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June 8, 2012

Land Use and Economic Development Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Re: Urban Agriculture Legislation (Ordinance 120404)

Dear Members of the Land Use and Economic Development Committee:

SPUR supports the urban agriculture legislation (Ordinance 120404) introduced by Supervisor David Chiu, including the revisions submitted on June 5. The proposed urban agriculture program will provide transparency, improve coordination of city resources, and lead to more opportunities for people to farm and garden on public land.

SPUR's new report, *Public Harvest* (April 2012), found that demand for space in San Francisco to grow food is strong, and that many community gardens have wait lists more than two years long. To meet this demand and to better utilize public land for urban agriculture, we recommended that the city expand and coordinate its institutional support, increase funding, and provide a clearer process for accessing and activating public land for urban agriculture. This legislation is an important first step in this direction.

Urban agriculture provides San Franciscans with many benefits: vibrant green spaces and recreation, education about fresh food and the effort it takes to produce it, ecological benefits for the city, sites that help build community, and a potential source of modest economic development. But the city will not fully capture these benefits unless it responds to the growing interest and energy behind the issue with more resources and better institutional support.

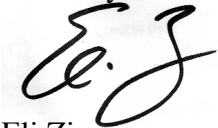
SPUR recommends, and this legislation creates, a "one-stop-shop" which would provide urban agriculture information and resources to the public. Currently, at least seven city agencies provide monetary support—averaging \$580,000 per year—and 11 agencies provide land to city gardeners and farmers. Although the funding supports many important projects, there are no clear goals or accountability for how it is spent. Multiple agencies spend staff time responding to inquiries from the public regarding urban agriculture, writing leases to activate new gardens or farms on their land, and responding to requests for technical assistance. Still, city residents interested in gardening do not know where to turn to add their name to a community garden wait list, how to access garden resources, or how to activate an underutilized, publicly-owned parcel to grow food.

Supervisor Chiu's legislation will begin to address these issues by creating a program that is responsible for reaching specific goals with timelines. Importantly, the

legislation requires the Mayor and City Administrator to create a strategic plan for how to achieve the goals of the legislation and also determine, by the end of 2012, whether a city agency or a non-profit partially funded by the City best serves as the main institutional support for urban agriculture. This type of planning will begin much-needed coordination of agency efforts and aligns with one of SPUR's top recommendations.

We appreciate your consideration of SPUR's comments and encourage you to approve this legislation without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Zigas', written in a cursive style.

Eli Zigas
Food Systems and Urban Agriculture
Program Manager