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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Equity-Driven Economics is a Central Theme of MBEP 8th Annual State of the Region

(Marina, CA, Oct. 7, 2022) - Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) will host its 8th Annual State of the Region, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Oct. 14, 2022, at California State University, Monterey Bay. Featuring presentations and conversations on critical issues for the region, the annual convening will take place in person after two years of virtual events and brings together public, private and civic leaders from Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties and beyond. A key theme is how to drive equitable regional economic recovery and development in the Monterey Bay region.

The keynote speakers will be UCSC Sociology and Environmental Studies Professor Chris Benner and USC Distinguished Professor of Sociology Manuel Pastor, whose book [Solidarity Economics: Why Mutuality and Movements Matter](#), offers a road map and conceptual framework for equity-driven economic reform in the United States.

In a world wracked by inequality, social divisions, and ecological destruction, Pastor and Benner help us envision alternative economics based on mutual cooperation, reframing what we so often refer to as "the" economy — built on an abstract set of rules — into "our" economy.

Based on decades of research and collaboration, "Solidarity Economics" shows that places that are more equitable and invested in mutuality and common governance structures do better economically, and social movements that confront power and shift structures in society are central to building the economy. Together, Benner and Pastor invite us to imagine and create a new sort of solidarity economics — an approach grounded in our instincts for connection and community — and in so doing, actually build a more robust, sustainable, and equitable economy.

MBEP's 8th Annual State of the Region features a thought-provoking lineup of presenters: Legislative updates from [Congressman Jimmy Panetta](#), [Assemblymember Robert Rivas](#), and [Sen. John Laird](#), acclaimed National Geographic Photographer-in-Residence [Frans Lanting](#), and award-winning writer, editor and videographer [Chris Eckstrom](#), who will be presenting on [Bay of Life](#), a project showcasing the region's natural richness in the context of human occupation and environmental impacts. Panel discussions include Broadband - Building Infrastructure to Reduce the Digital Divide & Advance Economic Growth; Housing, Homelessness, and 6th Cycle RHNA; Living with the Pandemic - Lessons Learned; Centering Equity in Programming, Policies and Jobs; and Advancing PK-16 Educational Collaboratives. Read more about these presenters [here](#).

"MBEP's 8th Annual State of the Region couldn't be more timely, as we work to transform our regional economy for a more inclusive and resilient tomorrow," says MBEP President & CEO Tahra Goraya. "Now more than ever, we need to build cross-sector collaborations and engage in the compelling conversations that occur when you bring together leaders, policymakers and stakeholders from across the region and state."

*Dr. Chris Benner is the Dorothy E. Everett Chair in Global Information and Social Entrepreneurship, and a Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He currently directs the Everett Program for Technology and Social Change and the Institute for Social Transformation.*

*Manuel Pastor is a Distinguished Professor of Sociology and American Studies & Ethnicity at the University of Southern California (USC). He currently directs the Equity Research Institute at USC. Pastor currently serves on California Governor Gavin Newsom's Council of Economic Advisors and on the California Business and Jobs Recovery Task Force.*

**Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP)** (MBEP) is a regional member-supported nonprofit organization consisting of public, private, and civic entities located throughout the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. Founded in 2015, our mission is to improve the economic health and quality of life in the region.