

December 15, 2023

To Ray Mueller

C/O San Mateo County Board of Supervisors County Government Center

Redwood City, CA

Re: Support for continuing the farm labor housing loan forgiveness program as it was established.

Dear Supervisor Mueller,

The Agricultural Advisory Committee of San Mateo County requests your support of the continuance of the farm labor housing loan forgiveness program. This program was established by San Mateo County to help agricultural landowners provide housing for very low-income farmworkers by creating new housing, rehabilitating or repairing existing housing, or replacing existing dilapidated mobile home units that have been used as farmworker housing previously. The need to continue this program is dire and losing it tears at the very heart of what we are trying to do for some of our most vulnerable right now.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee asks you to support the continuation of this funding, specifically the part that provides funding to farmers and ranchers to create and maintain farm labor housing on their own property. We ask this for the following reasons:

- As such this program directly supports the efforts of the Farm Labor Housing taskforce in its efforts to ensure safe housing for our farm worker community.
- It's already been established that this does not restrict farm laborers from working at any farm of their choosing while occupying the house; it just assists the farmer in assisting them.
- Should the laborer choose to work on the land which the house is located, they are in close proximity to the farm, still a huge need in rural areas of our San Mateo County Coast.
- Decentralized housing reduces greenhouse gas emissions and traffic.
- Larger projects are often met with opposition from neighbors.
- Keeping affordable housing on the property of the farmers keeps the housing agriculturally related and helps farm laborers from losing housing opportunities to others.

Farmers have seen laborers wait for housing while units designed for them are given to others who are not farm laborers. Continuing the Farm Labor Housing Loan Forgiveness Program specifically for housing on the producer's property supports the very intent of farm worker housing while preserving something we can't lose, agriculture on our San Mateo County Coast. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Natalie Sare, Committee Chair, on behalf of the San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee