Dear Editor,

I am writing to bring attention to the devastating impact that climate change is having on independent restaurants, including mine. As a chef and owner of [Restaurant Name], I have witnessed firsthand the challenges posed by climate change to my business and the communities we serve.

Independent restaurants like mine provide a space for people to gather, and celebrate, helping to cultivate what makes our community unique. We also employ our neighbors and fellow community members while supporting local agriculture and businesses.

Climate change is increasing and fluctuating costs, creating ingredient shortages, and spurring operational disruptions due to extreme weather events. Local farmers, who are vital to our supply chain, face unpredictable yields, increased vulnerability to pests and diseases, and altered growing seasons, further harming my business and theirs. This could lead to increased prices, layoffs, or worse, restaurant closures.
For example, here at [insert restaurant name] we have seen [insert specific example of cost increase due to climate change, lack of ingredients or service disruption due to extreme weather].

This is a national fight with real stakes for us here locally. In response to this challenge, I am lending my voice to the James Beard Foundation’s “Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival” campaign to drive action at the federal level. We need Congress to protect the $20 billion in conservation funding in the Farm Bill - which is under consideration now - that fights climate change and helps producers continue to source affordable produce.

Sincerely,
[Name]
[Restaurant Name]

How to submit a Letter to the Editor:

1. Customize the letter with your restaurant's information, including your name and location. Fill in the blanks within the letter with a specific example from your business. Try to keep the letter to less than 300 words.

2. Review the content to ensure it aligns with your views and experiences regarding climate change's impact on your business.

3. Feel free to edit more of the content to add how your restaurant is a vibrant part of the community and what other efforts you may be undertaking to support sustainability efforts.

4. Research the contact information for the local newspaper's editor. You can usually find this on the newspaper's website under the "Contact Us" or "About Us" section. Please let us know if you need help tracking down contact information. Reach out to impactforward@jamesbeard.org if you need assistance. Also, if your community has a major newspaper, city paper or a business publication like Crain’s submit to all of the publications.

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5. Draft an email to the editor, introducing yourself briefly and explaining that you’d like to submit a letter to the editor regarding the impact of climate change on independent restaurants. Include in your email your contact information, this helps increase the chances of your letter being published.

6. Copy and paste your customized letter into the email. Be sure to include a subject line that clearly states your purpose, such as "Letter to the Editor Submission: Climate Change Threat to Independent Restaurants."

7. Send the email to the editor and wait for confirmation of receipt. If you don’t receive a response within a reasonable time frame (usually a week or two), consider following up with a polite reminder.

8. Once your letter has been published, please post on social media and tag/share with the James Beard Foundation so we can amplify and share more broadly. You can also email impactforward@jamesbeard.org so we are aware and can help amplify. Also, consider tagging your member of Congress in your post.
Social Media Posts (Instagram or Facebook):

**Guidance:** For images to go along with your post, you can download campaign graphics [HERE](#). We will be updating these during different peaks of the campaign and will notify chefs about the updates via email and newsletters.

You can also use an image of your choosing, but consider something that shows how climate change is hurting your business, your interconnectedness with local farmers or your local economic impact – photos of your restaurant being impacted by climate change or a local producer being impacted will help draw notice. You can find other details about the campaign [HERE](#).

Below we have provided a couple of example posts for you. Consider posting a series or one, but please incorporate the hashtags – #JBFClimateCampaign and #JBFChefsLead. You can, of course, customize your post to be specifically about your business or more broadly in support of the independent restaurant industry. Please consider deploying a series of posts over a period of a week to ensure saturation. You may email [impactforward@jamesbeard.org](mailto:impactforward@jamesbeard.org) to have your posts amplified.

**Post:**

- **At [Restaurant Name],** we see firsthand how climate change impacts our food supply chain, leading to rising costs and ingredient shortages. We need Congress to take action,
including safeguarding the $20 billion in conservation funding in the Farm Bill to ensure we can source affordable ingredients and fight climate change. That’s why I’m joining @beardfoundation’s Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival campaign #JBFClimateCampaign #JBFChefsLead [@YOUR MEMBER(S) OF CONGRESS]

- Climate change isn’t just melting ice caps; it’s melting our profits too - we’re feeling the heat. Congress, it’s time to stop talking and start acting. Protect the $20 billion in conservation funding in the Farm Bill now! That’s why I’m joining @beardfoundation’s Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival campaign #JBFClimateCampaign #JBFChefsLead

- At [Restaurant Name], we’re on the frontline of the climate crisis. We’re seeing it in our supply chain, and we’re feeling it in our wallets. Congress, it’s time to put your money where your mouth is. Protect the $20 billion in conservation funding in the Farm Bill, or watch independent restaurants like ours go under. That’s why I’m joining @beardfoundation’s Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival campaign #JBFClimateCampaign #JBFChefsLead

- Independent restaurants are more than just places to eat; we’re local employers and hubs of creativity, diversity, and community. Climate change threatens our [restaurant or our industry’s] very survival. Let’s urge Congress to act now and safeguard the $20 billion in conservation funding in the Farm Bill to fight climate change and build a sustainable future. That’s why I’m joining @beardfoundation’s Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival campaign #JBFClimateCampaign #JBFChefsLead

- Climate change is hitting closer to home than you might think. At [Restaurant Name], we’re feeling the effects firsthand. Climate change is driving costs increases and ingredient shortages, challenging our ability to serve you the dishes you love and threatening our very existence. That’s why I’m joining @beardfoundation’s Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival campaign #JBFClimateCampaign #JBFChefsLead

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• Food connects us all, and unfortunately so does the threat from climate change. Here at [Restaurant Name], climate change impacts our food supply chain, leading to rising costs and ingredient shortages. We need Congress to safeguard the $20 billion in conservation funding in the Farm Bill to ensure we can source affordable ingredients and fight climate change. That’s why I’m joining @beardfoundation’s Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival campaign #JBFClimateCampaign #JBFChefsLead

• Climate change is not only an environmental crisis; it’s a clear and present danger to a thriving independent restaurant industry. That’s why I’m joining @beardfoundation’s Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival campaign to raise awareness, educate federal policy makers, and galvanize action to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Join me and industry leaders nationwide: jamesbeard.org/climate-solutions-for-restaurant-survival

#JBFClimateCampaign
#JBFChefsLead

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Pitch for Local Reporter

In addition to posting on social media and submitting a letter to the editor, we also encourage you to reach out directly to reporters you know personally or reports who might be interested in covering this topic. Below we have provided guidance on how to go about doing that and a draft pitch that you can personalize with your own examples and your own voice.

How to Pitch a Reporter

Pitching a local reporter effectively requires a clear understanding of the reporter's beat, interests, and the type of stories they typically cover. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to pitch a local reporter about the impact of climate change on restaurants:

1. **Research the Reporter:** Before reaching out, familiarize yourself with the reporter's previous articles and areas of interest. Look for any stories related to climate change, local businesses, or food and dining. This will help you tailor your pitch to align with their beat. They should list contact information on their website, but if they do not please let us know and we can help.

2. **Craft a Compelling Subject Line:** Start your email with a subject line that grabs the reporter's attention and clearly conveys the importance of your pitch. For example, "Urgent Pitch: Climate Change's Devastating Impact on Local Restaurants."
3. **Personalize Your Introduction:** Begin your email by addressing the reporter by name and introducing yourself briefly. Mention your role as a chef and restaurant owner, the name of your restaurant and your contact information.

4. **Highlight the Local Angle:** Emphasize the local impact of climate change on restaurants in your community. Provide specific examples of challenges your restaurant has faced due to climate-related issues, such as rising costs or ingredient shortages.

5. **Connect to Current Events:** Tie your pitch to current events or relevant news stories, such as legislative debates (Farm Bill) about climate change or recent extreme weather events in your area. This will help demonstrate the timeliness and newsworthiness of your pitch.

6. **Propose a Story Angle:** Offer a potential story angle or hook that the reporter could explore further. This could include interviewing you about your experiences as a restaurant owner dealing with the effects of climate change. Maybe offer them a meal at your restaurant? The James Beard Foundation could help fund this sort of activity.

7. **Provide Supporting Information:** Include any additional information or data that supports your pitch, such as statistics on the economic impact of independent restaurants in your area or specific examples from your own business. For this, you can pull your own example or refer to the campaign website for more information.

8. **Offer Yourself as a Resource:** Close your pitch by offering to provide further insights, share personal experiences, or connect the reporter with other restaurant owners or experts who can offer valuable perspectives on the topic.

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9. **Follow Up Politely, but Be Persistent:** If you don't receive a response within a week or two, consider sending a polite follow-up email to inquire whether the reporter received your pitch and if they are interested in pursuing the story.

**Draft Pitch**

*Please read and edit this carefully and make sure it aligns with your own situation and views.*

Dear [Reporter name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am reaching out to you as both a chef and the owner of [Restaurant Name], a local establishment deeply rooted in our community. I am writing to bring attention to the devastating impact that climate change is having on independent restaurants like mine, and to urge you to consider covering this pressing issue.

Climate change poses a serious threat to the survival of independent restaurants. The impact of climate change is palpable, driving rising and fluctuating costs, ingredient shortages, and operational disruptions due to extreme weather events are becoming increasingly common. Our local farmers, who are crucial to our supply chain, are experiencing unpredictable yields, heightened vulnerability to pests and diseases, and altered growing seasons as a result of climate change.

Allow me to illustrate the tangible effects of climate change on our restaurant. Here at [Restaurant Name], we have experienced [specific example of cost increase, ingredient shortage, or operational disruption due to climate change]. These challenges not only affect our bottom line and ability to stay open, but also our ability to serve our community, and support local producers.

To address this crisis, it is imperative that federal policymakers take action. One crucial step is to protect the $20 billion in conservation funding in the Farm Bill, which is currently under threat. This funding is essential for combating climate change and ensuring that producers can continue to source affordable produce. Without bold policy changes, the unmitigated impacts of climate change will further escalate supply chain costs, leading to increased prices for consumers, layoffs, or even restaurant closures.
I would urge you to cover the impact of climate change on local restaurants like mine to raise awareness with federal policy makers and local leaders. As you can see by the James Beard Foundation’s Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival campaign, which I am a part of, this is a national challenge with real implications locally.

I am available to provide further insights, share personal experiences, and connect you with other restaurant owners and experts who can offer valuable perspectives on this critical issue. I would be happy to host you at my restaurant for a deeper discussion.

Thank you for your consideration.

[Your Name]
[Restaurant Name]
[Contact Information]
Talking Points for Engaging Reporters, Policymakers or Customers

The Importance of Independent Restaurants

- Independent Restaurants contribute significantly to the social and economic fabric of our communities, reflecting our diversity, culture and creativity.
- Restaurants bring people and communities together, providing a place to gather, celebrate and collaborate.
- But independent restaurants are not just part of the social fabric of our communities—we are a powerful economic force, providing jobs to millions, generating hundreds of billions in revenue, and supporting local agriculture and businesses.
- Here at my restaurant, we employ XXX amount of people and buy directly from local producers, such as XXX. On average, we spend XXX purchasing products from local, community producers.
- Nationally, the independent restaurant industry is the 5th largest employer in the U.S., employing 3% of the U.S. workforce—totaling 3.9 million workers, generating $75 billion in wages in local economies across the U.S. and over $209 billion in revenue.

Impact of Climate Change

- To be blunt, unmitigated climate change threatens the very survival of the independent restaurant industry.
• Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, floods, drought, fire, and shifts in agricultural patterns are driving up costs for an already vulnerable industry and undermining our ability to meet consumers’ expectations for high-quality meals at all price points.

• The impact of climate change manifests in rising and fluctuating costs, ingredients and shortages.

• Due to climate change, local farmers, who are vital to our supply chain, face unpredictable yields, increased vulnerability to pests and diseases, and altered growing seasons, making farming and ranching more expensive.

• Extreme weather caused by climate change also causes massive operational disruptions.

• For example, here at [insert restaurant name] we have seen [insert specific example of cost increase due to climate change, lack of ingredients or disruption due to extreme weather].

• These added climate change-related costs are harming restaurants that now need to adjust by charging consumers more, laying off workers or, worse, shutting down altogether.

James Beard Foundation *Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival*™ campaign

• In response to this challenge, I am lending my voice to the James Beard Foundation’s “*Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival*™” campaign to drive action at the federal level.

• Through the “*Climate Solutions for Restaurant Survival*™” campaign, I will work with chefs from across the country to raise awareness, educate federal policy makers, and galvanize action to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

• Working together, we will make it clear to federal policy makers that climate change is not only an environmental crisis - it is a clear and present danger to a thriving independent restaurant industry.

What Congress Needs to Do

• It is imperative that federal policymakers take action to address this crisis.

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• As a starting point, we need Congress to protect the $20 billion in conservation funding in the Farm Bill - which is under consideration now - that fights climate change and helps producers continue to source affordable produce.

• We need them to support conservation programs to help farmers implement practices that help mitigate climate change, increase yields and source sustainable ingredients for restaurants.

• We need them to provide climate-smart technical support and capacity building to address the volatile aspects of farming and implement ecological strategies to make land more resilient.

• We need support for local and sustainable farming practices that diversify our supply chain, and provide opportunities for small, midsize, and disenfranchised farmers to thrive.

• And we need sustainable food policies and practices such as crop diversification, regenerative farming, efficient water and energy use, and reduced farm waste.

• All of this will help the producers who supply us and lead the larger fight against climate change.