

**Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance Candidate Questionnaire: City of Austin  
City Council Race 2014**

*Response from Jeb Boyt, District 7 Candidate*

1. Many farmers and artisan food producers tell us that their biggest challenge is navigating the regulatory maze. **Do you support reforms at the health department such as simplifying the regulations imposed on local producers and creating an ombudsman position to help producers understand the requirements?**

**Yes**

No

Comments:

2. While local, sustainable foods have gained a reputation for being higher priced than conventional foods, that is not always the case. And, even when the food is higher priced, it reflects higher production costs that the farmers pay in order to raise food in ways that are environmentally friendly and on a small scale. The result is that profit margins for our local farmers are tiny. Yet the City of Austin has some of the highest permit fees in the state for producers selling at farmers' markets. **Do you support reducing fees to support small-scale local farmers and food producers?**

**Yes**

No

Comments:

3. Access to land is another major challenge for people seeking to bring back locally raised foods. **Do you support measures to improve access to land for growing food, such as allowing public property to be used for nonprofit community gardens and working with County officials to reduce property tax burdens on small urban farmers?**

**Yes**

No

Comments:

4. Sustainable farming methods allowed under the city's code provide not only nutritious food, but also support a clean, healthy environment for our communities. Selling locally raised food provides income (either the primary income or supplemental) for growers, improves access to healthy local foods for consumers, and promotes local economic development. **Do you support people's ability to grow food and sell food in residential areas, subject to reasonable requirements (such as available parking) to protect neighbors' interests?**

**Yes**

No

Comments:

5. The interest in local foods goes beyond simply purchasing food. Re-connecting people with where and how their food is grown has many benefits. It promotes healthier eating; it creates transparency and encourages farmers to practice environmentally sound agriculture; it builds a sense of community and increased local economic development. An important aspect of rebuilding a local foods community is having people on farms for a wide range of events, including classes on cooking or canning; birthday parties for children that engage kids with their food; and weddings and other celebrations that recognize the vital role that food and our environment play in our lives. **Do you support urban farms' ability to host such events, subject to reasonable requirements (such as available parking and music restrictions) to protect neighbors' interests?**

**Yes**

No

Comments:

Sustainable and nutritious agriculture has been a key component of the environmental principles that I practice. Through much of my career, I have worked to promote sustainable agricultural and silvicultural practices, particularly those practices that protect and promote water quality. And, I have always worked to get people on the land. I have done this through my work with Austin Metro Trails & Greenways, the Parks Board, the Hill Country Conservancy, and the Texas Coastal Management Program, resulting in projects such as the Slaughter Creek Trail, the Violet Crown Trail, and the Lake Boardwalk.

I was raised on a rice farm and ranch in Southeast Texas where we were members of the American Rice Growers Cooperative founded by my great-grandfather. My grandfather was an old-school conservationist who taught me to value the natural world. Keeping people on the land, respecting the land, and enjoying the bounty of the land and of nature are some of my core values.

Urban farms are important for integrating the country into the city. The sharp division between urban areas and farms is largely an artifact of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, and we should remember that having vegetable gardens and livestock in cities has traditionally been a part of our urban experience.