



## URBANOASIS

April 19, 2016

Saint Paul City Council  
15 Kellogg Blvd. West. 310 City Hall  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Councilmembers:

I am writing to express concern regarding an amendment proposed by Councilmember Dai Thao regarding Saint Paul's Code of Ordinances: Section. 157.11--Parking for larger vehicles and urge the council to vote against it.

Rather than a limit to one truck per household, please consider a cap on the number of trucks allowed at a residence to 2 or 3.

Urban Oasis is a community-based organization in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood on Saint Paul's East Side that works to build a healthy and prosperous community using the power of food. We envision a vibrant, equitable local food economy that is accessible to the whole community.

We work alongside partners from multiple sectors who share this vision, including the City of Saint Paul, which promotes the following position: *Locally grown foods are a vital component for truly sustainable communities. Supporting the local economy by buying from Minnesota farmers and being healthy through access to nutritious food is a goal of the City of Saint Paul. **The City and its residents continue to create an environment that is supportive and encouraging of increased consumption, production, and distribution of healthy, sustainable, and locally grown food.***<sup>1</sup>

Councilmember Thao's amendment would effectively single out and undermine efforts of urban, especially Hmong, farmers to produce and sell healthy, sustainable, locally grown food. In other words, under Thao's new amendment, farmers can only have one truck registered to their house. If they have a second truck, they cannot park it on a residential street or else they could get ticketed, fined, and their truck impounded.

There are multiple reasons why this amendment is wrong and should be stopped.

Councilmember Thao's amendment limits the growth of farming businesses and the number of urban-dwelling farmers.

- This especially impacts Hmong farmers. By allowing only one truck to be registered at an address, Councilmember Thao's amendment sends a message to urban farmers that they can only grow their farming business to a certain point.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Saint Paul Website. Accessed April 19, 2016: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-recreation/natural-resources/arts-gardens/healthy-and-local-food>



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- With the proliferation of farmers markets and steady consumer demand, farmers now are faced with working at two farmers markets simultaneously to make the same amount of money. Market demands may require that a farmer invest in two box trucks. Why would we codify a reactionary amendment that undermines enterprises that expand access and consumption of healthy, local food?

Councilmember Thao's amendment is unfair treatment of urban farmers compared to bus drivers and recreational vehicles owners.

- The city gives bus drivers special exemptions to this parking rule and allows recreational vehicles to be parked on residential streets as long as they are specially licensed. Nowhere in the code of ordinances does it state that only one bus be assigned to a bus driver's address or that a homeowner may register only one recreational vehicle. Why would the City apply one restriction to farm business owners but not to others?

I urge you to provide equal treatment for urban farmers and truly "continue to create an environment that is supportive and encouraging of increased consumption, production, and distribution of healthy, sustainable, and locally grown food."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracy Sides, Executive Director