



March 7, 2012

Douglas Bosco
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor,
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

On behalf of the Bay Area Open Space Council, I am pleased to submit this letter of support to the California Coastal Conservancy for American Farmland Trust's proposal to develop a feasibility study and business plan for a Bay Area agricultural economic development finance commission (or similar entity). This entity would help expand sustainable agricultural production for regional markets and provide the infrastructure needed to connect expanded supply and demand for locally-produced food.

The partners involved in this project which also include Greenbelt Alliance and SAGE, believe a feasibility study and business plan is necessary to determine the most appropriate options for the structure and core functions of the commission. Its potential functions would include, but are not limited to:

- Attracting funds to invest in start-up and transformational agricultural operations
- Raising funds to invest in infrastructure needed to expand markets
- Providing technical assistance for agricultural and value-add enterprises such as business planning, marketing assistance, business development and expansion
- Expanding existing regional/local markets and creating new markets specifically for target producers and connecting producers with these markets
- Marketing and public communication campaigns

The overall goal of the project is to sustain agriculture and help ensure that is valued as part of the regional economy, environment and landscape. We feel this project is important because it supports the economic viability of agriculture which is not only key to protecting our food supply but also critical for conserving farmland which is 40% of the Bay Area landscape.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Bettina Ring
Executive Director

cc: Ed Thompson, CA Director, American Farmland Trust
Jeremy Madsen, Executive Director, Greenbelt Alliance
Sibella Kraus, Executive Director, SAGE