

January 30, 2020

Evaluation Committee  
The Rockefeller Foundation  
Food System Vision Prize

To whom this matter concerns:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of support to the Evaluation Committee of The Rockefeller Foundation's 2050 Food System Vision Prize application. My letter supports the dynamic team of Wageningen University, and the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) of the prestigious University of the District of Columbia.

The Wageningen University / UDC CAUSES team is ideally positioned to submit an innovative yet realistic vision of a regenerative and nourishing food system that can be created now and sustained well into year 2050. As a proud resident of the illustrious community of Congress Heights in the great Ward 8 of Washington DC, I have been closely involved with the award-winning Urban Food Hubs model that CAUSES has developed, both as a staff member and as a former elected neighborhood official. My glorious neighborhood is home to the city's most challenging households. Ward 8 is designated a "food desert" with high levels of health disparities among its population. The Urban Food Hubs model combines cutting-edge technology, community engagement, business development, youth and senior interactions, and a commitment to healthy food, green infrastructure and job creation in the most underserved neighborhoods of our nation's capital. I also admire the knowledge Wageningen University brings to the collaboration with UDC CAUSES as the number one ranked university in agriculture and food systems worldwide.

As a graduate of UDC and before joining UDC staff, it was my honor to be a part of the community visioning conversations surrounding sustainable and just economic development. UDC's Dr. Sabine O'Hara and a cadre of UDC students led insightful discussions regarding our thoughts and desires for a just and sustainable community. We sincerely appreciated the team asking for our participation, especially in the wake of rapid gentrification. This is hugely why I am supporting this team. They have done the legwork in challenging communities and know firsthand what is needed to improve health and wellness in challenging communities. More importantly, the visioning sessions included new and long-time residents in a discussion of economic development. The visioning process called 'the five pillars of economic development' can now provide the basis for moving forward with future food systems that are sustainable, resilient, equitable and rooted in a vision developed by me and my neighbors.

# UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, URBAN SUSTAINABILITY  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Given my own passion for improving the quality of life, economic opportunity and the health of residents in my beloved neighborhood, I am delighted to support the efforts of the Wageningen University – UDC CAUSES team. I believe that this collective work based on a future vision of sustainable and just food systems will inspire communities all over the world.

Thank you for this opportunity to laud an equitable food system up and running in various neighborhoods of the District of Columbia. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me ([phopalmer@gmail.com](mailto:phopalmer@gmail.com) / 202-827-6501).

Sincerely,



Pho Palmer Murphy

Executive Assistant to CAUSES Dean