

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

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SCOTT J. SOARES
Commissioner

November 1, 2010

Busa Land Use Proposal Committee
Attn: Mr. David Horton
c/o Board of Selectmen
1625 Massachusetts Ave.
Lexington, MA 02420

Dear Chairman Horton:

Subject: Lexington Community Farm Coalition Working Community Farm Proposal

I am writing to you today in strong support of the Lexington Community Farm Coalition's proposal to create a working community farm on the Busa farmland. This project shows great potential to benefit the Town of Lexington and surrounding communities in many ways: it will provide access to fresh, locally grown produce, educational opportunities to adults and children, a recreational venue, and importantly, preservation of Lexington's longstanding agricultural heritage (the latter recently recognized in an April 2010 Lexington Farming Resolution).

As you may be aware, Massachusetts has made significant strides towards "cultivating" a thriving agricultural future in the Bay State. In the last Agricultural Census (2007), we saw farms grow 27% to 7,691. The state has also been able to hold steady its total acreage of farmland. Now with growing interest in food safety and knowing from where one's food comes, these are indeed encouraging milestones.

The Community Farm Coalition proposal will further promote support for Locally Grown initiatives. This parcel of land in particular was classified by the NRCS as 100% Hinckley Soil and of "statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, or forage crops." Lexington is fortunate to have such a valuable asset and should be proud that the more land kept under cultivation means greater sustainability for local food sources.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources looks forward to working with the Lexington Community Farm Coalition via the programs and services we offer. We hope the Busa Land Use Proposal Committee will also see this project as worthy a one as we do. Thank you for your consideration and if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott J. Soares".

Scott J. Soares, Commissioner

Cc: George A. Burnell
Norman Cohen
Peter C. J. Kelley
Hank Manz, Chair
Deborah N. Mauger