Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve

Stanford University

4001 Sand Hill Road, Woodside, CA 94062

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To: AASHE STARS Steering Committee and Program Staff

This letter is to share with you the remarkable range of benefits and innovations provided by the recently installed Stanford Solar Decathlon house — the Start.Home, at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. It is a an honor to write this letter affirming the achievements of the community of students (because that is what they became) responsible for conceiving, developing, designing, managing, and constructing Stanford's inaugural entry into the Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon competition. The success of these students' vision for this building is confirmed not only by our interest in having this located at the preserve, but in the School of Humanities and Sciences willingness to include this in their list of capital project priorities. The house carries forward the preserve's commitment to long-term sustainability as represented by its award-winning Leslie Shao-ming Sun Field Station completed in June 2002.

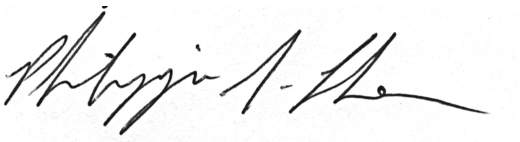
Like the Sun Field Station, the Start.Home provides many important short and long-term programmatic benefits to the preserve while also furthering our mission by helping continue to "walk the talk." As the preserve's strategic plan clearly articulates, "all of the infrastructure at JRBP…. also support the preserve's mission through demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and resource protection." The Start-Home does this in spades. First of all, it eliminates a carbon footprint as the house is designed to produce as much energy as it consumes (net-zero) and will initially replace the current resident ranger residence. Eventually, the home will help to grow our program because the Start.Home will be used to house long-term visiting researchers/scholars working at Jasper Ridge.

From the start, this building was conceived by students to optimally function in a temperate, coastal California climate, making it ideal for the preserve. The use of salvaged redwood, recycled materials in combination with cutting edge technology is a wonderful metaphor for what the preserve is about: understanding natural systems through research, education, and conservation. The Start-Home's use of the core, along with the structurally insulated panels (SIPs), heat-pump water heater, phase-change materials for insulation, etc., all speak to thinking about resource use in new ways that mimic the best characteristics of well functioning natural systems.

Office 650/851-6814 Fax 650/851-7334 Email: philippe.cohen@stanford.edu

Finally, the preserve is able to contribute to this effort not only by becoming location of this unique house, but by also becoming a test bed for proof of concept. The first step was simply seeing how taking this modular concept and adapting to local codes spoke to the viability of the design. By adding an extra bedroom after the Solar Decathlon competition, we are putting to test the "modularity" and growth component of the building's conceptual core. We will continue to collect performance, data, see how easily a family's behavior adapts to these the new technologies, and will be responsible for the long-term maintenance of the house. Together, this house is a collaboration between the preserve's mission, the students' vision, and achieving a long-term sustainable and resilient approach to future challenges.

The Stanford's inaugural entrant into the Solar Decathlon competition is destined to be a great new addition to the preserve and assuring its future productivity as a Stanford University biological field station.



Philippe S. Cohen, PhD.
Executive Director