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Date: March 24, 2015 Council File: 15-0103
To: Planning and Land Use Committee Item No: 4
From: Andrew Douglas
Reference: Plan for a Healthy LA
Subject: Supportive testimony for robust, expedient adaption and implementation

TESTIMONY

Good afternoon. As a non-profit advocate and someone who grows food, I'm grateful for this opportunity to contribute testimony in support of the urban agriculture recommendations in the *Plan for a Healthy LA*.

According to the Department of Labor, the average American spends \$6,600 annually on food. In LA, if just 3% of those expenditures went towards food grown here, it would inject \$800 million annually into the local economy. At 5%, it would be more like \$1.3 billion. Conversely, taxpayers give industrial, too big to fail, corporate ag over twenty billion for non-essential commodity crops. Globally, virtually all food is subsidized however here in America, urban farming is a tragic exception. The Open Acres project shows us that there's over ten thousand acres of available land here in the city. We have prolific evidence of capacity to activate those vacant parcels because every community garden has a years-long waitlist and recently even UCLA, USC, and LA Trade Tech have begun some form of urban farming program. The average american farmer is almost sixty years old, and GMOs and robots aren't capable of saving our future. Only we are.

Urban ag is a force multiplier. It mitigates blight, reduces heat island effect, provides healthy food, incentivizes exercise, creates jobs, retracts property tax revenue by increasing home values, saves water, serves as gathering venues, and serves the vital functions of resiliency and self-sufficiency. This plan is the first step towards building out an infrastructure that could serve the needs of tens of thousands of constituents. Please consider robust, expedient implementation of *all* the plan's urban ag recommendations.