



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
WITH FAMILY FARMERS

May 16, 2013

Assembly Member Philip Ting
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 94249-0019
Via facsimile: 916-319-2119

RE: AB 551 (Ting) – Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Act—Support

Dear Assembly Member Ting:

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is a statewide organization that represents both farmers and non-farm urban residents who support sustainable food and farming policies. We are pleased to support your AB 551, the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act. This legislation will help to address one of the biggest obstacles facing urban farmers – affordable access to land.

This legislation provides an incentive to private landowners to make more land available for urban agriculture. Currently, hosting agriculture on a privately owned property can be cost-prohibitive because the revenue potential and property costs are disparate. In the spirit of the Williamson Act, which we have supported for decades, AB 551 would enable an urban property owner to apply for a temporary property tax adjustment while the property is under contract with an agricultural enterprise.

Because it is an opt-in measure for counties, and with amendments takes into consideration the concerns of cities, we believe that the legislation 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.

Whether agriculture is carried out in rural or urban areas, it is a crucial human enterprise of food production. We can be particularly confident that urban agriculture is oriented toward feeding local California citizens, and for this reason we strongly support the passage of SB 551.

Sincerely,

David Runsten
Policy Director