



July 18, 2024

Governing Board, Bay Area Regional Collaborative  
Allison Brooks, Executive Director, Bay Area Regional Collaborative  
Bay Area Metro Center | 375 Beale Street | Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Subject: Input on BARC's Organizational Plan Update

Dear Allison and BARC Governing Board:

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Advisory Council of the **Bay Area Agricultural Plan Framework**, we are writing to request robust representation of the region's agricultural sector in BARC's organizational plan update. We appreciate your invitation to provide input to this update and are pleased to submit this joint letter for your consideration.

With 45 percent of the Bay Area's land base in agricultural use, investing in the ecological, economic, and social resilience of regional agriculture presents an opportunity to improve the resiliency of agriculture in the region, strengthen its cultural and public health contributions, and scale agriculture's critical contribution to climate mitigation and adaptation.

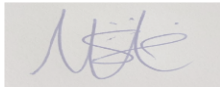
Agriculture has much to offer the region; however, the region and its agriculture also have much to lose. The nine county Bay Area is home to around 9,000 farms and ranches on almost two million acres of agricultural land, accounting for \$2.5 billion in annual sales of agricultural products. In addition, the region's farmers steward our critical natural resources, the farmlands give us iconic landscapes, and our abundant foodshed provides fresh healthy food. However, rising temperatures and extreme weather events, lack of investments in agriculture, insufficient agricultural worker housing, and continued threat of agricultural land loss due to incremental conversion to urban development, put the agricultural sector at risk. These challenges have threatened the existence of many of the region's small and midscale farmers and ranchers, have negative impacts on farmworkers and threaten to upend efforts to improve regional food security and strengthen farm-to-table food systems.

The **Bay Area Agricultural Plan Framework** (2023) was developed in response to the above-mentioned needs and opportunities. It was funded by the *Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation* (SALC) program through a grant to Santa Clara County, the project lead. Under the guidance of a seven-member Advisory Council with input from a 60-member Working Group, the **Framework** outlines four focus areas with 15 strategies to address equity and climate resilience for the region's agriculture, covering the Bay Area's nine counties. The focus areas are: *Agricultural Lands Conservation and Land Tenure*; *Climate-Smart Agricultural Lands and Stewardship*; *Agricultural Economy & Infrastructure*; and *Agricultural Sector Housing*. These focus areas intersect with BARC's regional climate change adaptation (and hazard mitigation) goals and priority of strengthening regional technical assistance to local governments to effectively coordinate and address climate adaptation and resilience.

With BARC's organizational update, we see an opportunity to address the risks to and opportunities of agriculture at a regional scale more inclusively and holistically as an integrated component of the regional landscape. As BARC sets out to address the region's cross-cutting challenges, and with the completion of the **Framework** as a guide, we welcome BARC to engage as a partner in advancing the resiliency of the region.

Thank you for your consideration,

**Advisory Council of the Bay Area Agricultural Plan Framework:**



Misti Arias, General Manager,  
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation  
and Open Space District



Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager,  
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority



Wendy Millet, Director, TomKat Ranch



Andy Naja-Riese, Chief Executive Officer,  
Agricultural Institute of Marin



Sam Schuchat, retired Executive Officer,  
California Coastal Conservancy

Louise Bedsworth, Executive Director, UC  
Berkeley, Climate Center for Law, Energy, &  
the Environment

Torri Estrada, Executive Director, Carbon  
Cycle Institute

**Advisory Council support:**



Sibella Kraus, President,  
Sustainable Agriculture Education



Amie MacPhee, Founder and Principal,  
Cultivate



Serena Unger, Founder and Principal,  
Urban Rural Regional Strategies