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February 10, 2015

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
70 West Hedding Street, 10th Floor
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear Supervisors:

On behalf of SPUR, I am writing to express our support for exploring the creation of an Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone in Santa Clara County as detailed in the February 10th referral memorandum from Supervisors Yeager and Wasserman (ID# 75053).

As we highlighted in SPUR's 2012 report, *Public Harvest*, urban agriculture provides many benefits to residents in urban areas 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 people who enjoy these benefits of urban agriculture is access to land. County implementation of the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act (Assembly Bill 551 of 2013) would allow property owners to receive a property tax reduction in exchange for committing their land to urban agricultural use for at least five years, which would incentivize both greater access to land and more secure land tenure for urban agriculture projects.

While the proposal is focused on creation of an urban agriculture incentive zone within the unincorporated areas of the county, we encourage county staff to draft the ordinance with a structure that also facilitates simple consideration and implementation of future proposals to create urban agriculture incentive zones that may be proposed by incorporated cities, such as San Jose.

As it moves forward, Santa Clara County would be setting a statewide precedent for how a county with both incorporated and unincorporated land could implement the urban agriculture incentive zones act. SPUR actively promoted AB 551 at the state level as well as within San Francisco and we look forward to similarly supporting its implementation in Santa Clara County.

Sincerely,

Eli Zigas
Food and Agriculture Policy Director

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