

Associated Students of the University of California



2014 Spring, Senate Bill No. 84

A Bill in Support of Preventing Development of the Gill Tract Farm

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WHEREAS, the Gill Tract Farm is a plot of land owned by the Regents of the University of California, located on Marin Avenue and San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley; and,

WHEREAS, the University of California was established as a Land-Grant University under the Morrill Land-Grant Acts, designating colleges for agricultural, and later mechanical purposes; and,

WHEREAS, the UC Regents proposed a plan to get approval from the Albany City Council for the zoning of a Sprouts Farmer's Market and an assisted living center on the majority of the 20 acres remaining from the original 100 acre tract; and,

WHEREAS, the Albany City Council approved the zoning for the development project; and,

WHEREAS, community members and organizations, such as the Gill Tract Farm Coalition and Occupy the Farm, have been fighting to stop development on the Gill Tract for over fifteen years in order to prompt the Regents to create a collaborative design process that is inclusive and accessible to both students and community member for possible alternative uses of the land, such as research, education, and community engagement; and,

WHEREAS, the substantial number of new and innovative food justice urban agricultural projects in the Bay Area highlights the valuable community-driven research that the University could be a global leader on by establishing an Urban Agroecological Research Station; and,

WHEREAS, community-based research has emerged as field of active and serious scholarly attention and the University could play a valued role in creating models for authentic community-University relationships; and,

WHEREAS, professors, such as Miguel Altieri who already uses the land for instructional purposes, can incorporate the land into their curriculum and research in agroecology and local urban agriculture projects; and,

WHEREAS, students can use the land for hands-on education and research through student organizations and de-cals; and,

WHEREAS, President Napolitano and UC Chancellors have agreed to move forward with a Food Initiative for the UC, as well as other commitments to significant carbon reduction plans to mitigate climate change; and,

WHEREAS, the State of California's Global Climate Change Solutions Act (AB32) Scoping Plan Update specifically emphasizes the importance of conserving agricultural land for greenhouse gas reductions; and,

WHEREAS, the air quality in the neighborhood of the Gill Tract, including the student family housing at University Village, is already disproportionately impacted by air pollution and would be worsened by development, as it would increase diesel emissions through the increased presence of delivery trucks and the removal of plants and old-growth trees currently on the land that currently remediate and cool the air; and,

WHEREAS, the land is an invaluable resource because it is a continuous piece of historic farmland with good soil quality; and,

WHEREAS, Students for Engaged and Active Learning is an organization on campus, which "Calls on our school to prioritize education by providing opportunities for hands-on engaged learning, and to fulfill its mission as a Public University by expanding opportunities for community-driven research serving community needs,"¹ and thus supports the retention of the Gill Tract as a resource for the University; and,

WHEREAS, the Student Regent on the Board of Regents of the University of California, Cinthia Flores, has voiced her support for preventing development on the Gill Tract and using it as a resource for the University, its students, faculty, and community; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the ASUC calls upon the Regents of the University of California to cease development on the remaining farm land on the Gill Tract; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ASUC calls upon the Regents of the University of California to create a collaborative design process, that is inclusive and accessible to both students and community members, for possible alternative uses of the Gill Tract Farm; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the ASUC External Affairs Vice President express these sentiments and demands to the Regents of the University of California; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the ASUC supports utilization of the currently undeveloped land on the Gill Tract Farm as a resource for the University and the community to better the quality of education, the prospects of research, and the University's relationship with the local community.

¹ <http://sealstudents.wordpress.com>