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Assembly Member Susan Talamantes Eggman  
Chair, Assembly Agriculture Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 362  
Sacramento, California 95814  
Via facsimile: 916-319-2184

SPUR URBAN CENTER  
654 Mission Street  
San Francisco, California  
94105

415.781.8726

www.spur.org

SPUR SAN JOSE  
38 West Santa Clara Street  
San Jose, California  
95113

408.510.5688

www.spur.org/sanjose

Dear Assembly Member Eggman:

On behalf of SPUR, I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 551, the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Act. This legislation will help address one of the biggest obstacles facing urban farmers – affordable access to land.

As SPUR detailed in its 2012 report, *Public Harvest*, urban agriculture provides many benefits to city residents including: education about fresh, healthy food and the effort it takes to produce it; environmental benefits for the city; community-building; vibrant green spaces and recreation; and a modest source of economic development. One of the biggest obstacles to expanding the number of Californians who enjoy these benefits of urban agriculture is access to land.

AB551 would enable a property owner to apply for a temporary property tax adjustment while the property is under a ten-year contract with an agricultural enterprise. In San Francisco alone, we know of at least three or four urban agriculture projects that could see benefit from this legislation’s ability to reduce property costs for urban farmers and gardeners and, importantly, provide long-term land security.

While providing benefits to urban agriculture projects, the legislation importantly includes language that would limit its potential for abuse. The most recent amendment from Assembly Member Ting, for example, would require any landowner who breaks their contract to reimburse the county for the tax benefit they received. Additionally, the legislation is narrowly tailored to target land that is unlikely to otherwise be developed in the near-term.

Because it is an opt-in measure for counties, Assembly Bill 551 offers a conservative approach to a widespread impediment to the emergence of viable urban agriculture projects across the State. We believe that the legislation provides a balanced and protective approach by being a voluntary program for property-owners, requiring a ten year commitment.

SPUR respectfully requests your AYE vote for Assembly Bill 551.

Sincerely,

Eli Zigas  
Food Systems and Urban Agriculture  
Program Manager