

Date

A.C. Gallo
Margaret Wittenberg
Whole Foods Market®
550 Bowie Street
Austin, TX 78703-4644

Edmund LaMacchia
Whole Foods Market
National Produce & Floral Procurement Office
28 Second Street, Suite 200
Watsonville, CA 95076

Dear Mr. Gallo, Ms. Wittenberg, and Mr. LaMacchia:

We understand that Whole Foods Market has decided to restrict the use of all biosolids for growing produce and flowers sold in its stores under its new Responsibly Grown Produce Rating System. We are disappointed with this decision and hope you will reconsider it. When a company as respected and influential as Whole Foods Market bans or denounces a practice, the public will naturally assume there was good reason to do so. However, there is a decades-long scientific consensus regarding the safety and the environmental and agricultural benefits of using biosolids as a fertilizer. The undersigned individuals are the general managers and executive directors of [NUMBER] publicly owned wastewater treatment agencies across the country. Collectively, these agencies serve more than [NUMBER] people in communities across the country. The primary goal of these agencies is to produce clean and safe water to protect both human and environmental health.

The clean water community has a strong environmental ethic and is a leader in sustainability. For decades, we have created biosolids for use as fertilizer, generated renewable energy through biogas production, and enhanced water conservation efforts through recycled water programs. Biosolids are the nutrient-rich materials resulting from the treatment of domestic wastewater. We support the beneficial use of these biosolids because it is well regulated, poses insignificant risk to the environment and public health, and provides valuable environmental and agricultural benefits. The benefits of using biosolids – decreased reliance on energy-intensive synthetic fertilizer, healthier and more productive soils, increased carbon storage in soils, reduced erosion, and increased soil water retention – help individual growers and also strengthen our country's crucial agricultural resources. Moreover, biosolids are one of the most powerful tools conventional growers can use to employ climate-friendly growing practices. The use of biosolids not only increases carbon storage in soils, but also offsets the use of energy-intensive synthetic fertilizers.

Our concern is that an official statement from Whole Foods Market restricting the use of biosolids as an acceptable soil amendment will perpetuate misinformation and give credence to fear-based campaigns. Overlooking the decades of scientific study behind the practice of biosolids recycling is a setback to national sustainability efforts. The Responsibly Grown statement on biosolids use ignores the scientific consensus and careful regulatory framework that is already in place. Federal biosolids regulations were conservatively designed to protect the most vulnerable human populations and environmental organisms. We urge you to carefully consider the facts and research behind biosolids use, compare those with your science-based

sustainability principles, and not restrict biosolids use by your non-organic suppliers beyond the existing regulatory requirements that are already in place.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide detailed information about why biosolids recycling is a safe, environmentally responsible practice and hope you are open to further discussion. For specific questions, or to arrange a meeting, please contact Chris Hornback, Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs for the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). Additional information on the science of biosolids can be found on these websites: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov/owm) and departments of environmental protection in various states (such as the Washington Department of Ecology at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/biosolids/>). A sampling of testimonials from growers who use biosolids can be viewed at <http://www.loopforyoursoil.com/what-is-loop/galleries/>.

Thank you for consideration of this important national issue.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]