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White House Highlights APEN Community Resilience Leader as “Champion of Change”

OAKLAND, CA & WASHINGTON, DC – On Thursday, April 11th, the White House will honor twelve citizens, businesses and community leaders who are Champions of Change, working to prepare their communities for the consequences of climate change. The Asian Pacific Environmental Network’s (APEN’s) Lipo Chanthanasak will be one of the twelve honored for his leadership in ending the era of fossil fuels and blazing a path for local renewable energy. All the individuals are leaders and innovators working tirelessly to build community resilience by preparing for increasingly extreme weather and other costly climate-related impacts.

“As we take action to reduce carbon pollution and speed the transition to more sustainable sources of energy, we must also take action to prepare for the impacts of climate change we are already seeing, including more frequent and severe extreme weather,” said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The White House Council on Environmental Quality will host this week’s Champions of Change event.

“The first step towards a 21st Century Economy is to accelerate our investment in our local, renewable energy future,” said Roger Kim, Executive Director of APEN. “We have the opportunity to move from scarcity to abundance, inequality to inclusion by replacing vulnerable centralized, corporate bureaucracies with more resilient, decentralized, renewable energy. Community members like Lipo are leading the way to healthy, safe and prosperous communities for all of us.”

From Northern Laos, Lipo Chanthanasak has proudly served as a leader with APEN for over a decade, working to reduce carbon pollution and ensure environmental justice. During the Vietnam War he joined a Guerilla Unit of American forces. After fighting alongside Americans, Lipo and his family immigrated to Richmond, California. Today, at 70 years old, Lipo is as fearless a community leader as he was a soldier fighting for the US and Laos. He strives, as he says, “to fight for our rights, equal opportunity and to develop a better community for children and many generations to come.”

The Champions of Change program was created as a part of President Obama’s Winning the Future initiative. Each week, the White House features a group of Americans – individuals, businesses and organizations – who are doing extraordinary things to empower and inspire members of their communities.

To watch this event live, visit www.whitehouse.gov/live at 12:30 pm ET on April 11th.

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