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Thank
you for
your
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Date: November 15, 2010
To: County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors
From: Robin Stanley
UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardener

Subject: Proposed UCCE Budget Reduction

Good morning! I'd like to provide one answer to the question: why are budget cuts to U.C. Cooperative Extension a poor option?

The county funding for the administrative and support staff in the UCCE office is an investment that gets multiplied dramatically in benefits to county residents. The contribution of our volunteers was valued at almost \$500,000 in 2009. That is a lot of bang for the buck.

The vision of programs like Master Gardeners became a reality under the leadership of esteemed UCCE Director and Farm Advisor Dick Bethell. In an oral history recorded before his death, Dick remarked on the dramatic way that Master Gardeners freed his time, allowing him to focus his energies and talents on the further enhancement of agriculture and farming in El Dorado County.

The program we have created exceeded his wildest expectation. Our free weekly classes were recognized by the International Master Gardeners Organization in 2009. Our firesafe landscaping outreach program was recognized by statewide Master Gardeners in 2008.

We have the highest retention rate of volunteers of any California Master Gardener program. This allows us to provide quality education to our residents. Please minimize budget reductions that would jeopardize the Master Gardener and other UCCE programs in our county. Thank you.