



January 27, 2020

Rep. Sharon Shewmake
Washington State House of Representatives
1155 N State Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Re: Sustainable Farm & Field – SB 5947

Dear Rep. Shewmake:

PCC Community Markets, a locally-owned community food market, would like to thank you for your leadership in sponsoring the Sustainable Farm & Field (SF&F) legislation. PCC supports the SF&F bill but believes that the proposed substitute language of the bill could be strengthened to better align its intended goals with related state-level initiatives and policy efforts we are seeing across the country on this important issue.

SF&F must define soil health and integrate this critical element of regenerative agriculture within its definition of “carbon farming.”

While there is much still to be learned and studied on the topic of how best to implement regenerative and soil health enhancing agricultural practices (and the resulting carbon sequestration benefits), there is little disagreement among scientists and agricultural experts that at the core of these benefits is, in fact, the act of developing healthy soils.

As drafted, the latest version of the SF&F does not define soil health or adequately integrate this core principle within its definition of “carbon farming.” We believe this separates this exciting and important legislation from not only complimentary state-level initiatives, such as the Soil Health Initiative, but also the existing scientific support on agricultural carbon sequestration occurring across the nation.

By focusing on carbon farming without adequate integration of the fundamental principle of soil health, we believe the legislation runs the risk failing to achieve its intended goals and creating opportunities for abuse of the intended funds.

SF&F should recognize complementary funding and programs as separate and necessary.

To address the climate and environmental challenges we are facing, we must make every resource available and make every effort possible. Many agricultural programs, such as organic, have supported the very agricultural practices that SF&F attempts to encourage on a broader scale. New initiatives,



such as the Soil Health Initiative, may also share overlapping goals and programs. All are valuable and all must be supported in our efforts.

Without identifying that the SF&F funding and aims are meant as complementary and not potentially competitive, however, we fear legislative and administrative confusion and/or reprioritization. Accordingly, we request that a provision be added to the proposed SF&F bill to identify the funds associated with the bill as complementary and not a replacement for local, state, private or federal funding for related training or agricultural support.

As the nation's largest co-op grocery retailer with 13 stores and more than \$288 million in revenue, PCC Community Markets has dedicated our triple bottom line business to providing local, organic and sustainable food to Washington state residents. Our shoppers care about the environment and how their food is grown, raised, and harvested. Our shoppers also care about what can be done to reduce the harmful impacts of our food system and encourage regenerative, soil health-conscious practices.

We thank you for your important work on this legislation and urge you to consider our proposed amendments.

Submitted respectfully,

Aimee Simpson
Director of Advocacy & Product Sustainability