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TO: King County Council
RE: Support for proposed agricultural uses zoning code amendments
DATE: July 26, 2017

The King Conservation district would like to express its support of the proposed agricultural uses zoning code changes currently before council.

King Conservation District's staff have provided substantial input to these code changes, through work at the Agricultural Permit Team and through work with the Agricultural Commission.

Core to these changes are new definitions for agriculture in code, consolidation of agricultural land uses into one reference table, and changes to permitted uses, activities, and support services that better recognize the needs and complexity of farming in a highly-urbanized county.

Because no single code update can capture the wide range of ways farms are operated, this code formalizes the current ad-hoc ag permit team as an Agricultural Technical Review Committee tasked to evaluate more complex agricultural permit situations. We believe this approach represents a solid step towards creating an operating environment that is responsive to farmer needs while protecting the environment and the natural resource base.

We strongly support the County's recent hiring of a Regulatory/ Permitting Specialist for Agriculture within the Department of Natural Resources and Parks. This position will be a key lead in helping apply these code changes in order to be successful in achieving the goal to "support viable and sustainable agricultural production districts" in King County.

Sincerely,

Bea Covington

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Executive Director
King Conservation District