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**Supervisors Support Urban Farming to Reduce Blight**

Paving the way for tender greens, edible flowers and fruit orchards to replace blighted, empty lots in Los Angeles County, the Board of Supervisors voted to implement a program that will help property owners and community leaders lease vacant properties for agricultural use.

The motion to establish the program, authored by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, calls for the local establishment of the California Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act, which will allow property owners throughout Los Angeles County to receive reduced tax assessments on their land if they lease it out for agricultural use.

For the past year, cities and counties throughout California have used the legislation to spur the creation of community gardens and small-scale farms in plots of land that lay empty and barren. With lower property taxes on plots of three acres or less, owners can lease them out to community gardeners dedicated to growing food for at least five years.

“This program would create a win-win. It will increase the amount of healthy fruits and vegetables available within our food deserts as well as reduce eyesores created by vacant, oftentimes blighted lots,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas.

The City of Los Angeles has already taken steps to set up the program and will be able to move forward now that the Board of Supervisors has approved the official Urban Agricultural Incentive Zone.

The board is expecting an assessment of the number of eligible vacant properties in Los Angeles County, a recommended budget and a schedule for potential implementation by early January.

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