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December 20, 2007

Yolo County Board of Supervisors
625 Court Street, Room 204
Woodland, CA 95695

Dear Chair Yamada and Members of the Board,

On behalf of the Yolo Ag Futures Alliance (AFA), I am writing to comment on the concept of agricultural districts, proposed for inclusion in the Yolo County General Plan. We also offer the AFA's assistance as the county further develops the agricultural district concept.

We applaud county staff and the Board of Supervisors for recognizing the need for different standards to ease farming in an increasingly urban environment and to encourage agritourism. The AFA supports the concepts outlined as part of the "Agricultural District Program" on Page 8 of the September 18, 2007 report to the Board of Supervisors, including lower building permit fees, relaxed standards for parking, free or subsidized participation in marketing efforts, free or subsidized use of county CEQA clearance documents, differentiated impact thresholds for rural roadways to allow higher traffic levels for ag-related events, the creation of a county "permit coordinator" position, and improved opportunities for development of on-site housing for agricultural families. We also support the Board's decision to remove rural residential development from the discussion of agricultural districts.

The AFA believes, however, the Board of Supervisors should apply most of these concepts to farming operations across the county, not just in specific districts. We understand the need to focus limited resources on areas with the greatest potential to remain as viable agricultural areas. As stated in previous correspondence to the Board, we support the development of ag preservation zones to which organizations can direct funding for ag land conservation easements, processing facilities, marketing, or other resource-intensive efforts. Most of the concepts in the September 18, 2007 staff report are not resource-intensive, however, and should be available to all farming operations.

The AFA is grateful for the Board of Supervisors' energetic interest in preserving agricultural land and supporting agricultural economic development opportunities. We look forward to working with you to implement the agricultural policies in the existing General Plan, as well as developing new policies and implementation measures for the updated General Plan.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (530) 662-3570 or yoloranch@yolo.net. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynnel Pollock for Ag Futures Alliance

cc: David Morrison, Yolo County; Heidi Tschudin, Tschudin Consulting Group; Wes Ervin, Yolo County; Denise Sagara, Yolo County Farm Bureau; Paul Robins, Yolo County Resource Conservation District