

**SPUR**

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

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

May 13, 2019

Dear Supervisors:

I am writing, on behalf of SPUR, to request that you develop a long-term budget strategy to fund one of the top recommendations of the Santa Clara County Ag Plan: acquisitions of agricultural conservation easements and purchases of land to help preserve agriculture in the county. Providing adequate funding to permanently preserve the 12,000 acres of agricultural land most threatened by development is perhaps the most important recommendation from the Ag Plan.

An initial start could come from an allocation in this year's budget, which the Board of Supervisors discussed as a possibility in January. Looking further ahead, though, this budget study session provides an opportunity to direct county staff to develop a long-term, stable funding mechanism sufficient to the needs of agricultural land preservation.

While we understand that the County has many competing priorities during budget deliberations, the need to fund the preservation of local farmland has reached a critical point. The benefits we reap from these lands - local food source, economic diversity, climate resiliency - are essential to all county residents.

A future for farming in Santa Clara County is contingent on long-term protection of agricultural land. And, in our current context of high development pressure at the urban edges of all the county's cities, that can only truly be achieved through acquisition of easements or purchases of land. We ask that you keep this need front and center in this, and future, budget deliberations.

Sincerely,

Eli Zigas
Food and Agriculture Policy Director

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