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June 30th, 2020

Lucy Diekmann, Ph.D.
Urban Agriculture/ Food Systems Advisor
UCCE Santa Clara County
1553 Berger Drive, Bldg. 1
San Jose, CA 95112

RE: Letter of Support for Closing the Climate Loop: Building Climate Resilience through Community Composting

Dear Dr. Diekmann,

As the Executive Director of Valley Verde, I am pleased to confirm my enthusiastic support for the proposal, "Closing the Climate Loop: Building Climate Resilience through Community Composting" led by the University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources in conjunction with San Jose Conservation Corps, Valley Verde, and Veggielution, to the Open Space Authority Urban Grant Program. In my capacity as Executive Director, I fully support this initiative.

I understand that the overarching goal of the project is to implement a network of community compost hubs in San Jose, evaluate the impact of compost creation and use on carbon storage, and educate community members on composting and climate-smart practices in urban agriculture.

As a partner in this project Valley Verde will expand the existing composting site, and provide hands-on learning opportunities for community members, while teaching them to reduce their own food waste and increasing access to organic soil amendments.

At Valley Verde we dedicate our efforts to build healthy and resilient communities by providing low-income families educational programs, edible gardens, and micro-entrepreneurship opportunities that create food security and lead to self-sufficiency. After ten years of working in partnership with home growers, we know that one of the main barriers for home gardeners to continue growing their own food is the cost of organic soil amendments. For that reason, we consider that this project adds value to our existing programs.

The community will benefit by increasing access to free or low-cost soil organic amendments they can produce in home or collectively at Valley Verde site.

Thank you for leading this important county effort. I am confident that this project will have a significant impact on the region's climate change goals, while promoting access to resources for low-income communities within the county.

Sincerely,

Raul Lozano
Executive Director
376 West Virginia Street San Jose, CA 95125
408-666-4794