

## Adam Zack

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**From:** Ed Suij <edsuij@rockisland.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 15, 2018 9:43 PM  
**To:** Comp Plan Update  
**Subject:** comment for the April 20 meeting of the Planning Commission

Dear SJC Planning Commission,

My name is Ed Suij.

I have lived on Orcas since 1983 and have been involved in growing and selling organic fruit and vegetables commercially for 25 years.

We all know that the major task for the next generation will be the reduction of CO2 emissions to avoid a global catastrophe of runaway temperature rise, which will affect all sections of society. How can The San Juan Islands contribute to this task? Or do we expect the rest of the world to do this for us? There are two major components. Reforestation and agriculture.

Organic agriculture can play a major role in carbon sequestering. Furthermore we can not let our food production fall in the hands of a few global corporations, who will poison us with chemicals and ruin the land. The enormous dead zone at the mouth of the Mississippi in the gulf of Mexico is proof. So food security, or rather "healthy food" security is a major topic to contemplate.

Most food products in our supermarkets have travelled on average 1500 miles, with an enormous carbon foot print. We can reduce that tremendously by producing most of our food needs locally and thus contribute to CO2 reduction.

There is a lot of talk about a great upcoming earthquake that could upset most of the food supply lines for a long time. So Local agriculture can play a big role in disaster preparedness and might be vital in case of "the Big One".

Tourists come here for the open space and the rural atmosphere, the feeling of differentness from the mainland. Who maintains and works in this open space? Yes, farmers. The attractiveness of these islands depends on a healthy agriculture community. It creates local and healthy jobs, and creates a sense of community. Agriculture is the historical backbone of the landscape. It is our heritage.

So, yes of course it makes absolutely sense to have an "Agriculture" section in the Vision Statement.

I would like to request the addition of a new stand-alone section to the Vision Statement dedicated to Agriculture.

Specifically, I request that the Planning Commission:

- 1). Adopt Staff Report OPTION C: --Add a standalone Agriculture section to the Vision1
- 2). ADD the following language proposed by the Agriculture Resource Committee2 to this new Agriculture section

### AGRICULTURE

The San Juan Islands have a rich agricultural heritage that remains culturally and economically significant. We invest resources to ensure that agricultural lands are preserved and to maintain and enhance agricultural viability. We encourage regenerative practices and recognize the integral role that agriculture plays in the stewardship of our soils and water resources. Agricultural activities are

essential to the health and well-being of our community, contributing to the social, economic and environmental fabric of our islands.

Thank you for listening.