



June 16, 2021

Derek Long
Sustainable Connections
1701 Ellis St STE 221
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Derek Long,

PCC Community Markets is the nation's largest community-owned food market, with over 90,000 active members, 15 stores across the Puget Sound region and over \$300 million in sales. PCC's vision is to inspire and advance the health and well-being of people, their communities, and our planet. It is our mission to ensure that good food nourishes the communities we serve while cultivating vibrant local, organic food systems.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the necessity of maintaining regional and independent food sources and supplies has increasingly become a priority. The ability of a town, city, and county to turn to the diversified specialty crop producers, distributors, and retailers within their local regions (often focusing on organic products) has provided a lifeline for multiple food supply chains.

In the Seattle region and for PCC, this has meant being able to call on local producers to fill orders left empty by national distributors and enabling farmer market producers to shift supplies to struggling food banks. There have been many more examples and all of them have emphasized the incredible agility and essentiality of local, small and mid-size producer supply chain. Additionally, COVID has presented an urgent need for adapting to, and adopting new technologies to access new and existing markets and assist in response and recovery efforts to support growth and sustainability for local economies and to bring more equitable access to markets.

PCC Community Markets is pleased to endorse the Eat Local First Collaborative's efforts to create online wholesale marketing infrastructure that will (1) provide access to training, technical and marketing support for producers to increase direct-to-consumer sales and increase ability to meet buyers' regulatory specifications and standards with focus on operations based in, or serving low income and/or low food access areas; (2) increase capacity and access, and develop equitable representation of producers with priority to traditionally underserved populations: BIPOC, women, veterans, immigrants or members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aimee Simpson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Aimee Simpson
Director of Advocacy & Product Sustainability