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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

Dear Members of the Land Use and Economic Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the resolution introduced by Supervisor Chiu on June 18 supporting the establishment of an urban agriculture program. SPUR supports this resolution, the general recommendations made by the City Administrator, and the dedication of a full-time staff person to the new program. We encourage the Board to consider planning for a status update on the program within six to nine months of launch.

As the strategic plan notes, the Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) has land, resources and staff that can support the new urban agriculture program in a way unavailable to other departments. In addition to these strengths, we are encouraged by the new energy in the Community Gardens program as well as the Department's engagement with community groups in discussing this proposal. Similarly, we are also encouraged that RPD has indicated in public meetings its understanding that the mission of this new program is to coordinate with other agencies and community groups, rather than replace them, and that the program needs to serve many types of urban agriculture beyond just plot-based community gardens.

Alongside our support of the resolution, we encourage the Board to consider holding a hearing six to nine months after the new coordinator has been hired to assess the program's progress in reaching the goals in the workplan and in the legislation. Currently, only one year of dedicated funding exists for the new program. A hearing would provide the Board with the opportunity to understand what resources are necessary to continue the program beyond the first year and also determine whether the new program has improved the city's efficiency, coordination, and accountability of its urban agriculture initiatives.

Thank you for consideration of our comments. With clear timelines and measures of accountability, we believe that this new program has the potential to greatly improve the city's support of urban agriculture.

Sincerely,

Eli Zigas
Food Systems and Urban Agriculture
Program Manager

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