:** To ensure that Congressional members, staff, and executive branch officials understand the challenges posed by climate change, the Foundation will bring chefs and farmers to Washington, D.C. for direct engagement.
- **Hosting Roundtable Conversations:** The Foundation will facilitate roundtable discussions involving chefs, policymakers, and experts. These conversations will focus on finding solutions, sharing lessons learned, and organizing collective action.
- **Deploying James Beard Foundation Leadership:** The Foundation's leadership will use its influence and platforms to raise awareness and mobilize a groundswell of voices for change across the industry.
- **Farm Visits:** The Foundation will arrange visits to local farms for chefs and policymakers. This firsthand experience will demonstrate how what happens on the farm directly affects what happens in the kitchen and create a collective voice for federal action.

ABOUT THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION

The James Beard Foundation (JBF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that celebrates and supports the people behind America's food culture, while pushing for new standards in the restaurant industry to create a future where all have the opportunity to thrive. Established over 30 years ago, the Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives and is committed to supporting a resilient and flourishing industry that honors its diverse communities. By amplifying new voices, celebrating those leading the way, and supporting those on the path to do so, the Foundation is working to create a more equitable and sustainable future—what we call Good Food for Good®. JBF brings its mission to life through the annual Awards, industry and community-focused programs, advocacy, partnerships, and

events across the country. For the first time in the Foundation's history, exceptional culinary talent, industry leaders, and visitors from NYC and beyond can experience unforgettable dining and educational programming at [Platform by the James Beard Foundation](#)—and be the first to try new food concepts at the Good To Go by JBF kiosk—inspiring food and beverage devotees for decades to come. Learn more at jamesbeard.org, sign up for our newsletter, and follow @beardfoundation on social media.

ABOUT JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

The James Beard Foundation's Programs help the independent restaurant industry reach new standards around equity, sustainability, and workplace practices to ensure that all involved in its supply chain can thrive. We look to turn independent restaurant jobs into long and healthy independent restaurant careers; to expand who has access to leadership, visibility, financial stability, and capital; and to use the power of chefs for climate change mitigation and other issues that touch our food system. Our mission comes to life through training programs, policy advocacy, and harnessing the agency of chefs for change.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL FOOD INSTITUTE AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Founded by the George Washington University (GW) and renowned chef, humanitarian, and long-time GW instructor José Andrés, the Global Food Institute at GW (GFI) seeks to advance global food policy and address the world's most urgent problems by **leveraging the power of food**. The GFI works across three main pillars: **Policy, Innovation, and Humanity**. The GFI is positioned to produce cutting-edge research to create and improve domestic and global food policies, incubate and engineer innovative new technologies with an entrepreneurial spirit, and lead critical conversations about the impact of food on humans and our planet. To learn more, visit globalfoodinstitute.gwu.edu.

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