Local Restaurants Join "Eat for Climate Week," Highlighting Connection Between Food and Climate Change

NEW YORK (September 24, 2018) - A campaign featuring 23 New York City restaurants that will highlight plant-rich, climate-friendly menu options begins today. Eat for Climate Week aligns with the 10th anniversary of Climate Week NYC and the 73rd United Nations General Assembly in a first-of-its-kind initiative to raise awareness among the general public on the connection between food choices and climate change. Climate-friendly dining is increasingly popular, with a 20 percent rise in plant-based food sales over the past year, and the campaign works directly with both plant-based and omnivorous restaurants to encourage diners to try plant-rich menu items in celebration of Climate Week NYC.

The livestock sector contributes 14.5 percent of global climate emissions, and studies suggest that meeting climate goals will require changing both how food is produced and which kinds of food are consumed. However, small shifts toward more plant-rich diets can go a long way. Replacing just 30 percent of beef with legumes lowers the greenhouse gas emissions associated with an individual's diet by 16 percent. "New York City is a global leader on climate and sustainability, and chefs, restaurants, and individuals all have an important role to play by re-envisioning the food we eat," says Mia MacDonald, Executive Director of Brighter Green. "New Yorkers can lower their climate footprint and help meet Paris Agreement climate goals while enjoying innovative, delicious, and healthy cuisine at the same time." Food consumption can make up 14 to 20 percent of a city's total greenhouse gas emissions, based on US cities who have measured food's contribution.

While New York City does not include food consumption in its greenhouse gas inventory, there are efforts to increase access to plant-based and plant-rich foods. 15 Brooklyn school are undertaking Meatless Monday pilot programs, a major investment in a plant-based lifestyle medicine program was recently funded for NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue, and Council Member Helen Rosenthal (Manhattan, District 6) re-introduced a Meatless Monday Resolution in early June. "A plant-based diet not only provides enormous health benefits, it's also far better for the climate -- using fewer fossil fuel resources and generating less greenhouse gas pollution than animal-based food products," said Council Member Rosenthal. "This is why I've introduced a resolution in the City Council encouraging New Yorkers to enjoy 'Meatless Mondays.' I'm thrilled to support the Eat for Climate Week campaign, which meets consumers where they're at, making sure that delicious, climate-friendly food is within everyone's reach."

The Eat for Climate Week campaign is led by Brighter Green, an environmental non-profit think tank based in Brooklyn, NY. For more information and to see a full list of participating restaurants, please visit https://www.climateweeknyc.org/eatforclimateweek.

For media inquiries contact:
Lauren Wolahan, lwolahan@climatenexus.org, 978.621.0619