



Craig McNamara
Board President
Owner, Sierra Orchards

June 8, 2017

Joshua Eddy
Executive Director

Ashley Boren
Executive Director,
Sustainable Conservation

Donald Bransford, Owner
Bransford Farms

Don Cameron,
General Manager,
Terranova Ranch, Inc.

Nancy Casady
General Manager
Ocean Beach People's
Organic Food Co-Op

Helene Dillard, Dean
College of Agricultural
and Environmental
Sciences at the
University of California,
Davis

Bennet Drake, President
Drake Enterprises

Michael Gallo, Co-owner
Joseph Gallo Farms

Eric Holst,
Senior Director,
Environmental Defense
Fund

Bryce Lundberg,
Vice President,
Lundberg Family Farms

Martha Montoya,
President,
Los Kitos Produce

Joy Sterling, CEO
Iron Horse Vineyards

Mr. Ken Alex, Chair
California Strategic Growth Council
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Alex and Council Members:

The protection of agricultural lands should be among the key priorities of the State as the Council works to promote sustainability, economic prosperity, and quality of life for all Californians. The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program is a strong recognition of this priority and should be expanded in funding and scope to protect at-risk agricultural lands from conversion to more GHG-intensive land uses.

As you continue your work in planning for the sustainable growth of our communities and economy, the California State Board of Food and Agriculture recommends that the Council establish a statewide goal to reduce agricultural land conversion. Past, University of California studies have estimated that more than a million acres of farmland could be developed by 2050 if development trends in the state continue. In addition, American Farmland Trust has estimated that, "if California farmland conversion could be reduced by half (from 39,500 to 19,750 acres per year), within a decade we would avoid the emission of 55 million metric tons of greenhouse gases."

By establishing a meaningful and quantifiable statewide goal on reducing farmland conversion, the Council is establishing a benchmark that counties and communities can also align to as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and other statewide policy initiatives begin to take effect. Also, establishing a statewide goal would help to minimize the impact of farmland conversion by prioritizing the development of less productive or unproductive land that is reasonably necessary for non-agricultural purposes.

Earlier this year, the Board updated the California Agricultural Vision and identified resource conservation and stewardship as a priority issue for our state. Protecting farmland (through voluntary agreements) and the SALC program aligns with the intent of this priority.

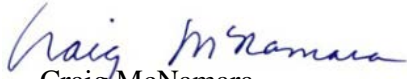


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We encourage the Council to continue your important work in farmland conservation and establish a statewide goal that aligns with climate priorities of the state and encourages collaboration among state and local government entities to meet this goal.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Craig McNamara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Craig McNamara
President