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[www.kingcd.org](http://www.kingcd.org)

November 9, 2017

Mr. Matt Barnard  
PLENTY  
582 Eccles Avenue  
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Dear Mr. Barnard,

I'd like to congratulate you on your decision to site a large-scale indoor farming facility in Kent, Washington. The poetry of such an operation rising from what was once one of the most fertile agricultural production zones and is now most known for its warehouses is not lost on me. As the Executive Director of King Conservation District, an agency that works directly with local farmers, among other constituents, I welcome you to our region.

You are correct that between development pressures in our region and a strong healthy food ethic, policymakers and other involved and invested in the food landscape struggle to balance food production, demand, and access. Since King County launched its Local Food Initiative in 2014, <http://kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/constantine/initiatives/local-food-initiative.aspx>, King Conservation District has found itself squarely in the intersection of this balancing act.

***We work with traditional farmers to help ensure farming remains an economically viable livelihood.***

***We work with farmers markets, institutions, and other points of procurement to educate consumers about the availability of local product.***

***We work with urban community and market gardeners, launch new food production opportunities for front-line communities to ensure access to healthy, local food, and explore creative ways to make more and better food available to a broader set of eaters.***

BETTER  
GROUND

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In short, KCD is a go-to resource for many here in the food landscape. And while we are excited that such a large-scale food production enterprise is locating in the heart of a city that routinely finds itself on low-food-access maps - a city in which many front-line immigrants and refugees settle each year - your promise to deliver “Whole Food quality at Walmart prices” raises significant concerns. Delivery on that promise would like *undermine* the local food economy, rather than have the liberating effect you paint in your interview. I hope we can begin a conversation that explores the ways in which Plenty can contribute to a truly healthy regional food economy.

I invite you to familiarize yourself with some of the innovative food sector endeavors currently at play here in King County, including:

- *There are 42 farmers markets in King County (17 in Seattle city limits alone!)*
- *According to Washington Dept. of Agriculture, King County has 1,837 reported farms and produces \$121 million in crops and livestock market value*
- *28 of the 42 farmers markets accept Fresh Bucks (subsidized purchasing for low income shoppers) to help ensure access for all*
- *Over 60 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs have pick up sites in King County*
- *The City of Seattle has 90 P-Patch gardens that allow 6,800 urban gardeners to grow their own fresh fruits and vegetables*
- *Seattle’s P Patch Program donates over 24,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables annually to area food banks (ensuring that hundreds of additional individuals can access that produce)*
- *Seattle has recently embraced Imperfect Produce (a No Cal neighbor of yours, I believe)*
- *King Conservation District supports the Local Institutional Food Team (LIFT) to help source local food for area institutions by providing technical assistance to purchasers looking for local agricultural products*

Further, I would like the opportunity to welcome you to the area in person. I suggest we get to know each other, along with a few key folks at the County and the City of Kent who are also deeply committed to expanding our food universe, over – what else? – lunch made of local, fresh ingredients.

Sincerely,

Bea Covington  
Executive Director

Enclosure