

January 18, 2017

Corporate sustainability professionals gathered at the LA Cleantech Incubator to discuss how the business world can prepare itself for water resiliency.

**Peter Kareiva, Director of UCLA's [Institute of the Environment and Sustainability](#)**, introduced the event and the mission of the Corporate Partners Program (CPP): "We facilitate conversations between academia and the business world. Through student research we bring to the light the importance of sustainability not only to the environment, but to a company's culture and bottom-line."

**Joanne Beatty, Director of Sustainability Services at KPMG**, set the stage by talking about how water uncertainty is a business risk as well as an opportunity to innovate and improve a company's bottom-line. She emphasized that water conservation should be a collaborative endeavor, looking beyond a single site to the larger local area in a 'watershed approach' for opportunities to improve resiliency and reduce costs.



**John Marler, Senior Director of Energy and Environment at AEG**, talked about how AEG has set science-based sustainability goals for its venues, including reducing potable water use by 2.3% per year from 2010 to 2020 in water-stressed locations. He described the methods they implemented to achieve this, including installing water-efficient technologies such as waterless urinals, using recycled water for irrigation, and collecting rainwater.

**Josh Prigge, Director of Regenerative Development at Fetzer Vineyards**, summarized the innovative steps Fetzer



has taken to be a sustainability leader. The approach is Regenerative Development which not only eliminates the negative effects of the business and its externalities, but also maximizes the positive

effects for the company *and* for society and nature. He was optimistic about the future and the incorporation of technology, including smart meters, to harness the power of big data to further improve conservation efforts.

Moderator **Emily Guerin, Environment Reporter at Southern California Public Radio**, guided the interactive



portion, exploring some of the economics behind the companies' decision-making. A recurring theme was the impact of the low price of water and the challenges it presents to return on investment for retrofits or other capital projects. Other topics included how to effectively change behavior and educate your employees or customers, and the regional nature of water and how that influences the imperative for action.

**Martin Adams, COO of LADWP**, started the second panel by describing the programs that are available to area businesses including the [technical assistance program \(TAP\)](#) and the [commercial rebate program](#). He described how specific companies had utilized these programs and the positive outcomes that had been seen. For example, cooling tower upgrades in supermarkets are saving a million gallons of water per store per year. He stressed that while LA has had a lot of rain recently, there is still a need to be vigilant about conservation to achieve the goals in the [Sustainable City pLAN](#).

**Kirsten James, Director of California Policy at Ceres**, outlined how water scarcity has severe economic impacts, over \$2.5B globally, that are often overlooked. She described the how CA businesses are coming together to advocate for water conservation policy through [Connect the Drops](#), and explained forthcoming changes to CA water policy that will impact infrastructure and industry.

The panels were followed by a networking reception featuring sustainably produced beverages: [Fetzer](#) wines and [Dry River Brewing](#) beer.

The conversations started at this event will inform the research questions the CPP works on for the rest of academic year. Student-led *green* papers are already underway. Their findings will be presented in early June 2017.

