



SPUR

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

September 12, 2016

Mayor Sam Liccardo and City Councilmembers
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers:

On behalf of SPUR, I am writing in support of the revised resolution that would provide the City's consent to the establishment of the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone (UAIZ) in certain unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County.

SPUR supports the resolution so that the county can move forward implementing its urban agriculture incentive zone. As we highlighted in our 2012 report, *Public Harvest*, urban agriculture provides numerous benefits to cities. Access to land and land tenure, however, are significant obstacles to its expansion in the Bay Area. The county's Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone will allow property owners in the unincorporated areas of the county to receive a property tax reduction in exchange for committing their land to urban agricultural use for at least five years. The Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone will help address both those obstacles by providing landowners with an incentive to allow urban agriculture projects on their land for set periods of time.

We specifically support the revisions to the resolution that have removed mention of any potential conflict between the UAIZ and the Housing Element Inventory. As Planning Staff mentioned in their memo, this issue has been resolved through communication with the state Department of Housing and Community Development. We also hope that any remaining issues that the County has raised that would further delay the UAIZ going into effect can be resolved expeditiously.

Additionally, we are pleased that the Planning Department has hired new staff to implement the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone within San Jose itself. For property owners to see the benefit of the incentive, time is of the essence. Contracts must be signed by the end of this year if property owners are going to see the tax savings in 2017. We urge the Council to ensure that implementation can move forward as quickly as possible in the next month so that projects seeking to take advantage of the incentive can submit their applications and have them reviewed before the end of the year.

We appreciate your consideration of SPUR's comments. If we can answer any questions or provide any additional information about our position, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Eli Zigas
Food and Agriculture Policy Director

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