

May 17, 2021

To:  
Administrative Council  
Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program  
Re: Letter of support for grant proposal to the Western SARE Research & Education Competitive Grants Program

Dear Western SARE reviewers,

I write on behalf of the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCDSCC), to express our support for the grant proposal titled *“Supporting Small Farms and New and Future Farmers through Agricultural Technology, Regenerative Practices, Permaculture and Best Practices”* led by Whiskey Hill Farm and the Sustainable Systems Research Foundation, both based in Santa Cruz County, CA. The proponents seek to create a support network for small farmers in the Central Coast area, with the goal of building professional capacity, fostering and facilitating exchange of knowledge, and demonstrating practices, techniques and technologies that can increase farm productivity and resiliency. As Agriculture and Conservation Program Manager for the RCDSCC, I see great value in this proposal and several ways in which our agency’s work and on-going relationships with small producers on the Central Coast region can both benefit and be supported by the proposed project.

RCDSCC actively works with small and large producers, agricultural industry and a number of public and private partner agencies on the central coast of California, to help advance sustainable agriculture practices, climate change preparedness, and conservation of soil and water resources in both organic and conventional systems. RCDSCC shares the proponent organization’s goals of supporting local small farming operations to feed local foodsheds, advancing their capacity and economic viability while emphasizing a sustainable land use and natural resource conservation.

RCDSCC has a long record of successful collaboration with growers and private landowners, which has resulted in voluntary implementation of conservation practices, as well as access to USDA-NRCS cost-share programs and UC Cooperative Extension’s technical assistance and expertise. The proposed endeavors in this project are timely and relevant to support small farms on the California Central Coast, and at the same time address critical social and environmental issues in our region. The RCDSCC fully supports this proposal as a local stakeholder.

Sincerely,



Sacha Lozano  
Program Manager - Agricultural Land Stewardship