November 5, 2020

Southern SARE

1109 Experiment St., Stuckey Building

University of Georgia

Griffin, GA 30223

Dear Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grants Management:

I am writing this letter in support of the SSARE grant proposal "The use of cyanobacteria (cyanophyta) biofertilizer to increase crop productivity, improve soil health, and agricultural sustainability in Florida" led by Florida International University Agroecology program.

The DiMare Company is one of the leading tomato growers in Florida. Since the early days of developing the growth of mid-winter tomatoes and vegetables in Florida, we have always viewed staying on the cutting edge of technology and support of research as a critical factor in our success. Many in our organization are involved in various aspects of the industry and invest significantly in development and research. Always learning, we are actively involved with agricultural departments at major universities.

We have always been pioneers in the tomato industry, from our innovations such as frost protection irrigation systems, utilization of plastic mulch, and large drip irrigation to our current utilization of virtually impermeable film (VIF).

The DiMare Companies have always been leaders in developing new and improved practices, including disease model forecasting and analysis of weather prediction to conserve water. We promote advances in socially responsible use of pesticides and became one of the first high-tech vegetable farms to incorporate moisture-sensory computer technology. Even with all of the

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advancements, we still hand pick each product to ensure the highest quality.

The industry and our customers' needs are constantly changing. We believe that through the dynamic changes within our company and our underlying commitment to strong ethics and values, we are well positioned to continue to successfully grow and meet our customers' needs as the industry continues to evolve.

The FIU Agroecology program faculty and students have been participating in innovative sustainable agriculture education, research, and outreach activities. The proposal's plan to develop and evaluate an innovative novel idea of making biofertilizer from freshwater algal blooms and use if for sustainable food production will benefit Florida farmers.

We are happy to provide expert advice and assistance with the successful execution of the project. I strongly support this effort to develop this biofertilizer that has tremendous environmental, agricultural, economic benefit to Florida growers. This proposal project is of interest to us as it aligns with our mission of sustainable agriculture, conservation and protection of ecosystem health.

Sincerely

Tony DiMare

Vice President

DiMare Homestead, Inc.

Homestead, FL

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