



Why Agriculture is
URBAN Washington's
Greatest Asset:
✓ Food ✓ Environment



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Pacific Northwest Director



Reason # 1: Food



No Farms No Food[®]

www.farmland.org



1-800-431-1499



The accelerating loss of working farmland

- 1.2 million acres developed every year (23,000 acres in WA - size of Lake Wash.)
- Lose most productive lands first
- 75% of WA farmland has market value exceeding its agriculture value
- Aging farmer population
- Diminishing ownership by local food producers – leased land
- 86% of nation's fruits & vegetables in path of development



“How’s it going for us” using current GMA

- Much of ag not in ag zoning
- 35-40 acre ag zoning is best we have
- 15, 10, even 5-acre zoning
- Grandfathering
- Zoning “erosion”
- No expectation of improvement ahead
- Most farms larger than their zoning –
farm sale means land fragmentation
- Problem bigger than can be solved with
increased farm profitability



The need for a new – powerful public constituency

- Limited funding for PDR
- TDR depends on GMA “fortitude”
- Both require a new, strong, public constituency
- Need for an urban-rural, farm-city connection that supports consistency in our zoning laws and funding for PDR programs
- The result: local farms and local food



Reason # 2: Environment

- ❑ **Rapid growth - sensitive environment**
 - 3-7 times more people in PNW by 2100
- ❑ **Limited opportunities to mitigate/offset**
 - Public lands, cities, private farms/forests
- ❑ **Rising cost of environmental compliance**
 - Mitigation: 5-30% of cost; \$150-300K/acre;
 - Public Utilities: \$100mm plus treatment plants
 - Carbon: \$144bb worldwide; \$350mm in US
- ❑ **Increased pressure to regulate**
 - Alternate futures for agriculture & society
- ❑ **Increased pressure to develop**



Our daunting land use future

- Ever-increasing demands on a limited land base**
 - Development**
 - Environmental mitigation**
 - Recreation**
 - Timber**
 - Food**
- Envision the Puget Sound Basin – a science-fiction future?**



What are Environmental Markets?

- **Replacement of environmental services destroyed by growth and development**
- **A few examples:**
 - **Carbon Sequestration**
 - **Water Quality Trading**
 - **Wetland Mitigation**
 - **Wildlife Habitat Mitigation**
 - **Renewable energy**
 - **Water rights transactions**
 - **Transfer of development rights**
 - **Aquifer recharge protection**
 - **Flood mitigation**
 - **Etc.**

The opportunity for a Farm-City Compact

□ Farmers and non-farmers have reciprocal needs

Farmers	Non-Farmers
Dependable local markets	Dependable local food supply
Affordable, undeveloped land	Compact, efficient cities
Viable and sustainable rural communities	Livable, workable, urban communities
Relief from costly burdens of environmental compliance	Environmentally affordable and responsible growth



Envision a world where . . .



- Urban and rural communities understand their co-dependency!**
- Local farms earn enough from selling local food and local environmental benefits to make an honest living!**
- Farm supplied environmental credits save urban communities money!**
- Urban growth & development pay to protect open farm landscapes!**



As we get more of this . . .



**We must also retain
some of this**



American Farmland Trust





A window of opportunity



www.farmland.org

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