



PRESS RELEASE

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ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE CENTER URGES PRESERVATION OF DWINDLING LOCAL URBAN AGRICULTURE IN GOLETA VALLEY

NEW EDC REPORT HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF THREATENED PRODUCTIVE AG LAND

Santa Barbara, CA – The Environmental Defense Center (EDC) today announced the release of “[Urban Agriculture in the Goleta Valley](#),” a report profiling some of the few remaining productive urban farms in the Goleta Valley, many of which are being threatened by potentially being rezoned and developed as part of the Eastern Goleta Valley Community Plan Update (Plan). Located within Santa Barbara County, Goleta Valley’s urban agriculture not only provides critical benefits to human health and well-being and the environment, but also contributes to the County’s \$3 billion agriculture industry. EDC demonstrates the critical need for these farmlands and encourages community members to voice support for their conservation.

EDC’s report profiles five agricultural sites, three of which are specifically proposed for rezone and development in the Plan, and two of which are listed as alternative property options for rezone and development. One of the parcels specifically identified for rezone and development – the South Patterson Triangle – is actively and successfully farmed by a local farmer, as are both of the alternative sites – the Giorgi/South Hollister and Hodges/San Marcos Growers sites. These properties are home to John Givens Farm, Goleta Lemon Association, and Lane Farm, all who we see at our local farmers’ markets and whose produce is seen in a number of our grocery stores.

The Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department is in the process of updating the Plan, which provides a framework and overarching policies for development and land use for the region for the next 15-30 years. The County has released a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Plan to assess the environmental impacts of such long-range planning documents and to inform the public of the environmental impacts of the Plan, such as conversion of agricultural land. Community members are encouraged to comment on the DEIR to help facilitate informed local decision-making.

EDC’s report highlights that the housing needs identified in the Plan can be satisfied through rezone and development of two of the agricultural sites that are not currently actively farmed – the MTD and Tatum sites. The Environmentally Superior Alternative identified in the DEIR would only rezone those sites, thereby satisfying the state housing mandates while eliminating the need to develop active farm sites. According to EDC Staff Attorney Nicole Di Camillo, “The Environmental Defense Center supports Alternative E as a clear win-win for our community that will preserve our local farms. We can meet our housing needs and preserve these thriving urban farms that provide us with so many environmental, health and economic benefits.”

In addition to profiling the threatened farmland, the report identifies the environmental, economic and human health and well-being benefits provided by urban agriculture. These benefits include the healthier and fresher quality of local food, the reduced carbon footprint of local food, and the economic boon and jobs provided by local farms. Funding for the report was provided in part by the UCSB Associated Students Coastal Fund.

For more information and to [read the report](#), visit EDC's website.

*The **Environmental Defense Center**, a non-profit law firm, protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy, and legal action and works primarily within Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo counties. Since 1977, EDC has empowered community based organizations to advance environmental protection. Program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health. Learn more about EDC at www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org*

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