



PRESS RELEASE

Acterra Confers Sustainability Awards on Silicon Valley Clean Energy, Peninsula Clean Energy, and Bay Area Climate Advocates

Clean energy and electrification prominent features of “Promise to Our Planet” benefit

Event website: acterra.org/promise

PALO ALTO—April 23, 2021—At its spring benefit, “**Promise to Our Planet**,” on **March 26, 2021**, Acterra recognized organizations and individuals for achievement in sustainability and climate change leadership. Acterra, a nonprofit that promotes climate change action in the San Francisco Bay Area, oversaw the 31st annual **Business Environmental Awards** in the **Spare the Air Leadership** category, which was sponsored by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. **“This award salutes leaders who voluntarily take actions needed to protect our climate and air quality, setting a higher standard for Bay Area businesses,”** stated **Jack Broadbent, Chief Executive of the Bay Area Air District**. The prestigious 2021 Spare the Air Leadership Award was given to co-recipients **Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE)** and **Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE)**.

In response to recent events — including the state’s most devastating wildfire season in history, and the global atmospheric carbon dioxide levels topping 420 parts per million, and projections of worsening floods that will disrupt the region’s transportation corridors and essential services — Acterra’s “Promise to Our Planet” event focused attention on impactful actions already underway to combat our climate crisis. **Lauren Weston, Executive Director of Acterra, commented: “These local solutions include reducing greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and transportation, building sustainable food systems, celebrating the environmental leadership of Bay Area companies and organizations, and educating and mentoring the next generation of climate activists.”**

After a rigorous process, Acterra awarded the 2021 Spare the Air Leadership Award to the **Peninsula-Silicon Valley Reach Code Initiative**. This ongoing regional effort focuses on first-in-the-nation model building codes that reach beyond current state standards expands local codes (known as “reach codes”) to advance new all-electric buildings and electrified transportation. Co-led by **Silicon Valley Clean Energy** and **Peninsula Clean Energy**, two Bay Area Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs), the partnership is comprised of formal relationships across 40 local governments and other key stakeholders, building a regional network to provide extensive technical assistance and resources.

“Silicon Valley Clean Energy is honored to accept the Spare the Air Leadership Award on behalf of the many local leaders and elected officials who, through adopting reach codes, took significant action to combat climate change. All-electric building codes will have a lasting impact to reduce emissions in our communities for decades to come,” said **Girish Balachandran, SVCE’s CEO**.

“As a result of terrific collaboration with SVCE and especially our local governments, we have really moved the needle on reach codes in California. This local leadership will have a much broader long-term impact by serving as a model for others and means that many more will benefit from safer all-electric buildings that improve internal air quality and our carbon footprint by further transitioning from fossil

fuels to carbon-free energy," said Jan Pepper, PCE's CEO.

The state of California is currently a national leader in establishing reach codes (view a complete list [here](#)), with several San Francisco Bay Area localities, including Berkeley, Menlo Park, San Jose, and the County of San Mateo, being notable early adopters of such ordinances.

The 2021 runner-up Spare the Air Leadership Award Finalist was **Granite Construction Company** for its **Santa Clara Asphalt Plant Renovation** (2019), which increased the efficiency of the facility's operations by 45% while reducing particulate matter and carbon monoxide emissions. Among the top 5 most productive Granite facilities nationally, this facility manufactures between 300,000 and 500,000 tons of asphalt annually, 40,000 to 60,000 tons of which reincorporates recycled asphalt paving material into new mix designs.

Champions of Promise Awards — Individuals who received awards were as follows:

- Workplace Sustainability: Julie Weiss, City of Palo Alto
- Youth Education and Activism: Audrey Chang, Los Altos High School Green Team
- Beneficial Electrification for All: Deborah Vasquez, Sunshine Gardens Apartments
- Food Sustainability: Deborah Moskowitz and Chance Cutrano, Resource Renewal Institute

Event Speakers included nationally renowned leaders in the sustainability space, including:

- **Bill McKibben** — Founder of the international grassroots climate campaign [350.org](#), the first planet-wide, grassroots climate action movement.
- **Wade Crowfoot** — California's Natural Resources Secretary
- **Bryant Terry** — James Beard Award-Winning Chef, activist, and Chef-in-Residence at the Museum of the African Diaspora
- **Matthew Gough** — Senior campaign representative, Sierra Club's Clean Buildings Campaign
- **Isaias Hernandez** — Environmental educator and creator of @QueerBrownVegan
- **Malcolm Shabazz Hoover** — Co-founder / co-director of Black Futures Farm in Portland, Oregon
- **Vinita Jacinto** — Founder of The Spice Whisperer and former instructor of vegetarian cooking at the California Culinary Academy.
- **Chelsea Sexton** — Co-Founder of Plug In America.
- **Bill Wehl** (an Acterra Board Member) — Founder and Executive Director of ClimateVoice.

The event recording can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7z3TxLAmaWg>

Funds raised prior to and the night of the event during the Acterra "Fund-A-Future" will support Acterra's community-based programs (Beneficial Electrification for All; Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet; You(th) Be the Change; Workplace Sustainability).

Promise to Our Planet 2022 is slated to be held on **March 25, 2022**.

About Acterra: Acterra is a San Francisco Bay Area 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Palo Alto that brings people together to create local solutions for a healthy planet. Acterra's educational programs help people and communities use cleaner power and reduce their carbon footprint through beneficial electrification of homes, businesses, and transportation, and climate-friendly food choices such as plant-forward diets and reduced food waste. For more information, visit [acterra.org](#)

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