Veggielution
www.veggielution.org | info@veggielution.org
647 S King Rd, San Jose, CA 95116 | (408) 753-6705

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 Veggielution, 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.

The mission of Veggielution is to connect people from diverse backgrounds through food and farming to build community in East San José. Through Veggielution's three key program platforms - Community Engagement, Environmental Education, and Food Sovereignty- we aim to help our East San José neighbors experience a richness of community life and health that combats social isolation and provides the support needed to create more robust social networks and take positive action in their community.

East San Jose is largely home to working-poor, immigrant families. Despite residents' commitment to hard work--most people work multiple jobs--the median income is $27,583 annually. Based on the 2010 Census, 80% of residents are first- and second-generation Mexican-origin families, and increasingly home to immigrants from Asia. Mayfair residents have a rate for diabetes deaths that is over twice the rate for Santa Clara County, and also have some of the worst incidence of heart disease and obesity in the area. Despite these challenging circumstances, Mayfair is a vibrant neighborhood, rich in cultural and culinary traditions and characterized by diverse entrepreneurial and informal food businesses. It is also the home of a strong collaborative of community organizations that offer food access, civic engagement, education and arts and culture programs.

As a partner on this project it is our organizational goal to implement a network of community compost hubs in San Jose, evaluate the impact of compost creation and use on carbon storage at Veggielution, and educate our East San José community members on composting and climate-smart practices in urban agriculture. Veggielution is willing to provide our already existing

Veggielution
www.veggielution.org | info@veggielution.org
647 S King Rd, San Jose, CA 95116 | (408) 753-6705

aerated static composting system to be included in this community composting network as well as our staff expertise in community engagement & strategic partnerships.

This program will be a way to encourage & educate families from East San José about the benefits of community composting. We will leverage our Food Sovereignty programs to recruit, organize, and conduct outreach during this project. By better linking East San Jose residents to this crucial project and learning, Veggielution aims to have a long-term impact on residents' perception of what is possible for their communities' food system and food waste.

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,

Cayce Hill
Executive Director