

Good Evening Council Members,

I stand before you tonight not just to discuss the Agricultural Land Study—but to speak genuinely about the impact it can have on our County: ensuring that **every** family in Clark County has enough to eat—today and in times of crisis.

Let the facts speak for themselves:

- **Over 48,000 of our neighbors**—more than **10%** of our community—now face food insecurity, with a combined **\$29.8 million shortfall** in annual food budgets .These aren't just statistics—they are our teachers, friends, families. When food vanishes, so does hope.
- **Roughly 6.8% of our homeless population** in Clark County are young people—high school students overwhelmed by hunger and instability .

Imagine waking up tomorrow with commercial food supplies cut off—and **no backup plan** in place. Without proactive, strategic preparation, our most vulnerable—low-income households, working-class families, struggling students—will suffer the most. We've watched unprepared communities reel under such strain; we cannot sit by and let it happen here.

Meanwhile, cuts at the federal and state levels—to SNAP, WIC, and school meals—have struck at the very programs meant to support our infants, children, pregnant women, and students. All the while, we continue approving development on prime agricultural land—land that could nourish and secure our next generation. How can we justify building large single-family homes when we're failing to feed and protect our future?

Food insecurity impacts so many of us, but has an especially hard impact on those who are unhoused. **Youth homelessness hits close to home**. Last year, nearly **2,583 children under 18** in Clark County experienced homelessness. I've seen high school students pushed to the brink—juggling homelessness and hunger just to get through the school day. How can they concentrate in class when they're worried about where their next meal will come from or whether they'll even have a safe place to sleep?

Without access to consistent, nutritious meals, their brains aren't properly fueled—and their futures stall. I've seen students lose focus, fall behind, and even give up hope because **hunger and housing instability are the only predictable parts of their day**. What kind of community allows this to continue?

We must meet this moment—not with temporary fixes, but with a bold, proactive vision. The Comp Plan is our vision for Clark County in 20 years - planning without ensuring food security for future generations is shortsighted, reckless and irresponsible. Preserving agricultural land isn't just preserving scenery—it's building a shield. It's about supporting local food systems, preparing for disasters, and strengthening community resilience.

Council Members, I urge you to ask yourselves:

- When was the last time **you** felt true hunger?
- Could you bear wondering where your next meal would come from?

If the answer is no, then **why should any family in Clark County ever have to?**

Thank you for your attention

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