



The Need for Agricultural Land and Educational Urban Farms in the Santa Clara Valley

Representing: Friends of BAREC (www.savebarec.org) and
Post Carbon Santa Clara Valley (www.relocalize.net/groups/santaclara)

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The Benefits and Reasons for Retaining Prime Farmland in Santa Clara



- ◆ Urban adults & children need to be connected to the source of food!
 - Local food production facilitates healthy choices, nutrition and education
- ◆ Moving towards a sustainable future should be part of every community government's planning
 - City of Oakland's Office of Sustainability is doing a Food System Assessment; Proposal of growing 30% of city's food inside urban boundary
- ◆ CA Civil Code 815 states that agricultural land preservation is a high priority for the state and should be placed into a conservation easement

The Benefits and Reasons for Retaining Prime Farmland in Santa Clara (cont.)



- ◆ Farmland provides community food security against economic upheavals
- ◆ Peaking of world oil production shows the urgent need to reconsider local food production and relocalization of our economy
 - We can not afford to lose any remaining farm land for this reason alone
 - San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a Peak Oil Resolution on 4-11-06 with 10-0 unanimous vote (see attached)
- ◆ Agriculture can be integrated effectively in urban areas
 - Organic agriculture is healthy for environment, people, improves biodiversity
 - Educational farms generally use and prefer human power to machinery



Successful Examples of Urban Educational Farms



- ◆ Center for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens in Goleta, CA
 - 12.5 acres of 100 year old organic farm preserved in perpetuity via an agricultural conservation easement in midst of high density urban area
 - Employs 20 people and feeds over 500 families while providing education

- ◆ UC Santa Cruz Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems Farm & Gardens, Santa Cruz, CA
 - UCSC Farm & Garden program has run for 25 years financially self-sufficient
 - Education includes apprentices, K-5 curriculum and community workshops
 - They have offered help to setup similar program in the Santa Clara Valley

- ◆ Tryon Life Community Farm in Portland, OR
 - 7 acre farm, bought from a developer by community donations, placed into conservation easement with Oregon Sustainable Agricultural Land Trust as trustee
 - Provides non-profit income through sustainable living education & selling farm produce

Bay Area Educational Agricultural Programs vs. Santa Clara Valley



- ◆ A few examples in the Bay Area:
 - Marin Food Systems Project
 - Santa Rosa Jr. College Farm
 - Berkeley Farm-to-School Program
 - Livermore's Camp Arroyo Sustainable Living Center

- ◆ Santa Clara (city or county) has little like these programs yet it has some of the best farmland in the State of California
 - Santa Clara Valley agricultural land rated as “Prime Farmland” should be valued by city governments and local residents far beyond what the current market says its value is worth

- ◆ What do we want for the “Valley of Heart's Delight”? Shouldn't we preserve some of this valley's heritage for future generations?

New Education Requirements Will Require Land Resources to Accommodate



- ◆ USDA National Wellness Policy for Nutrition, Health, Physical Education and Obesity Reduction in curriculum starting in 2006-07 school year
- ◆ California State requirements (K-12) in 2007-08 school year to teach the interactions and interdependence of human societies and natural systems (Assembly Bills 1548, 1721)
- ◆ A centralized, non-profit urban farm can meet many of these education requirements for all City and County public schools and alleviate the struggles of individual schools attempting it on their own (funding, staffing, maintenance issues)
 - A non-profit urban farm can apply the income from produce sales and educational programs to pay for farm expenses without tax obligations

Beneficiaries of a Non-Profit Educational Agriculture Center



- ◆ Curriculum for all grade levels in local schools (K-12)
- ◆ Local Colleges: Environmental Studies, Horticulture, Natural History
- ◆ Future Farmer training in organic and sustainable methods
- ◆ Local community via workshops (composting, biointensive methods)
- ◆ Apprenticeship program (~40/season) similar to UCSC CASFS
- ◆ Programs for seniors: volunteer, relaxation, physical therapy and low income shares of fresh farm produce
- ◆ Hospital use for progressive programs and patient therapy
- ◆ General public access during daylight hours for open space
- ◆ Strengthen local community through harvest festivals and other events
- ◆ Landscape professional training in organic methods
- ◆ Restore home for Master Gardeners/Master Composters of SCC

References

- ◆ UCSC Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems: <http://zzyx.ucsc.edu/casfs/>
- ◆ The Center for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens, Goleta, CA: www.fairviewgardens.org
- ◆ TryOn Life Community Farm, Portland, OR: www.tryonfarm.org
- ◆ Peak Oil current news: www.energybulletin.net
- ◆ CA Education and Environment Initiative: www.calepa.ca.gov/Education/EEI
- ◆ USDA Wellness Policy Requirement: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellness_policyrequirements.html
- ◆ City of Oakland, Office of Sustainability, Food System Assessment: <http://oaklandfoodsystem.pbwiki.com/>
- ◆ Friends of BAREC: www.savebarec.org
- ◆ Post Carbon Santa Clara Valley: www.relocalize.net/groups/santaclara



DRAFT PROPOSED RESOLUTION

Resolution acknowledging the challenge of Peak Oil and the need for San Francisco to prepare a plan of response and preparation.

WHEREAS, World oil production is nearing its point of maximum production (“Peak Oil”) and will enter a prolonged period of irreversible decline leading to ever-increasing prices;

WHEREAS, the United States has only 2 percent of the world's oil reserves, produces 8 percent of the world's oil and consumes 25 percent of the world's oil, of which nearly 60 percent is imported from foreign countries;

WHEREAS, the decline in global oil production threatens to increase resource competition, geopolitical instability, and lead to greater impoverishment;

WHEREAS, national oil companies own 72% of remaining oil reserves and 55% of remaining gas reserves¹, and resource nationalism is increasingly dominating decisions of oil and gas development and trade relationships;

WHEREAS, The availability of affordable petroleum is critical to the functioning of our transportation system, the production of our food and of petrochemical-based consumer goods; the paving of roads, the lubrication of all machinery, and myriad other parts of the economy;

WHEREAS, San Francisco is entirely dependent on external supplies of petroleum, including the crude oil processed in Bay Area refineries;

WHEREAS: Price signals of petroleum scarcity are likely to come too late to trigger effective mitigation efforts in the private sector, and governmental intervention at all levels of government will be required to avert social and economic chaos;

WHEREAS, the Department of Energy-sponsored study² on mitigation of Peak Oil demonstrated that a 20-year lead time is required for effective mitigation, while current measures supported by the federal government will replace only 3-weeks worth of gasoline consumption by 2012;³

¹ “The Role of the National Oil Companies in a Changing World: Economic and Energy Relations”, OPEC, 2004, at <http://www.saudinf.com/main/y7480.htm>

² Robert L. Hirsch, R. Bezdek, R. Wendling, *Peaking Of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation, & Risk Management*, February 2005, online at http://www.mnforsustain.org/oil_peaking_of_world_oil_production_study_hirsch.htm

³ <http://www.eia.doe.gov/neic/brochure/renew05/renewable.html>



WHEREAS, alternative sources of transport fuels from coal and natural gas both require high energy inputs and increase total carbon emissions, and biomass-based fuels compete with soil fertility, impacting agricultural sustainability⁴;

WHEREAS, substitution of petroleum with other fossil fuels threatens even greater damage to water, air, soil, and species diversity through their extraction and combustion;

WHEREAS, North American production of natural gas has already peaked, and 46% of California's electricity supply is generated from natural gas; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco has demonstrated leadership in confronting challenges of environmental quality and energy security, promoting environmental and economic equity, and has a rich diversity of citizens committed to maintaining San Francisco's long-term viability;

RESOLVED, The Commission on the Environment acknowledges the unprecedented challenges of Peak Oil; and further

RESOLVED, The Commission supports the adoption of a global Oil Depletion Protocol to provide transparency in oil markets, control price swings, address issues of equity in access to remaining oil resources and provide a framework of predictability within which municipal governments can adjust to increasing oil scarcity; and further

RESOLVED, The Commission supports the undertaking of a city-wide assessment study in order to inventory city activities and their corollary resource requirements, evaluating the impact in each area to a decline in petroleum availability and to higher prices, with the aim of developing a comprehensive city plan of action and response to Peak Oil, and further

RESOLVED, The Commission urges the Mayor to provide funding and direction to city departments for the development of a response plan.

⁴ L. Reijnders, "Conditions for the sustainability of biomass based fuel use", *Energy Policy* 34 (2006) 863–876