

## **Local food production on the Garden City Lands makes sense for climate action**

July 23, 2009

Dear Minister John Yap,

As Minister for State for Climate Action, you are aware of the importance of increasing local food production. In a poll conducted by Ipsos Reid in December, 2008, **91% of residents agreed that “it is important that BC produce enough food so we don’t have to depend on imports from other places.”** Further, 8 out of 10 residents agreed that a benefit of agriculture is protecting green spaces.

The farther food travels to us from its source, the more fossil energy is expended and the more carbon is released into the atmosphere. David Pimentel at Cornell University estimated that it takes about 10 “calories” of fossil energy to put one calorie of food on our plates in North America<sup>1</sup>. **About 70 percent of these “calories” are tied up in processing and transportation.**

The Garden City Lands provides Richmond with a unique opportunity to showcase to the world how urban agriculture can be integrated within a city and provide its citizens with both local food and a model of sustainability. A major value of developing the local food system with urban agriculture is the climate action aspect. Urban agriculture, especially when it is organic, can absorb carbon dioxide while greatly reducing the carbon emission of food shipped at a distance. **This will enhance the already significant value of the Garden City Lands as a carbon sink.**

A recent academic report by Dr. Mae Wan Ho estimates that **organic, sustainable agriculture that localizes food systems has the potential to mitigate nearly thirty percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and save one-sixth of global energy use.**<sup>2</sup>

I urge you to publicly express the importance of keeping the Garden City Lands green, within the ALR, producing food for local people, and contributing to climate action.

Sincerely,

Arzeena Hamir, M.Sc., P.Ag.  
Agrologist

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<sup>1</sup> David Pimentel & Mario Giampietro, Cornell University, “The Tightening Conflict: Population, Energy Use and the Ecology of Agriculture”, October, 1993

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Mae Wan Ho, Institute of Science and Society, “Organic Agriculture and Localized Food & Energy Systems for Mitigating Climate Change” October, 2008.