

# Sustainability in Restaurants

## *An Overview*

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November 1, 2023

NATIONAL  
**RESTAURANT**  
ASSOCIATION

The logo for the National Restaurant Association, featuring a stylized white arc that curves around the text.

# Key Themes

## Recommendations



### **Journey NOT a Destination**

- One step at a time
- Be strategic
- Start with efforts that directly benefit your business (save \$\$)



### **Co-opt Staff Champions**

- Builds employee satisfaction
- Boosts retention
- Build and reward a Green Team



### **Be Realistic**

- Don't compost if composting isn't available
- Make it standard operating procedures

# Why Am I Talking To You All?

Jeffrey Clark



## 10 Years

- Serving and bartending
- Seven different restaurants
- Through two degrees



## 16 Years

- Sustainability experience
  - 12 at the Association
  - 4 consulting -> Energy Star CFS
- Developed research and toolkits
- Organized panels, interviews, videos, and 4 sustainability events for food service



## 2 Semesters

- Teaching at Georgetown University, School of Continuing Studies
- *Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility in Supply Chain*

# What Is “Sustainability”?

- Often amorphous
- Depends on “who you ask”!
- Quadruple bottom line:
  - People
  - Planet
  - Profit



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  - People
  - Planet
  - Profit
  - Purpose



# Lots of Frameworks/Certifications

**GREEN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION**



GREENING RESTAURANTS SINCE 1990

**FIND CERTIFIED GREEN RESTAURANTS**

**CERTIFICATION STANDARDS**

The Green Restaurant Association's (GRA) standards reflect over 30 years of research in the field and hundreds of thousands of restaurant personnel have provided the living laboratory for the GRA standards is to provide a transparent way to measure each restaurant's environmental performance. Restaurants can earn GreenPoints™, enough GreenPoints™ must be earned across the categories.

**GREEN CALIFORNIA GREEN BUSINESS NETWORK**

Donate Login


FIND A BUSINESS WHY GET CERTIFIED CONTACT US REGISTER RESOURCES BLOG ESPAÑOL

**Why Get Certified?**

There has never been a better time to go green! Below are some of the biggest reasons to become a California Green Business Partner.

**It's good for the environment.**

You'll be doing your part to fight climate change by saving your company's valuable resources as well as the environment.



## SBTi CRITERIA AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEAR-TERM TARGETS

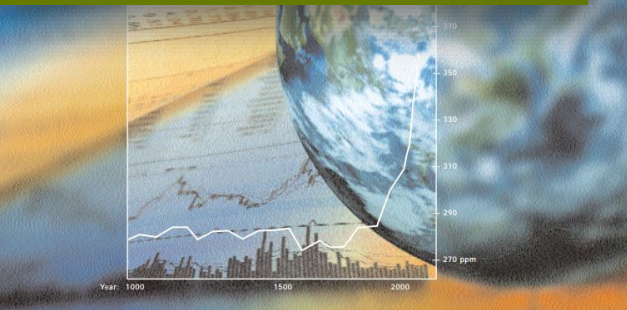
Version 5.1  
April 2023

**CERTIFIED**



**MEMBER**

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol



A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard  
REVISED EDITION

World Business Council for Sustainable Development  
WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

**OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS**

**A Quick Guide For Restaurants**

HOW TO EASILY COMPLY WITH THE OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS CRITERIA

**THE FOOD MADE GOOD STANDARD**



SCIENCE BASED TARGETS  
DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS




1 NO POVERTY  
2 ZERO HUNGER  
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING  
4 QUALITY EDUCATION  
5 GENDER EQUALITY  
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION  
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY  
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH  
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES  
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES  
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION  
13 CLIMATE ACTION  
14 LIFE BELOW WATER  
15 LIFE ON LAND  
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS  
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Source: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

# Certification Worth It?

- Strict ROI, vs.
- Doing the right thing
- Every business, brand, and customer base is different!

RESTAURANT  
BUSINESS

NEWSLETTER

MARKETING

## Is a sustainable-restaurant certification worth it?

By *Jonathan Deutsch, Ph.D.* on Apr. 11, 2019



Photograph: Shutterstock

# What Do I Mean by Customer Base?

Did you know that **The Cheesecake Factory** has an incredibly **robust sustainability program** with three+ full-time staffers, one with a PhD.?



# What Do I Mean by Customer Base?

Did you know that The Cheesecake Factory has a robust sustainability program?

**NO**



The Cheesecake Factory

# Example: Green Seal GS-55

- I personally helped develop GS-55 in 2014
  - Reviewed text, commented, shared with other SMEs
- In 2020, Green Seal (GS) determined:
  - Restaurants couldn't invest enough money to implement GS-55
  - Low profit margins main culprit
  - GS withdrew the Standard for Restaurants and Food Services (GS-55)



## Standard Withdrawal Proposal

### Restaurants and Food Services (GS-55)

October 25, 2021

**Overview.** The following standard is proposed for withdrawal. This proposal summarizes Green Seal's rationale for the withdrawal of this standard.

- Standard for Restaurants and Food Services (GS-55, Edition 1.0).

Every five years, Green Seal assesses each standard for accuracy and relevance to its respective market. In 2018 to 2020, Green Seal conducted an assessment and determined that the GS-55 Standard provided a strong set of best practices for healthier, greener restaurants, but identified a major barrier to certification: demonstrating compliance with the standard was not feasible for most restaurants due to the time and financial limitations. Therefore, Green Seal is proposing to withdraw this standard with the intention of converting this tool into a best practices guide to inform consumers and support leading restaurants.

# Another Example



## OUR FRAMEWORK

Food Made Good is a 360-degree holistic assessment of your whole operations. Built on a ten-point framework, Food Made Good answers the question “What does *good* look like for a foodservice business?” by evaluating impact across the three pillars of Sourcing, Society and Environment.



YOUR ANNUAL SALES (USD)	FMG ANNUAL FEE (USD)
\$0 - \$999,999	\$1,200
\$1,000,000 - \$2,499,999	\$1,800
\$2,500,000 - \$4,999,999	\$2,400
\$5,000,000 - \$7,499,999	\$3,600
\$7,500,000 - \$9,999,999	\$4,200
\$10,000,000 - \$14,999,999	\$4,900
\$15,000,000 - \$19,999,999	\$5,500
\$20,000,000 - \$29,999,999	\$6,100
\$30,000,000 - \$39,999,999	\$8,500
\$40,000,000 - \$49,999,999	\$12,100
\$50,000,000 - \$74,999,999	PRICE ON APPLICATION
\$75,000,000 - \$99,999,999	PRICE ON APPLICATION
\$100,000,000 - \$174,999,999	PRICE ON APPLICATION
\$175,000,000 - \$249,999,999	PRICE ON APPLICATION
\$250,000,000 - \$499,999,999	PRICE ON APPLICATION
\$500,000,000+	PRICE ON APPLICATION

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# Step 1: fix leaks

**\$5 – 415+ /year**

A hand is holding a red digital leak detector near a faucet. The faucet has a clear water gauge attached to it. The background is a blurred kitchen setting.

# Step 2: swap pre-rinse spray valves

**\$115 - \$240/year**

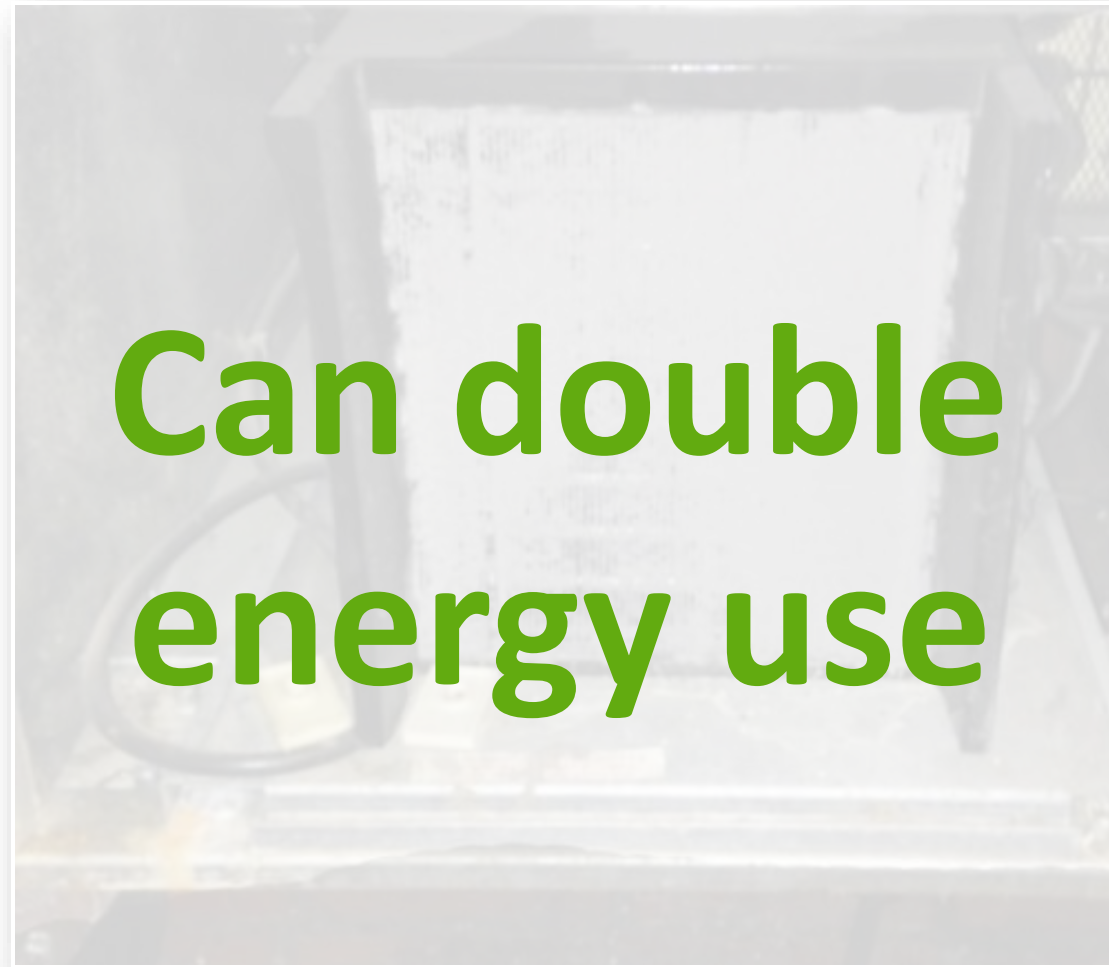


# Step 3: install efficient lighting

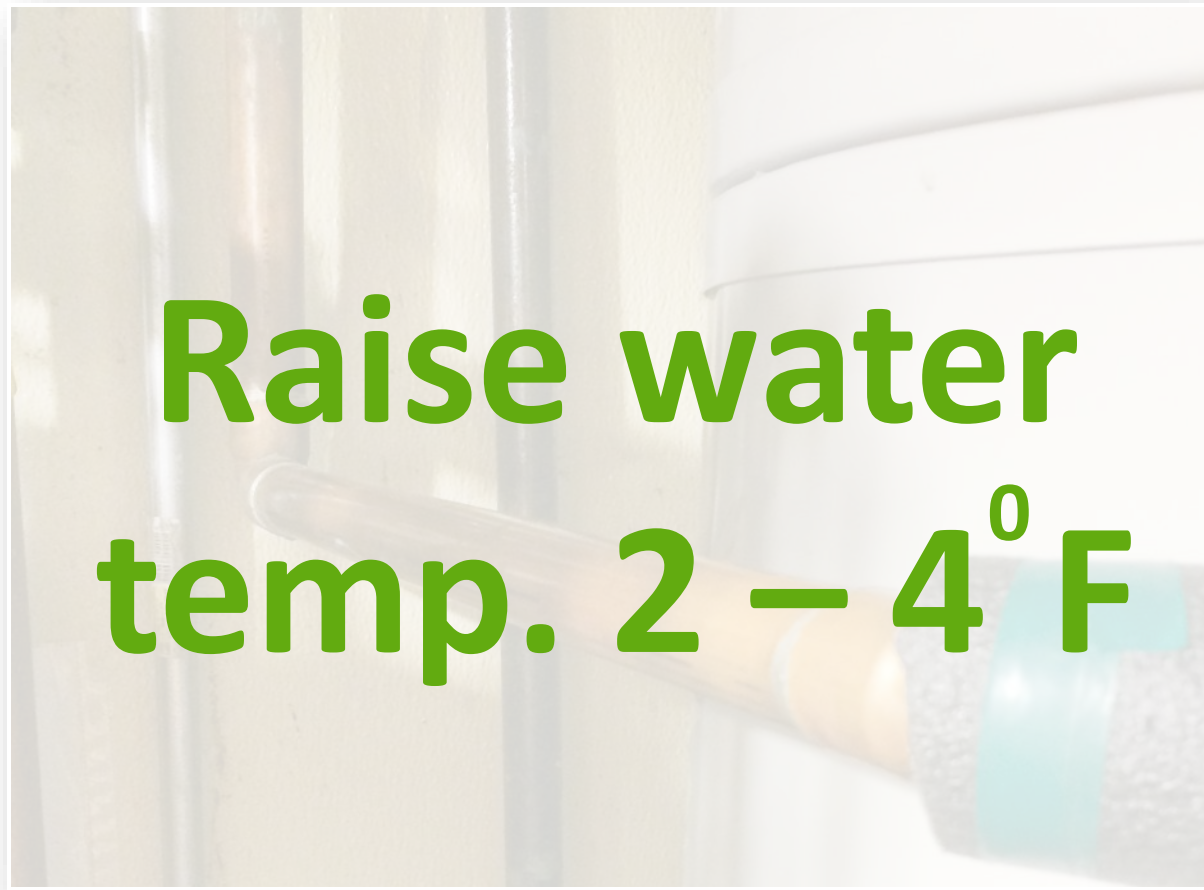


**12 LEDs, save  
~\$300/year**

# Step 4: clean refrigerator coils



# Step 5: insulate hot water pipes



# Step 6: shut 'em down



**1 off for 30**

**min./day**

**= ~\$100/year**

# Step 7: give H<sub>2</sub>O upon request



# Step 8: start recycling/composting

The image shows a screenshot of the website [Recyclefsp.org](http://Recyclefsp.org). The website header includes a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT FPI, FOODSERVICE OPERATORS, COMMUNITIES, MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITIES, END MARKETS, COMPOSTING & AD FACILITIES, and FAQs. The main heading is "Foodservice Packaging Recovery Toolkit". Below this, there is a paragraph of introductory text. A central graphic features five categories: Foodservice Operators, Communities, Materials Recovery Facilities, End Markets, and Composting & Anaerobic Digestion Facilities. At the bottom, there are social media icons and a footer with the Foodservice Packaging Institute logo and copyright information.

**Recyclefsp.org**

Foodservice Packaging Recovery Toolkit

Recovering Foodservice Packaging (FSP) can have substantial benefits in cost-saving waste reduction, revenue generation, reduction of environmental impact and positive expectations from residents and customers. No matter what role you play in recovering foodservice packaging, this Toolkit has something for everyone.

This Recovery Toolkit presents lessons learned in successful recovery of foodservice packaging. It is a comprehensive resource on what foodservice packaging is currently being recovered, collected, processed and marketed. Let's get started!

**Easily save \$200/month**

Foodservice Operators | Communities | Materials Recovery Facilities | End Markets | Composting & Anaerobic Digestion Facilities

Foodservice Packaging Institute  
Toolkit brought to you by FPI's Paper Recovery Alliance (PRA) and Plastics Recovery Group (PRG).

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# Step 9: slash food waste

As much as 40%  
of all the food grown,  
produced and transported  
in the United States will  
never be consumed

**Tracking food  
waste can cut  
food costs 2 - 6%**



# Food Waste Gaining Traction



## CHUCK GRASSLEY

UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR IOWA

### THE REDUCE FOOD LOSS AND WASTE ACT

U.S. Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.)

**Background:** The United States produces and imports close to 241 million tons of food each year, but 33 percent of it—equal to 80 million tons—is never sold or eaten. Instead, most of this food is left on the farm field or ends up in a landfill or incinerator.

**Issue:** Food waste is a complex issue because it occurs at each stage of the supply chain. For example:

- Farms leave crops in the field when it is unprofitable to move them to market.
- Processors trim foods of stems, peels, and bones to refine them into finished products.
- Retailers stock more than 35,000 items on average, but stock rotation challenges can lead to excess, old, or damaged products.
- Foodservice establishments can struggle with inventory, production, or spoilage issues, in addition to consumer plate waste.
- Consumers purchase perishable items and let them spoil in the refrigerator, or throw items out due to date labeling confusion.

This waste has significant economic, environmental, and social costs:

- **Economic:** More than \$440 billion (nearly 2% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product) is spent annually to produce and dispose of food that is never sold or eaten.
- **Environmental:** Food waste is the most common material sent to landfills or incinerators. It is responsible for the use of more than 20 trillion liters of water (equal to the annual water use of 50 million homes) and 560,000 square kilometers of agricultural land (an area the size of California and New York combined).
- **Hunger:** About 34 million Americans, including five million children, are food-insecure. Less than one-third of food waste, if saved from disposal, could feed each of them, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

# Assoc. Toolkit

<http://86foodwaste.com>



## Menu Redesign Concepts

When updating your menus, consider the following actions:

- ✔ Identify commonly wasted ingredients
- ✔ Offer customers a choice of portion sizes
- ✔ Be mindful of seasonal offerings to reduce prep
- ✔ Consider limiting menu items

[DOWNLOAD](#)



## Donation Resources

Establishing a donation program will require the following steps:

- ✔ Designating a donation lead
- ✔ Identifying a food recovery partner
- ✔ Handling food for donation safely
- ✔ Informing and training all staff

[DOWNLOAD](#)



## Diversion Resources

One important goal is to keep food waste out of landfills so look at...

- ✔ Partnering with a local farmer
- ✔ Teaming with a compost hauler
- ✔ Composting and using it on-site
- ✔ Processing food waste through an anaerobic digester

[DOWNLOAD](#)

## MANAGING FOOD WASTE IN RESTAURANTS

How **small steps** can have a **big impact** on reducing waste and protecting the planet

A combined effort with

WWF Think ahead.

NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

# Find YOUR Sustainability Story

“When a restaurateur **grabs hold of the role of storyteller** and starts telling about where the food is coming from and how you can **connect with people** in your community who have supplied some of it (food), suddenly the restaurateur takes on a role that is, to me, sort of the ground level of **real sustainability.**”

*Source:* 2013 National Restaurant Association Show



- Chef Rick Bayless

# Questions and Discussion

