Slow Food®
Southwest Washington

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Mr. Steve Morasch, Chair
Clark County Planning Commission
Clark County Community Planning
PO Box 9810
Vancouver, WA 98666-9810

December 17, 2015

**RE: Designation of Industrial Zone, De-designation 600 acres of Agricultural Land**

Dear Chair Morasch and Planning Commission Members:

My name is Sue Marshall. My family owns a 20 acre farm in Ridgefield and I am a board member of Slow Food SW Washington. My comments tonight are on behalf of Slow Food SW Washington - working to inspire people to eat, grow and share local, healthy food.

Our concern is not with the merits of any proposed project on this site but with the de-designation of 600 acres of agricultural lands with no mitigation to offset the net loss of farm land. This land qualifies as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance and continues to have an Agriculture comprehensive plan designation.

We believe the county is overdue in developing tools that can ameliorate conflicting land uses related to agricultural. These tools can serve as the catalyst to create win-win opportunities and can protect farmland for the long term.

There have been two excellent reports that point the way forward.

- The Agriculture Preservation Committee's report of 2009, *Agricultural Preservation Strategies Report*. A principle recommendation from the report is the designation of agricultural production districts in the county. These would be prioritized areas for the preservation of agricultural lands and the focus for application of purchase or transfer of development rights and aggregation of land dedicated to farming.

  **Follow up on this report and convene a task force that will focus on identification of agricultural production districts and implementation of strategies to enhance and protect these districts.**

- Clark County Food System Council, *Promoting Agricultural Food Production in Clark County*, 2013, recommendation: during the current update of the comprehensive plan consider voluntary measures to protect and maintain agriculturally productive lands.

  **Seek the Clark County Food System's assistance.**

We recognize it may not be in your power to set up such a taskforce or commission but we urge you to be proactive in making this recommendation to the County Council

Agriculture has long-term commercial significance in Clark County According to USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, *2012 Census of Agriculture Washington State and County Data* - Income from farm-related sources is up sharply in Clark County, increasing from $4 2 million in 2007 to $5 98 million in 2012 - an increase of 41 percent Fueling this, at least in part, is both the increased access to direct markets and a customer base motivated to buy local We need to build on this momentum

Thank you for your consideration We urge you to postpone this designation until an adequate mitigation plan can be put in place

Sincerely,

Sue Marshall

## P.S. More on Slow Food Southwest Washington

**Our story:** The Southwest Washington chapter of Slow Food USA was founded in 2006 as a Leadership Clark County project

We reconnect Southwest Washington with the people, traditions, plants, animals, fertile soils and waters that produce our food. We work to inspire a transformation in food policy, production practices and market forces so that they ensure equity, sustainability and pleasure in the food we eat

**Urban Abundance**
Rescues fresh local produce that would otherwise go to waste, connecting this abundance with people in need, and inspiring others to do the same

**Clark County Grown**
Clark County Grown is a branding and marketing campaign adding value and easing access to farm products grown in Clark County The initiative is launched by Slow Food Southwest Washington in collaboration with Clark County Farmers Market Coalition

**Garden to Table:**
The Garden to Table Youth Mural and Workshop Series is a program that works with Clark County youth facing systemic barriers By designing and painting a community mural, the Clark County youth will explore and learn about four important topics Food Heritage, Local Food System, Food Justice, and Healthy Eating – a collaboration with WSU MIT's youth program, AHAS