



April 9, 2013

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

**Assembly Bill 551 (Ting) - Sponsor**

Dear Assembly Member Eggman:

On behalf of the San Francisco Urban Agriculture Alliance, we are 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.

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 potential source of economic development.

This legislation provides an incentive to private landowners to make more land available for urban agriculture, which would help expand the number of San Franciscans who benefit from city farming. Currently, hosting agriculture on a privately owned property can be cost-prohibitive, especially in San Francisco, because the revenue potential and property costs are disparate. AB 551 would enable a property owner to apply for a temporary property tax adjustment while the property is under contract with an agricultural enterprise.

Land access and long-term land security are two of the largest obstacles to the start and ongoing sustainability of urban agriculture projects in San Francisco. Part of the SFUAA's policy platform is to increase access to land for city farming and gardening of all types and this legislation would help San Francisco move in that direction.

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, including Assembly Member Ting's most recent amendments, provides a balanced and protective approach by being a voluntary program for property-owners, requiring a 10 year commitment in exchange for a lower property tax assessment, and including consequences for breach of agreements. Additionally, the

legislation is narrowly tailored to target land that is unlikely to otherwise be developed short-term.

The San Francisco Urban Agriculture Alliance respectfully request your AYE vote for Assembly Bill 551 and would like our organization to be listed as a sponsor of the legislation.

Sincerely,

Antonio Roman-Alcalá, Elan Segarra, Susan Kuehn  
Co-coordinators

CC:

Assembly Agriculture Committee

Assembly Member Philip Ting

Agriculture Committee Consultants: Victor Frankovich, Doug Haaland