



**COUNTY OF
SAN MATEO**

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Peninsula Open Space Trust Unveils Housing for Laborers at San Gregorio Farm in San Mateo County

***Partnership with County of San Mateo's Agricultural Workforce Housing
Program Provides \$300,000 in Measure K Funds
to Meet Vital Farming Need***

Ribbon-cutting event for media on September 18, 10:30 a.m.

September 18, 2018 — [Peninsula Open Space Trust](#) (POST) announced today the completion of four 3-bedroom housing units for Blue House Farm, the long-term tenant at San Gregorio Farm. The new units provide additional safe and low-cost housing for farmworkers along the San Mateo County coast.

By adding housing specifically for farm laborers, this project brings financial stability to a private locally owned farm on permanently protected agricultural land and ensures farm laborers have a safe and affordable place to live. The Blue House Farm project is the largest of several that POST and the County of San Mateo have collaborated on this year, working to ensure long-term preservation of productive farms in the region. Two of the units were funded in large part by San Mateo County Measure K sales tax revenue, with Blue House Farm funding the purchase of two further units.

“In San Mateo County alone, we have lost 35 percent of our farmland over the last 30 years. Through our Farmland Futures Initiative (FFI), POST is reversing this trend for the benefit of all. It’s a complex challenge that involves the land acquisition, and the protection and strategic investments like farm worker housing, to make a thriving local farm operation possible,” said **Walter T. Moore, President of POST**. “Local farms not only add to the beauty of our region, but

well managed farmland plays a vital role in the health of our environment, our economy and our people. We hope that these new housing units will go some way to making life more comfortable for workers in this industry.”

Pending permitting, the units will be occupied later this fall. Workers will pay rents substantially below market rates.

Blue House Farm is located about 10 miles south of Half Moon Bay, on La Honda Road. In 2016, POST awarded the farm a long-term agricultural lease, with an option to purchase the property that is protected by an agricultural easement. Through FFI, POST is raising \$25 million to finance both land protection and infrastructure improvements that will enable local farms to succeed for decades to come. Since the 1980s, the Bay Area’s nine counties have lost nearly 200,000 acres of agricultural land that have fallen prey to development or are no longer in production.

In 2017, the County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors approved \$300,000 to fund two new very-low income housing units at Blue House Farm through the County’s Agricultural Workforce Housing Pilot Loan Program, which is funded by Measure K, a voter-approved half-cent sales tax. POST and Blue House Farm provided additional funding and project coordination.

“Providing housing that is suitable and affordable for farmworkers helps to preserve agriculture on the San Mateo County coastside,” said **Supervisor Don Horsley**, whose District Three includes Blue House Farm. “Many agricultural producers told us that a lack of housing is a key concern in recruiting and retaining employees. Farms are a key thread in the fabric of the coastside community landscape, and we thank POST for its great work striving to keep them viable.”

The completion of the Blue House Farm housing units is part of a wider improvement program undertaken by POST at the farm. In cooperation with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District and Blue House Farm, improvements are being made on site to increase water security for the agricultural operations, which will also enhance stream flows within San Gregorio Creek for threatened and endangered Steelhead trout and Coho salmon.

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***Note to media:** Supervisor Horsley, representatives from POST and Blue House Farm owners will gather at the Farm on September 18th at 10:30 a.m. for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the housing project.*

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About Peninsula Open Space Trust

POST protects open space, farms and parkland for communities in and around Silicon Valley. As a private nonprofit land trust, POST has been responsible for saving more than 75,700 acres over the last 40 years. POST works with private landowners and public agencies to connect people and nature for the benefit of all. Visit openspacetrust.org for more information.

About San Mateo County Measure K

Measure K is a countywide half-cent sales originally passed overwhelmingly by San Mateo County voters in November 2012 (then known as Measure A) and extended in November 2016. The five-member Board of Supervisors allocates these funds to support essential County of San Mateo services and to maintain or replace critical facilities. For more information, visit <https://cmo.smcgov.org/measureK>.

The County of San Mateo's *Agricultural Workforce Housing Needs Assessment Report*, completed by BAE Urban Economics in 2016, identified lack of housing as "a key concern for [agricultural] producers in recruiting and retaining employees." The full report is available at https://housing.smcgov.org/sites/housing.smcgov.org/files/SMC_Ag_Workforce_Housing_Needs_Assessment-Report_without_appendices.pdf

About Blue House Farm

Established in 2005, Blue House Farm grows an incredible array of certified organic vegetables, fruits and cut flowers year-round, on 60 acres nestled at the end of a small agricultural valley in Pescadero, California. Now in its thirteenth growing year, the farm supply farmers' markets, CSA, Farmstand, and wholesale accounts with the highest-quality produce available. The farm specializes in growing strawberries, tomatoes, leafy greens and peppers, growing diverse varieties of impeccable quality that have gained the farm a loyal following throughout the Bay Area. For more information visit www.bluehousefarm.com.

About San Mateo Resource Conservation District

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District is a public special district that provides comprehensive, non-regulatory services to protect, conserve, and restore natural resources. Serving as a local hub for conservation efforts, Resource Conservation Districts across California work in partnership with land owners and managers, technical advisors, area jurisdictions, government agencies, and others. For more information visit www.sanmateorcd.org.

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