



## MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission	From: Sean Trippi, Supervising Planner <a href="mailto:Sean.trippi@countyofnapa.org">Sean.trippi@countyofnapa.org</a>
Date: March 17, 2026	Re: Agenda Item 8b – Paloma Vineyard Use Permit Modification (P19-00386- MOD)

Please find the following for your review:

1. Errata to Proposed IS/MND:

This document presents two minor corrections made to the proposed Paloma Vineyard Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND). These corrections do not constitute substantial revisions pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5 (Recirculation of a Negative Declaration Prior to Adoption) because they do not involve new significant impacts or new mitigation measures.

2. Hours of Operation:

The Winery Summary of Operational Changes should read as follows:

Existing Conditions

Days/Hours of Visitation

~~7:30~~ 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM

7 days a week

Proposed Conditions

Days/Hours of Visitation

~~7:30~~ 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM

7 days a week

3. Additional Plans/Graphics:

The attached floor plan and elevations of the proposed hospitality were inadvertently left out the packet materials. The attached also includes floor plans of the existing winery building and a floor plan of the main residence as a hospitality building and residence.

4. Public comments:

Attached are 29 comment letters received after publication of the packet. These comments had been conveyed previously. There is also an updated letter from the applicant’s representative.

**COUNTY OF NAPA**  
**PLANNING, BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**1195 THIRD STREET SUITE 210**  
**NAPA, CA 94559**  
**(707) 253-4417**

**Initial Study Checklist**  
**(form updated January 2019)**

This document presents minor corrections made to the proposed Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) by the Lead Agency (Napa County). New text is indicated in underline and text to be deleted is reflected by ~~strike through~~. Text changes are presented in the section and page order in which they appear in the proposed Initial Study Checklist.

1. **Project Title:** Paloma Vineyard Use Permit Major Modification #P19-00386-MOD
2. **Property Owner:** Sheldon Richards, Paloma Vineyard, 4013 Spring Mountain Road, St. Helena CA 94574
3. **County Contact Person, Phone Number and email:** Sean Trippi, Supervising Planner; phone: (707) 299-1353 or email: sean.trippi@countyofnapa.org.
4. **Project Location and Assessor's Parcel Number (APN):**  
The project is located on a 17.11-acre site within the Agricultural Watershed (AW) zoning district. The site is accessed via an existing private driveway on Spring Mtn. Road, approximately 3.25 miles northwest of the city of St. Helena, with the western and southern boundaries of the site abutting Sonoma County. Project address: 4013 Spring Mountain Road, St. Helena, CA 94574. APN: 022-150-008.
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** Scott Greenwood-Meinert, Coblenz Patch Duffy & Bass, LLP., (415) 772-5741, sgreenwood-meinert@coblenzlaw.com
6. **General Plan description:** Agriculture, Watershed & Open Space (AWOS)
7. **Zoning:** Agricultural Watershed (AW)
8. **Background/Project History:**

July 7, 1999 - The Planning Commission approved the original Paloma Vineyard (aka Richards Vineyard or Richards Winery) Use Permit #98368-UP. This approval entitled a new, 10,000 gallon per year winery to be constructed in two phases consisting of a 1,600 sf cut and cover barrel storage building (Phase 1) and a 1,693 sf winery building with a 1,720 sf crush pad (Phase 2). The approval also included tours and tastings for two visitors per day by prior appointment only and a marketing plan with one event per year with a maximum of 50 people and two lunches per year with a maximum of 25 people. Outdoor facilities could be used for marketing activities which were to end by 11:00 PM, but not for tours and tastings. Hours of operation were limited to 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM, six days a week, excluding marketing activities. In addition to the owners, the winery was approved for one part-time employee. The application indicated that there were eight on-site parking spaces.

April 7, 2000 - The Zoning Administrator approved Use Permit Modification #99285-MOD for the winery to relocate the cut and cover barrel storage building above ground attached to the 1,693 sf building and a 320 sf building addition, resulting in a 3,613 sf winery building. The request also included reducing the crush pad from 1,720 sf to 1,330 sf and providing a cover over the crush pad.

May 5, 2000 - The Zoning Administrator approved Use Permit Modification #99285-MOD which was a request for a rescission of Use Permit Modification #99285-MOD. The approval resulted in a revision of the design and phasing of the winery with no change to the floor area identified above, except this action did not include the reduced crush pad.

June 24, 2019 – The Director issued a status determination (P19-00120) detailing that, as established under Use Permit #98368 and its subsequent modifications, Paloma Vineyards is a 3,613 sf, 10,000 gallon per year winery limited to a maximum of two (2) visitors per day, a marketing program allowing one (1) marketing event per year with a maximum of 50 guests and two (2) marketing events per year with a maximum of 25 guests, (2) one part time employee in addition to the owners and hours of operation from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (note: The Status Determination letter indicated the hours of operation were from 7:30 a.m. to 4:20 p.m. which was a typographical error, the correct hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. per the original use permit approval letter (#98368-UP) dated July 12, 1999, condition of

shall have either a California Air Resources Board (ARB) registration Portable Equipment Registration Program (PERP) or a BAAQMD permit. For general information regarding the certified visible emissions evaluator or the registration program, visit the ARB FAQ [http://www.arb.ca.gov/portable/perp/perfact\\_04-16-15.pdf](http://www.arb.ca.gov/portable/perp/perfact_04-16-15.pdf) or the PERP website <http://www.arb.ca.gov/portable/portable.htm>.

Furthermore, while earthmoving and construction on the site would generate dust particulates in the short-term, the impact would be less than significant with dust control measures as specified in Napa County's standard condition of approval relating to dust:

7.1 SITE IMPROVEMENTS

b. DUST CONTROL

Water and/or dust palliatives shall be applied in sufficient quantities during grading and other ground disturbing activities on-site to minimize the amount of dust produced. Outdoor construction activities shall not occur when average wind speeds exceed 20 mph.

- d. While the Air District defines public exposure to offensive odors as a potentially significant impact, wineries are not known operational producers of pollutants capable of causing substantial negative impacts to sensitive receptors. The physical improvements and operational changes would not significantly increase odors associated with the winery. Construction-phase pollutants would be reduced to a less than significant level by the above-noted standard condition of approval. The project would not create pollutant concentrations or objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, Coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a/b/e. The parcel is dominated by approximately 10-acres of vineyards with some edge communities of Douglas-fir and mixed oak woodland between the vineyards and Spring Mountain Road. The nearest blue-line stream (Mill creek) is approximately 1,860 feet north of the project site. The project site includes a winery, winery accessory structures and infrastructure such as tanks, a pump house, wastewater facilities, access routes, etc., a single-family residential structure, an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), and an accessory residential structure. Additional improvements proposed on the property include construction of a new 1,065 sq. ft. hospitality building in place of a deck attached to the single-family residence, conversion of an existing residential accessory structure to winery equipment storage, three (3) new parking spaces near the proposed hospitality building, and widening the existing access drive which will require the removal of 12 trees (six pines, three oaks, two olive trees and one unidentified tree) and approximately 93 vines. All proposed improvements are in previously developed and/or disturbed areas. Any Oak trees removed because of the project shall be replaced at a 2:1 ratio and shown on the grading plans for the Planning Division's review and approval. Trees to be retained shall be protected during construction by fencing securely installed at the outer most dripline of the tree or trees. Such fencing shall be maintained throughout the duration of the work undertaken in connection with the winery development/construction. In no case shall construction material, debris or vehicles be stored in the fenced tree protection area.

In review of Napa County Geographic Information System (GIS) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) layers, the subject property is within an area of the County that is known to have the potential for Napa false indigo (*Amorpha californica* var. *napensis*) near the eastern portion of the access drive, and Napa checkerbloom (*Sidalcea hickmanii* ssp. *napensis*) within the western portion of the site that is planted in vines (no work is proposed in this area), and Northern Spotted Owl (NSO).

Protecting the continued presence of special-status species, including special-status plants, special-status wildlife, and their habitats is encouraged by Napa County General Plan Goal CON-3<sup>2</sup>. Pursuant to Napa County General Plan Policy CON-13, the County requires discretionary agricultural projects to consider and address impacts to wildlife habitat and avoid impacts to habitat supporting special status species to the extent feasible, and where impacts to special-status species and their habitat cannot be avoided, projects shall include effective mitigation measures to provide protection for habitat supporting special-status species through buffering or other means. Specifically, General Plan Policy CON-13(d) and (e) provide protections for habitat through buffering or other means, and by requiring replacement of habitat of like quantity and quality on- or off-site to mitigate impacts on special status species.

Because the project has the potential for occurrences of Napa false indigo and Napa checkerbloom, the project may result in direct or inadvertent removal of special status plants. Removal of special status plants is considered a potentially significant cumulative impact therefore, **Mitigation Measure BIO-1** has been incorporated into the project to require botanical surveys for special-status plants at the project development areas prior to any grading and/or vegetation removal. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 will reduce potentially significant cumulative impacts on special-status plants to a less than significant level.

As noted above, the proposed project includes the removal of 12 trees as a result of the widening the existing access drive. The general attributes of NSO habitat include dense, multi-layered canopy of several tree species of varying size and ages with open spaces among the lower branches to allow flight under the canopy. NSO habitat also tends to include abundant logs, snags/cavity trees with broken tops or platform-like substrates. The trees to be removed are directly adjacent to the existing access drive and vineyards and provide low quality and highly disturbed habitat due to regular vehicle traffic and vineyard activities. In the abundance of caution and in order to mitigate any potentially significant impacts to owls, **Mitigation Measure BIO-2** requires NSO Owl surveys prior to any on site vegetation removal.

While the proposed tree removal is located next to the existing access drive, with low quality and highly disturbed habitat due to regular vehicle traffic and vineyard activities, migratory birds and raptors have the potential to nest within the woodlands adjacent to the project area. Tree removal to accommodate improvements to the project access drive and intermittent increases in noise levels due to project construction may cause nest abandonment and death of young or loss of reproductive potential at active nests located near project activities, resulting in potentially significant indirect and cumulative impacts to special-status bird species. In the abundance of caution, **Mitigation Measure BIO-3** will require preconstruction surveys for nesting birds to reduce this impact to less than significant level. Due to proposed tree removal, and in the abundance of caution, in order to mitigate any potentially significant impacts to bat species, **Mitigation Measure BIO-4** requires a bat habitat assessment and surveys prior to any on site vegetation removal. No other sensitive species have been identified. Based on the limited location of site improvements and minor modifications to winery operations, it is unlikely that the proposed project would have a substantial adverse effect on any candidate, sensitive or special status species, or that it would have a substantial adverse effect on sensitive natural communities. Due to the aforementioned factors, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on any candidate, sensitive or special status species, or would have a substantial adverse effect on sensitive natural communities.

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<sup>2</sup> Goal Con-3: Protect the continued presence of special-status species, including special-status plants, special-status wildlife, and their habitats, and comply with all applicable state, federal, or local laws or regulations.

- c. According to the Napa County GIS Sensitivity Maps (based on the following layers – Wetlands and vernal pools and National Wetlands Inventory) there are no wetlands on the site. The project will not have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, Coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.
- d. All proposed improvements would occur on, or adjacent to, previously disturbed areas of the property. Therefore, project activities would not interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with their corridors or nursery sites. No impacts would occur.
- e. ~~The project does not require tree removal and would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. No impacts would occur.~~
- f. The site is not subject to any adopted Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans. No impacts would occur.

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure BIO-1:** The owner/permittee shall implement the following measures to minimize potential impacts to special-status plant species:

Prior to the initiation of earth disturbing activities, a qualified biologist (defined as having demonstrable qualifications and experience with the particular species for which they are surveying) shall conduct botanical surveys for special-status plants at the project site. The survey shall be completed during the appropriate blooming period for the species likely to occur on site. These surveys shall be in compliance with CDFW's *Protocol's for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities (2018)*. If the survey finds that there are no special-status plants within the proposed project site that would be impacted by the project, then there would be no further mitigation necessary and the project may proceed, provided all other applicable permits and authorizations are obtained for the project.

Any special-status plants/populations removed, including inadvertent removals, shall be replaced on-site at a ratio of 2:1 at locations with similar habitat. For such removal a replacement plan shall be prepared by a qualified biologist, botanist or ecologist for review and approval by the Planning Division and CDFW prior to commencement of any earth disturbing including but not limited to grading and construction activities. At a minimum, the replacement plan shall include i) a site plan showing the locations where replacement plants will be planted, ii) a plant pallet composed of the special-status plants specie(s) being removed including sizes and/or application rates, iii) planting notes and details including any recommended plant protection measures, iv) invasive species removal and management specifications, v) an implementation and monitoring schedule, and vi) performance standards with a minimum success rate of 80% to ensure the success of re-vegetation efforts. Any replaced special-status plants shall be monitored for a period of at least three years to success criteria are met.

**Method of Monitoring:** Prior to issuance of any grading permit or building permit(s) and through completion of initial site disturbance, the County shall review the results of all pre-construction surveys and any proposed removal of special-status plants/populations, including inadvertent removals. For such removal, a replacement plan shall be prepared by a qualified botanist or ecologist for review and approval by the PBES Director and CDFW prior to commencement of grading and construction activities. All measures shall be noted on the final project plans.

**Mitigation measure BIO-2:** The owner/permittee shall implement the following measures to minimize potential impacts to Northern Spotted Owls (NSO):

A qualified biologist (defined as having demonstrable qualifications and experience with the particular species for which they are surveying) shall provide an assessment of potential NSO nesting habitat within the Project site and a 0.25-mile radius and obtain CDFW's written acceptance of the assessment.

Alternatively, if the assessment is not completed, or if it concludes that NSO nesting habitat is present, then no Project activities within 0.25 miles of potential NSO nesting habitat shall occur between March 15 and July 31 unless a qualified biologist approved in writing by CDFW conducts NSO surveys following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) *Protocol for Surveying Proposed Management Activities That May Impact Northern Spotted Owls*, dated (revised) January 9, 2012, available at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=83977&inline>. Surveys shall be conducted in accordance with Section 9 of the survey protocol, Surveys for Disturbance-Only Projects. If breeding NSO are detected during surveys, CDFW shall be immediately notified and a 0.25-mile no-disturbance buffer zone shall be implemented around the nest until the end of the breeding season, or a qualified biologist determines that the nest is no longer active in consultation with CDFW, unless otherwise approved in writing by CDFW. The Project shall obtain CDFW's written acceptance of the qualified biologist and survey report prior to Project construction occurring between March 15 and July 31 each year.

# PALOMA VINEYARD TASTING ROOM EXPANSION

4013 SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD  
ST. HELENA, CA

# for PALOMA VINEYARD

G B D H

DESIGN GROUP, INC.

ARCHITECTURE  
ENGINEERING

9806 Old Winery Place, Suite 1  
Sacramento, California 95827  
Tel: 916.854.9901 Fax: 916.854.9840

Conditions:

DESIGN REVIEW  
08/30/2021

PALOMA VINEYARD  
TASTING ROOM EXPANSION

SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD  
ST. HELENA, CA 94574

ABBREVIATIONS	
A	AND
AN	ANCHOR
ANB	ANCHOR BOLT
ACC	ACCESSIBLE ACCESSIBILITY
ASG	ASPHALT TO RAISING
ASG	ASBESTOS
ALUM	ALUMINUM
APPROX	APPROXIMATE
ARCHIT	ARCHITECTURAL
BD	BOARD
BY	BUILDING
BLDG	BUILDING
BLK	BLOCK
BTM	BOTTOM
C	CABINET
CAB	CABINET
CANT	CANTILEVER
C.S.	CARBIDE BOLT
C.I.	CAST IRON
CR	CORNER
CL	CENTERLINE
CL	CEILING
CLR	CLEAR
CMU	CONCRETE MASONRY UNIT
COL	COLUMN
CONC	CONCRETE
CONN	CONNECTION
CONRT	CONSTRUCTION
CONT	CONTIGUOUS
COORD	COORDINATE
COOR	COORDINATE
CSK	COUNTERSINK, COUNTERSINK
CTR	CENTER
DBL	DOUBLE
DTL	DETAIL
D.F.	DRINKING FOUNTAIN, DOUGLAS FIR
D.I.	DRAINAGE ISLET
DIAB	DIAGONAL
DN	DIRECTION
DS	DOWNSPOUT
DRW	DRAWING
EA	EXISTING
EA	EARTH
ESFR	EARLY SUPPRESSION FAST RESPONSE
ELEV	ELEVATION
ELC	ELECTRIC, ELECTRICAL
EMBED	EMBEDMENT
EMT	ELECTRICAL METALLIC TUBING
EN	END WALLING
EQ	EQUAL
EQUIP	EQUIPMENT
EXP	EXPANSION
EXT	EXTERIOR
F.D.	FLOOR DRAIN
FND	FOUNDATION
F.F.	FINISH FLOOR
FIN	FINISH
FLR	FLOOR
F.O.	FACE OF
FRP	FIBERGLASS REINFORCED PANEL
FT	FOOT, FEET
FOOTING	FOOTING
GA	GAUGE
GLB	GLUE LAMINATED BEAM
G.S.K.	GLUE LAMINATED SHEET METAL
GYSM	GYPSONUM
H	HIGH
H.M.	HOLLOW METAL
HZ	HORIZONTAL
HT	HEIGHT
H.S.	HIGH STRENGTH
ID.	INSIDE DIAMETER
INFO	INFORMATION
INSUL	INSULATION
INT	INTERIOR
JT	JUNCTION
LAV	LAVATORY
LB	LEAD
L	LEAD
MAX	MAXIMUM
M.B.M.	METAL BUILDING MANUFACTURER
M.S.	MISCELLANEOUS
MEZ	MEZZANINE
MFG	MANUFACTURING
MFR	MANUFACTURER
M.H.	MISCELLANEOUS
MISC	MISCELLANEOUS
MTL	METAL
N	NOT
N.I.C.	NOT IN CONTRACT
N.T.S.	NOT TO SCALE
O.C.	ON CENTER
O.D.	OUTSIDE DIAMETER, OUTSIDE DIMENSION
O.H.	OPPOSITE HAND
O.S.	OVERHEAD
OPEN	OPENING
P.	PLATE PROPERTY LINE
P. LAM.	PLASTIC LAMINATE
P.L.F.	POUNDS PER LINEAR FOOT
PLY	PLYWOOD
PR	PAIR
PREFAB	PREFABRICATED
PROJ	PROJECTION
P.S.F.	POUNDS PER SQUARE FOOT
P.S.I.	POUNDS PER SQUARE INCH
P.T.	PRESSURE TREATED
P.T.P.	PRESSURE TREATED DOUGLAS FIR
R	RADIUS
REFR	REFRIGERATOR
REINP	REINFORCED
REQD	REQUIRED
RET	RETAINING
ROOF	ROOF
S.B.C.	STANDARD BUILDING CODE
SCHED	SCHEDULE
SECT	SECTION
S.F.	SQUARE FOOT
SH	SHEET
SM	SIMILAR
SN	SIMPSON
SMS	SHEET METAL SCREW
SPEC	SPECIFICATION
SQ	SQUARE
S.S.	STAINLESS STEEL
STD	STANDARD
STR	STEEL
STRUC	STRUCTURAL
SUP	SUPPLEMENT
T	TEMPERED
TEL	TELEPHONE
THK	THICK
THRU	THROUGH
T.O.	TOP OF
TS	TRUSS
TYP	TYPICAL
UNIFORM BUILDING CODE	UNIFORM BUILDING CODE
UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE	UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE
VERT	VERTICAL
W	WIDE, WIDE FLANGE
W.P.	WATER PUMP
W.D.	WATER DISTRIBUTION
W.H.	WATER HEATER
W.P.F.	WELDED PIPE FABRIC

DEFERRED SUBMITTALS	
[Symbol]	2 x 4 LAY-IN FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURE
[Symbol]	2 x 2 LAY-IN FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURE
[Symbol]	SURFACE MOUNTED FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURE

SYMBOLS	
[Symbol]	GRID
[Symbol]	DETAIL
[Symbol]	DETAIL
[Symbol]	BUILDING SECTION
[Symbol]	REVISIONS
[Symbol]	WINDOW SYMBOL
[Symbol]	DOOR SYMBOL
[Symbol]	INTERIOR ELEVATION
[Symbol]	KEY NOTE
[Symbol]	HALL TYPE
[Symbol]	GYPSONUM BOARD CEILING
[Symbol]	2 x 4 CEILING GRID
[Symbol]	2 x 2 CEILING GRID
[Symbol]	HVAC SUPPLY DIFFUSER
[Symbol]	HVAC RETURN DIFFUSER
[Symbol]	2 x 4 LAY-IN FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURE
[Symbol]	2 x 2 LAY-IN FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURE
[Symbol]	SURFACE MOUNTED FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURE

LIST OF DRAWINGS	
TJ	TITLE SHEET
CIVIL	PRELIMINARY GRADING PLAN
ARCHITECTURAL	PROPOSED SITE PLAN ENLARGED SITE PLAN PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN INTERIOR ELEVATIONS COLORED ELEVATIONS

PROJECT DATA	
PROPERTY OWNER:	SHELDON RICHARDS
OWNER ADDRESS:	4013 SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD ST. HELENA, CA
PHONE NUMBER:	(707) 468-7804
JURISDICTION:	NAPA COUNTY
BUILDING CODE:	2014 CBC, CBC, CALIFORNIA GREEN CODE, CBC, CGC, CFC (BASED ON THE 2004 IBC, 2004 UFG, 2004 CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS CODE, 2004 UFG, 2004 UFG AND 2008 IBC, AND 2010 ENERGY STANDARDS, AS AMENDED BY STATE OF CALIFORNIA LOCAL JURISDICTION APPLICABLE TO THIS PROJECT.
PARCEL NUMBER:	022-50-008-000
PARCEL AREA:	486421 S.F. (2.130 ACRES)
ZONING:	AM - AGRICULTURAL WATERSHED

SCOPE OF WORK	
PROPOSED 1084 S.F. EXPANSION OF THE EXISTING TASTING ROOM.	

VICINITY MAP	

No.	Revision	Date

Client	
PALOMA VINYARDS	
SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD ST. HELENA, CA 94574	
PH: 707.963.7504	

Sheet Title	
TITLE SHEET	

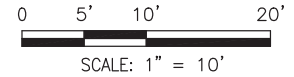
Date	Project No.
00/00/2021	P75-9724
Drawn By	Sheet No.
LES	
Checked By	T1.1
RAH	

# PALOMA VINEYARDS ADDITION GRADING PLAN



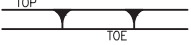



ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA

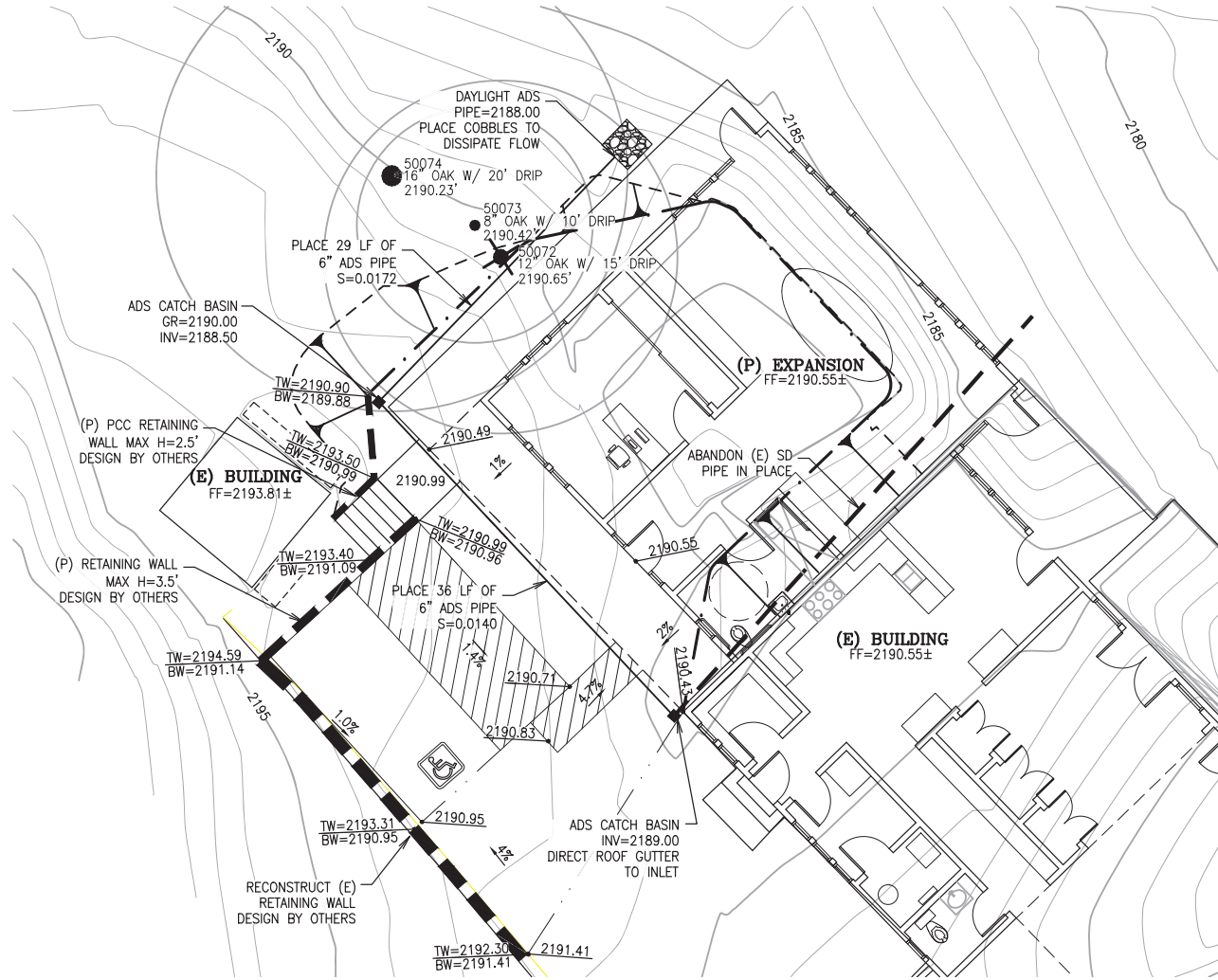
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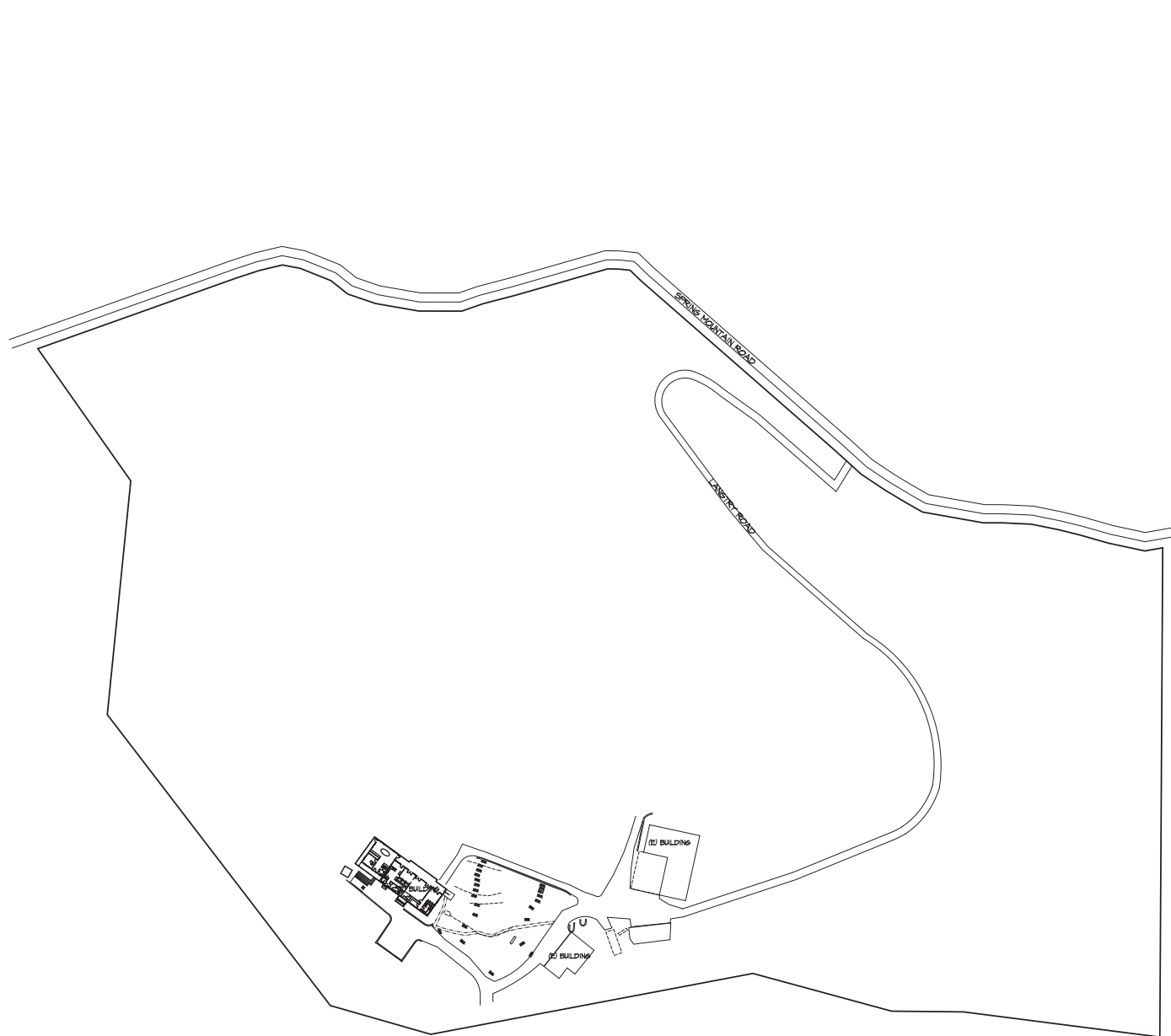
AUGUST, 2021



## LEGEND

-  EXISTING TREE AS NOTED
-  REMOVE (E) TREE
-  TOP  
TOE  
(P) CUT OR FILL SLOPE
-  (P) ADS PIPE
-  (P) PAD
-  (P) RETAINING WALL





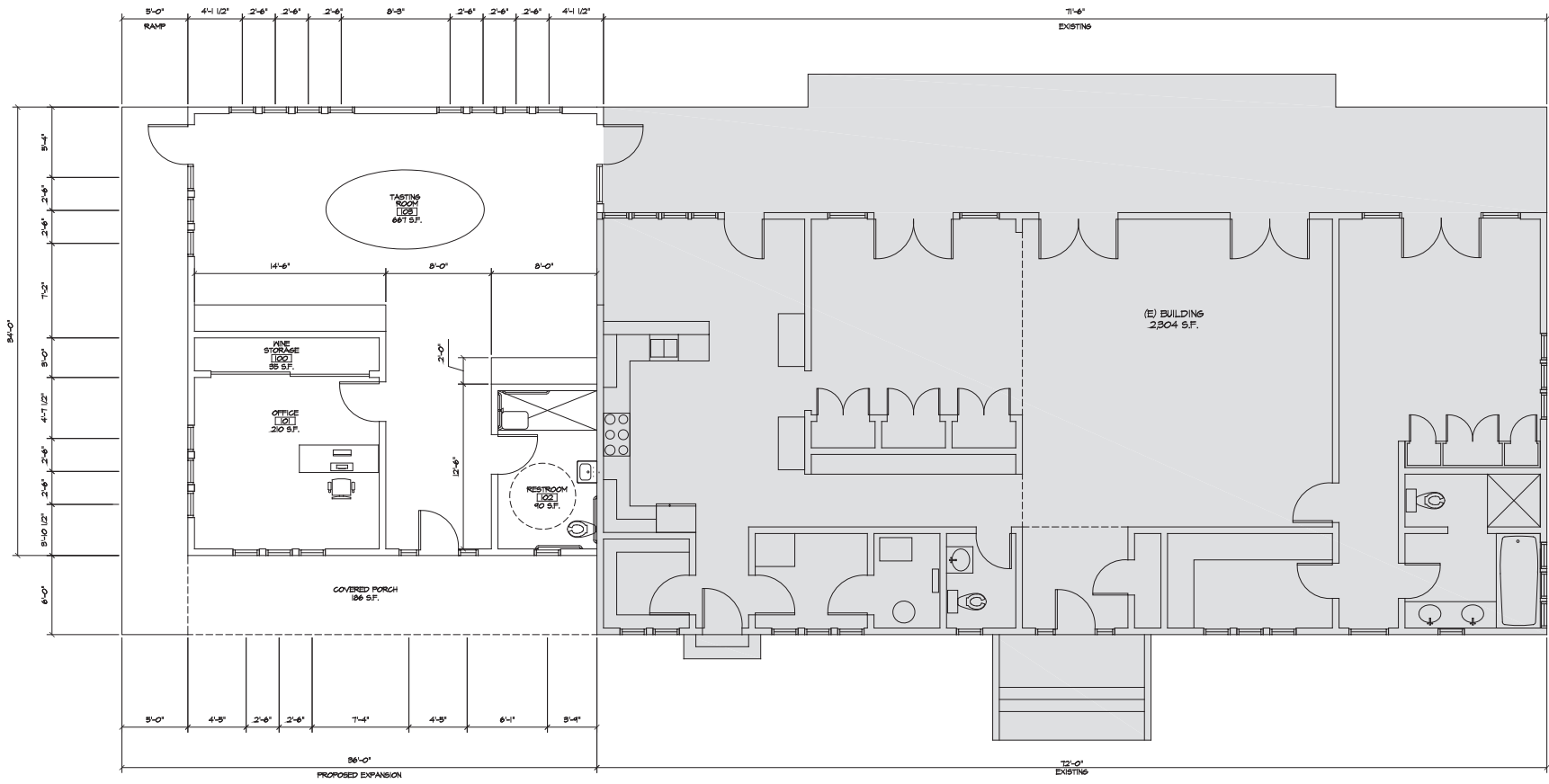
A SITE PLAN  
A1.1 PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 60'



G B D H	
DESIGN GROUP, INC.	
ARCHITECTURE ENGINEERING	
9806 Old Winery Place, Suite 1 Sacramento, California 95827 Tel: 916.854.9901 Fax: 916.854.9840	
Consultants DESIGN REVIEW 08/30/2021	
POLOMA VINEYARD TASTING ROOM EXPANSION	
PROJECT SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD ST. HELENA, CA 94574	
No.	Revision
Date	Scale
Client PALOMA VINYARDS SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD ST. HELENA, CA 94574 PH: 707 963 7504	
Sheet Title SITE PLAN	
Date	Project No.
00/00/2021	P75-9724
Drawn By	Sheet No.
LES	
Checked By	A1.1
RAH	





**A** PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN  
**A2.1** PLAN  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

**G B D H**

DESIGN GROUP, INC.

ARCHITECTURE  
 ENGINEERING

9806 Old Winery Place, Suite 1  
 Sacramento, California 95827  
 Tel: 916.854.9901 Fax: 916.854.9840

Consultants

DESIGN REVIEW  
 08/30/2021

PROJECT  
**POLOMA VINEYARD  
 TASTING ROOM EXPANSION**

SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD  
 ST. HELENA, CA 94574

No.	Revision	Date

Client  
**PALOMA VINYARDS**

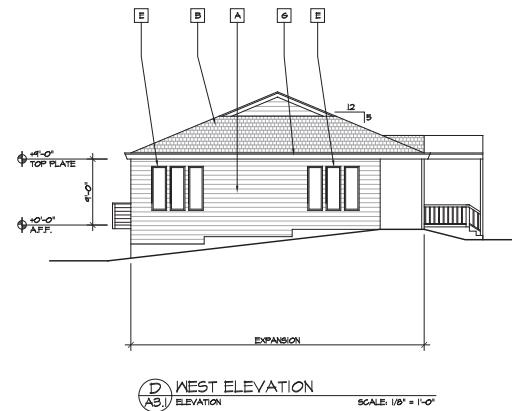
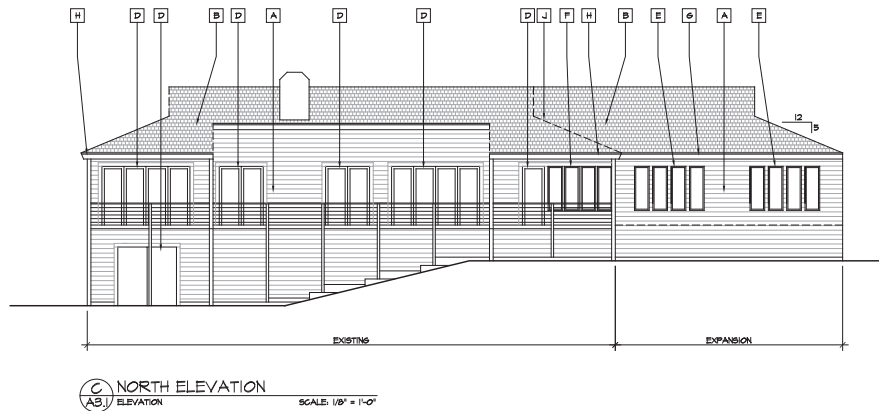
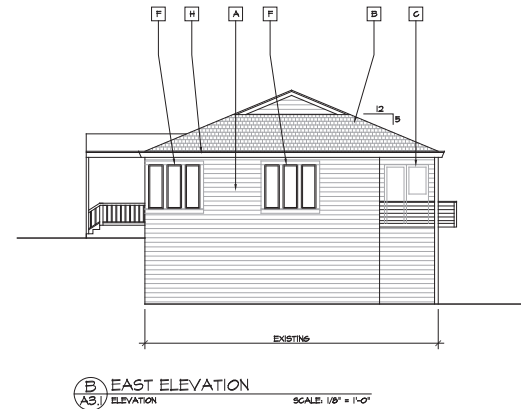
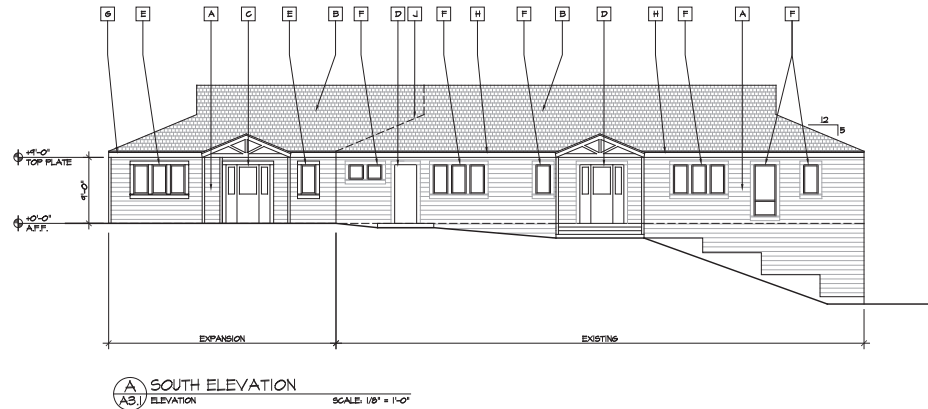
SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD  
 ST. HELENA, CA 94574  
 PH: 707.963.7504

Sheet Title  
**PROPOSED  
 FLOOR PLAN**

Date 00/00/2021	Project No. P75-3924
Drawn By LES	Sheet No.
Checked By RAH	<b>A2.1</b>

**KEYNOTES**

- A CHERRY WOOD / REDWOOD SIDING
- B ASPHALT COMPOSITION TILES
- C (P) MAN DOOR
- D (E) MAN DOOR
- E (P) WINDOW
- F (E) WINDOW
- G (P) BUTTER & DOWNSPOUT
- H (E) BUTTER & DOWNSPOUT
- J (E) ROOF LINE TO BE REMOVED



**G B D H**

**DESIGN GROUP, INC.**

ARCHITECTURE  
ENGINEERING

9806 Old Winery Place, Suite 1  
Sacramento, California 95827  
Tel: 916.854.9901 Fax: 916.854.9840

Consultants

**DESIGN REVIEW**  
08/30/2021

**POLOMA VINEYARD  
TASTING ROOM EXPANSION**

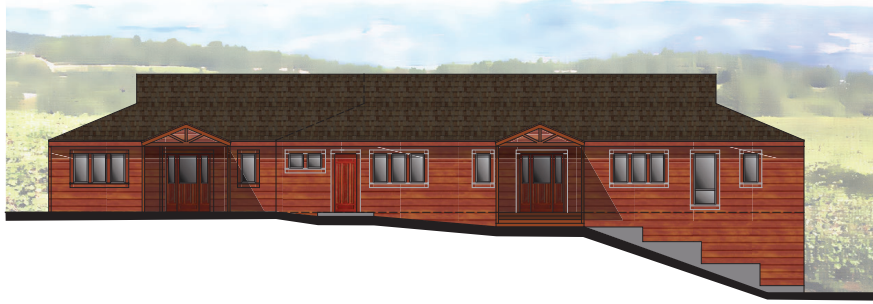
SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD  
ST. HELENA, CA 94574

No.	Revision	Date

Client  
**PALOMA VINYARDS**  
SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD  
ST. HELENA, CA 94574  
PH: 707.963.7504

Sheet Title  
**EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS**

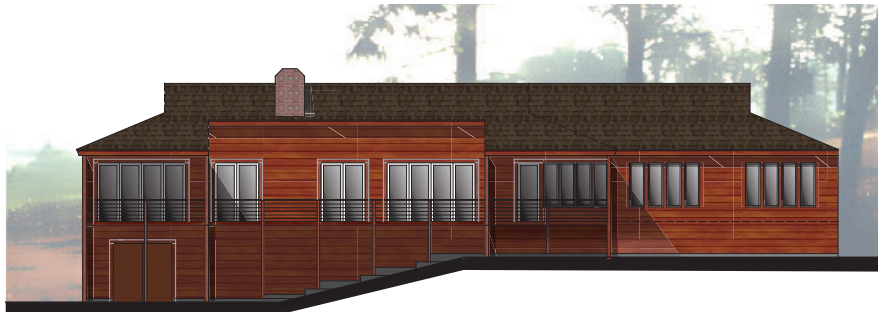
Date	Project No.
00/00/2021	P75-9724
Drawn By	Sheet No.
LES	
Checked By	<b>A3.1</b>
RAH	



**A** SOUTH ELEVATION  
AS/1 ELEVATION SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**B** EAST ELEVATION  
AS/1 ELEVATION SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**C** NORTH ELEVATION  
AS/1 ELEVATION SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**D** WEST ELEVATION  
AS/1 ELEVATION SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



STAINED FIR  
 SIDING



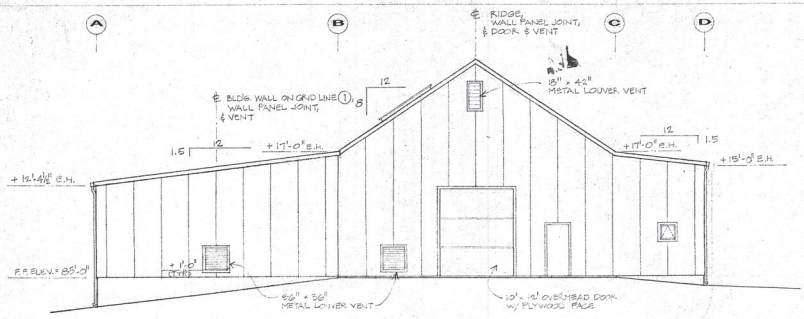
COMPOSITION  
 ROOF  
 TILES



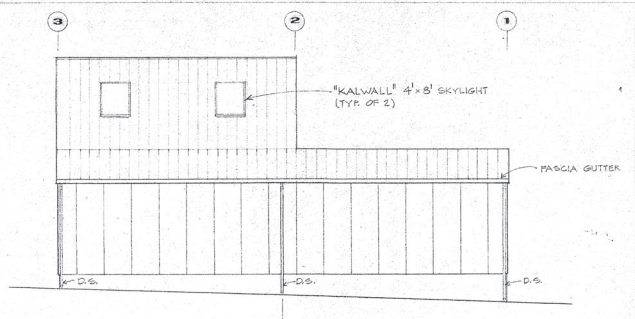
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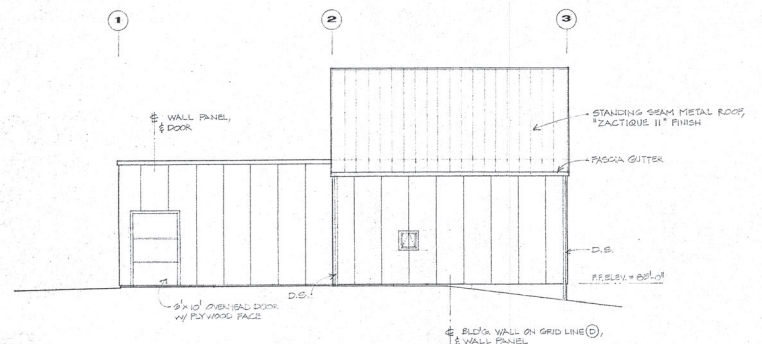
REVISIONS

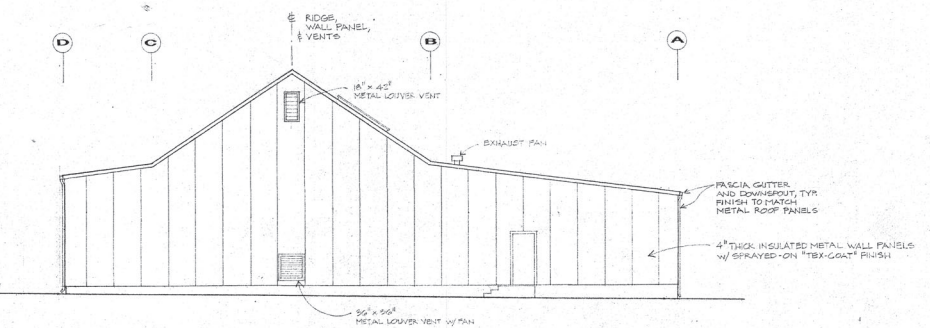
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**NORTH**



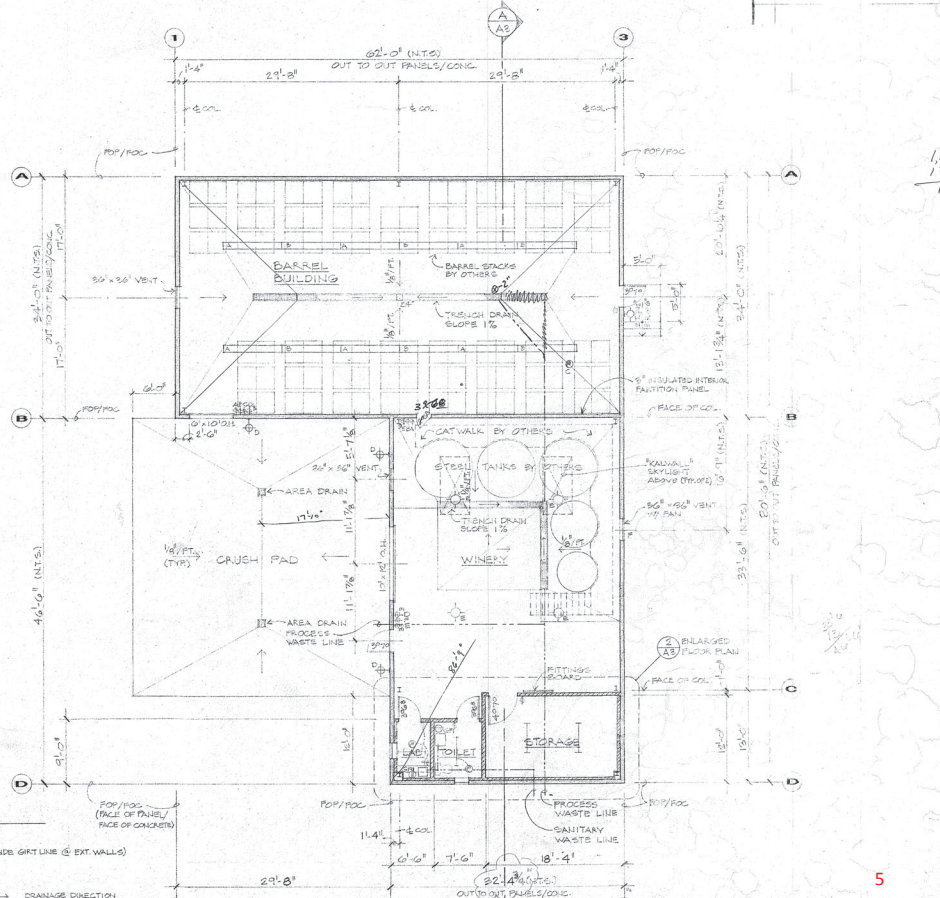
**SOUTH**



**EAST**

1/8" = 1'-0" (TYP)

- LEGEND**
- 4" INSULATED WALL PANEL (JMS)
  - WOOD STUDS @ 16" O.C. (LOCATED INSIDE GRID LINES @ EXT WALLS)
  - FLOOD LIGHT, WALL MTD.
  - METAL HALIDE LIGHT
  - WALL MTD. LIGHT
  - FLUORESCENT, WATERPROOF LENS
  - FLUORESCENT
  - EXHAUST FAN
  - SINGLE POLE SWITCH @ THREE-WAY
  - DRAINAGE DIRECTION
  - AIR SUPPLY
  - HOSE BIBB
  - 1/2" DUPLEX, WATER-PROOF
  - 1/2" DUPLEX W/ GROUND FAULT INTERRUPTER

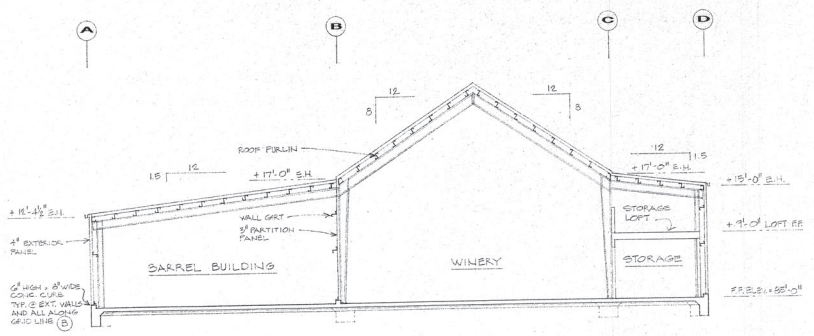


**FLOOR PLAN**

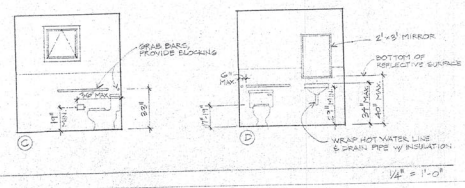
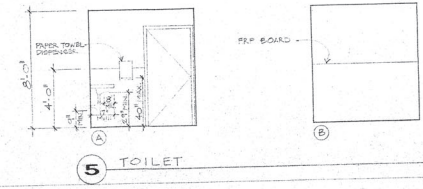
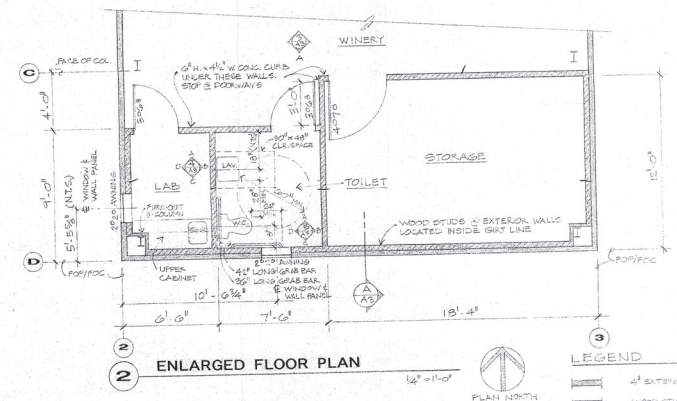
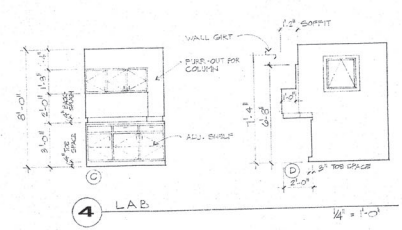
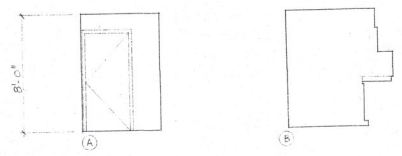
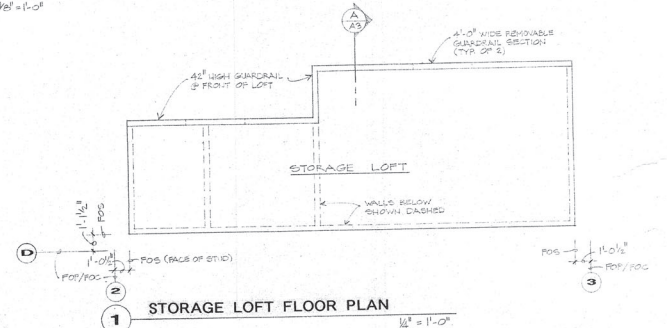
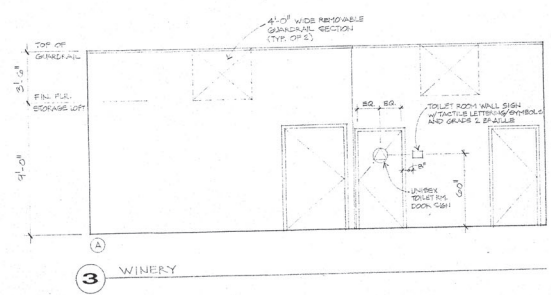
1/8" = 1'-0"

DATE: 11/11/01  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"  
DRAWN BY: [Signature]  
SHEET: 5

REVISIONS



SECTION A-A  
 1/8" = 1'-0"



LEGEND  
 4" EXTERIOR PANELS  
 WOOD STUDS & EXTERIOR WALLS

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SCALE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DRAWN BY: \_\_\_\_\_

4/11-2051

Scott Greenwood-Meinert  
D (415) 772-5741  
sgreenwood-meinert@coblentzlaw.com

March 9, 2026

*Via Email Only to: Sean.Trippi@countyofnapa.org*

County of Napa  
Planning, Building, and Environmental  
Services  
Attn: Sean Trippi, Supervising Planner  
1695 Third St, Suite 210  
Napa, CA 94559

**Re: P19-00386; Paloma Vineyard Code Compliance Major Modification  
4013 Spring Mountain Road; APN 022-150-008 – Updated Letter**

Dear Sean,

This letter is regarding the Paloma Vineyard (also referred to as “Applicant”) Code Compliance Major Modification (the “Project”), located at 4013 Spring Mt. Road (APN 022-150-008) (the “Property”). The purpose of this letter is a request to compromise as to compliance with the Napa County Road and Street Standards (“NCRSS”).

As you are well aware, the wine industry is currently in a tumultuous state. Grape growers are not able to sell their grapes; wine is sitting on the bulk market at low prices unable to be sold, and growers are ripping out vines. Wineries and tasting rooms are shutting their doors across both Napa and Sonoma Counties. As the entire wine industry is in an extremely fragile state, any potential strain on business presents a potential threat to growers and wineries across the Napa Valley.

This Project is a perfect example of how the County’s cost prohibitive rules unfortunately contribute to the problem of the economic state of the wine industry. The County’s rigid road standards have, in recent years, contributed to the downturn of the wine industry by making things prohibitively expensive for wineries. If the County continues down the path of requiring compliance with such cost prohibitive standards, any small, family-run winery hoping to continue operations in Napa Valley will be forced to shut down.

With all of this important context in mind, the purpose of this letter is explain why the County’s unreasonable request to widen Applicant’s road to meet the stringent requirements of the NCRSS is not feasible for this Project.

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For context, this letter is based on the requirements of Engineering's comment below (with the Applicant's response) from the County's March 24, 2024 comment letter:

Engineering Services:

*Comment 1: Based on site visits by Engineering and Fire, and review of the submittal documents, there is sufficient opportunity to improve the access road to meet the requirements of the Napa County Road and Street Standards (NCRSS). If the applicant refrains from improving the access to meet standards, Engineering will therefore recommend denial of the project, as configured.*

**Response 1:**

***The project is proposing additional driveway improvements in order to reduce the areas of the driveway that are seeking exceptions. The additional improvements include identification and improvement of additional turnout locations, and additional driveway widening to the full 22 feet per NCRSS requirements.***

***RSA+ also performed a preliminary cost analysis of the full driveway widening and the work associated with improving the road to meet the current requirements established by the NCRSS would result in an economic hardship for the small winery.***

In anticipation of the upcoming Planning Commission hearing, this letter will explain (1) the general difficulty of compliance with the NCRSS; (2) the narrow exceptions provided for in the NCRSS and why such restricted exceptions are a problem for most projects; and (3) why it is not possible for the Project to comply with the NCRSS.

## **1. The NCRSS do not provide clear, usable standards**

As a general matter, the NCRSS are not easy to follow and hard to decipher. The setup of the document, with a combination of technical graphics intertwined with wordy paragraphs, makes it extremely hard to understand the applicable standards. For example, section 12, residential driveways, refers to section 15 for "specific design criteria." However, section 15 says only that there is a general requirement for "all streets, drives, and roads" which shall have "a minimum of two ten (10) foot traffic lanes, of homogeneous surface, and a minimum of one (1) foot of shoulder on each side of the roadway providing two-way traffic flow to support emergency vehicle and civilian egress, unless other standards are provided herein, or additional requirements are mandated by the inspection authority or local subdivision requirements."<sup>1</sup> Section 15 does not provide specific design criteria, and in addition, it is unclear what the "other standards" referred to here means. This example is not the only instance of conflicting and disorganized language.

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<sup>1</sup> NCRSS, p. 14.

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## 2. The NCRSS's constraining exception criteria

The NCRSS do not allow for flexibility beyond the exception criteria in Section 3(d), which says:

*(d) An exception to these Standards may be allowed as provided if one or more of the following findings can be made and the findings in subsection (e) can also be made:*

*i. The exception will preserve unique features of the natural environment which includes, but is not limited to, natural water courses, steep slopes, geological features, heritage oak trees, or other trees of at least six inches in diameter at breast height and found by the decision-maker to be of significant importance, but does not include human altered environmental features such as vineyards and ornamental or decorative landscaping, or artificial features such as, rock walls, fences or the like;*

*ii. The exception is necessary to accommodate physical site limitations such as grade differentials; and/or*

*iii. The exception is necessary to accommodate other limiting factors such as recorded historical sites or legal constraints.*

*Exceptions are only allowed "where the exceptions provide the same overall practical effect as 'the SRA Fire Safe Regulations' towards providing defensible space."*

*Exceptions shall be made on a case-by-case basis only. Exceptions granted by the County shall be forwarded to the Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit of CAL FIRE.*

The exception attempts to provide three criteria, however, it also states that "exceptions shall be made on a case-by-case basis." If it is actually Napa County's intent to allow for exceptions on a "case-by-case basis," then it would seem more projects would be able to take advantage of such exception. The manner in which the County chooses to apply these exception criteria is extremely limiting and inconsistent. In the case of the Project, even though the site has obvious site limitations due to the steep grade, the County has prevented Applicant from being able to take advantage of criteria (ii), without any reasonable basis. The County's interpretation of this rule is clearly far too narrow.

To add to the confusion, the NCRSS provide the following definition of "Exception": "[a]n alternative to the specified standard requested by the developer that may be necessary due to health, safety, environmental conditions, physical site limitations or other limiting conditions such as recorded historical sites that mitigates the problem."<sup>2</sup> The definition appears to provide for a more widely applicable exception standard, however, in actuality, Napa County defers to the narrow Section 3 exception criteria above. The intention of the NCRSS is to ensure the safety of County roads. But, the way the County has historically applied the standards, it appears to value preservation of the natural environment over safety. Of course, Applicant understands the need to preserve oak trees, riparian areas, and valuable environmental

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<sup>2</sup> NCRSS, p. 6.

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resources. But, preserving such resources at the expense of completely shutting down a project is entirely out of line with the safety focus of the NCRSS.

### **3. Other counties provide examples of usable road and street standards and exceptions**

To understand where the NCRSS fall short, it is helpful to look at other counties' road construction standards. As described below, nearby counties have standards that tailor to the needs of specific areas and have more widely applicable exception criteria.

#### **Sonoma County's Road Construction Standards**

Sonoma County's Road Construction Standards are somewhat more flexible and lenient. Sonoma County's standards for rural driveways/ roadways (for example, Section 8.15 of the county's standards), provides that exceptions by the Sonoma County Fire Prevention Division are allowed to reduce the required driveway requirements.<sup>3</sup> For approval of an exception to various standards, Sonoma County's Fire Services Division evaluates the exception request based on the "same practical effect" standard.<sup>4</sup> Sonoma County has a specific exception request form, which allows an applicant to choose what standard it requests an exception from (roadway width, surface, grade, etc.) which must be submitted with the application. This exception process allows for a clear, standardized approach to granting exceptions. Although the NCRSS also contain the "same practical effect" language in regards to exceptions, Napa County does not appear to, in practice, utilize the "same practical effect" standard as the basis for approving exceptions, but rather relies on the more stringent exception criteria contained in Section 3 above.<sup>5</sup>

#### **San Mateo County's Standard Details Book**

San Mateo County also allows for more flexibility with its requirements. San Mateo County has specific, technical requirements tailored to different areas in the county. Providing for area-specific standards addresses the physical constraints of each area, and reduces the need for exception requests. For example, for the West Menlo Park area, the road width has a range

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<sup>3</sup> "(5) Driveway radii may be less than 25' with approved written exception by the Sonoma County Fire Prevention Division" and "(6) Throat width shall be a minimum of 12' for driveways and 20' for roadways *unless otherwise approved by the Sonoma County Fire Prevention Division.*" (Sonoma County Construction Standard No. 815, emphasis added.) This is the driveway standard for Rural Driveways/ Roadways, however, this same exception allowance is repeated for other roadway standards.

<sup>4</sup> This standard comes from California's Fire Safe Regulations, 14 CCR §1270.06. As explained, this exception standard is included in the NCRSS, but because the NCRSS provides for a separate exception criteria, Napa County's exception process results in far fewer allowed exceptions than are allowed by other counties.

<sup>5</sup> See NRCSS, pp. 9-10.

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requirement of 18 to 22 feet, depending on survey results for the specified project.<sup>6</sup> As another example, the requirements for driveway width and curb openings provide for a range rather than a specified requirement, providing for more flexibility.<sup>7</sup> Such flexibility is a reasonable way to ensure that projects that may not be able to meet stringent, inflexible and costly standards can still be approved.

Given the wide variety of land uses and varying topographical areas in Napa County, it is surprising that the NCRSS do not provide standards tailored to the various areas within the County. If Napa County did so (specifically, in the more mountainous areas of the County), applicants would have an easier time ensuring projects comply with the required standards. As well, the County would not be required to allocate substantial time ensuring each project meets such requirements.

#### **4. This Project cannot comply with NCRSS requirements**

The Project cannot meet the costly width requirements of the NCRSS based on the topography of the site. Applicant has spent considerable time, energy and effort to work diligently with RSA+ to creatively engineer a road leading to the Property. As the County is aware, certain portions of the road leading up to the Property cannot be widened to meet the 22 foot width standard due to steep terrain without implementing cost-prohibitive elements. As currently designed, the road includes as much roadway as possible that meets the 22 foot width requirement. Applicant simply cannot afford to perform the requested widening upgrades. In addition, if the road were to be widened along its entirety, the drainage system for the Property would be required to be fully redesigned and replaced. The road can be constructed per the plans dated April 8, 2025, but Applicant cannot offer more.

The Project cannot meet the costly requirements of the NCRSS based on the topography of the site. Applicant has spent considerable time, energy and effort to work diligently with RSA+ to creatively engineer a road leading to the Property that propose widening the road to 22 feet where it is reasonable and feasible, while ensuring line of sight pull outs less than 250 apart where it is not. As the County is aware, the Property's road has areas where steep terrain on either side significantly increase the cost of widening the road to the full 22 feet. As currently designed, the road includes as much roadway as possible that meets the 22 foot width requirement. In addition, if the road were to be widened along its entirety, the drainage system for the Property would be required to be fully redesigned and replaced. At an estimated cost of \$2.26M (not including an estimated \$400,000 - \$600,000 in wastewater and facility upgrades), the economics of the county required project simply are not feasible for the Applicant. The road can be constructed per the plans dated April 8, 2025, but Applicant cannot offer more.

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<sup>6</sup> San Mateo County Standard Details Book, West Menlo Park Road Standard A-6H.

<sup>7</sup> San Mateo County Standard Details Book, Standard Structures – Driveway Widths and Curb Openings for Single Family Residential Dwellings, Standard D-1.

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Page 6

Widening the entirety of the road would not be in the best interest of Applicant or the state of the wine industry as a whole in Napa County. Should the County impose NCRSS standards for the entirety of the road, Applicant would be forced to rip out vines, which would result in further economic loss. In addition, there is no option for Applicant to obtain any amount of commercial financing for a replant or otherwise. Such financing is generally not feasible for small, independent, family-run wineries.

Of note as to the road on the Property, during the 2020 Glass Fire, firefighters used the Property daily as a fire lookout point, easily driving up the road to reach the Richards' house. Firefighters also refilled their tanks from the Property's well daily. The fire trucks had no issue navigating the road to the Property, even during smoky, stressful conditions. They luckily saved the house, the winery, and the neighboring properties.

Imposing the County's cost prohibitive standards here is impractical and will force Applicant to shut down its entire business. The Paloma Vineyard is an award winning, family owned and operated vineyard and winery at the top of the Spring Mountain District. It is the epitome of what Napa Valley stands for: historic, family owned operations, and world renowned wines. The Property has approximately 7,000 vines, consisting of Merlot, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes, which produce highly regarded estate-grown wines. As the first grape production occurred in 1987, Paloma Vineyard is a truly historic feature of the Napa Valley wine industry. It started from scratch with the planting of grapes on the Property by the first generation of Paloma Vineyard owners (the Richards family) and has remained largely the same since its inception. The business is now run by the third generation of Richards' family farmers and winemakers, who hope to continue operations far into the future.

It is crucial to ensure that the Paloma Vineyard maintain its existing character while allowing its visitor operations to expand and continue. The Project seeks to add a tasting room, which is a simple and reasonable ask for a well-regarded winery. However, the County's ask for approximately \$2.26 million in road upgrades, when there are other viable and practical options, is unreasonable.

Given the fragile state of the wine industry and Applicant's efforts to meet the County's standards, Applicant would like to reiterate its request to allow for a reasonable exception to the NCRSS. Applicant is already paying for an entire vineyard replant due to the GRBV virus that is decimating Napa and surrounding areas, and will hit its lowest production numbers since the initial planting of the vineyard in the 1980s. The requested upgrades are financially infeasible, especially given that winery loans are currently not a possibility. The Project already complies with the County's requirements in all other respects. Applicant simply cannot overstretch its resources to comply with the County's costly standards.

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**5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the NCRSS are much too restrictive and do not allow for the type of development that would be beneficial for the County given the current state of the wine industry. Applicant therefore requests that the Planning Commission either (1) approve its application by allowing the Project to meet the requirements for an exception from the NCRSS; or (2) alter the standards so that more projects like Paloma can comply.

Cordially,



Scott Greenwood-Meinert

cc: Planning Commissioners:  
Chair Kara Brunzell [Kara.Brunzell@countyofnapa.org](mailto:Kara.Brunzell@countyofnapa.org)  
Vice-Chair Pete Richmond [pete.richmond@countyofnapa.org](mailto:pete.richmond@countyofnapa.org)  
Commissioner Walter Brooks [walter.brooks@countyofnapa.org](mailto:walter.brooks@countyofnapa.org)  
Commissioner Molly Williams [molly.williams@countyofnapa.org](mailto:molly.williams@countyofnapa.org)  
Commissioner Megan Dameron [megan.dameron@countyofnapa.org](mailto:megan.dameron@countyofnapa.org)  
Michael Parker, Planning Manager [michael.parker@countyofnapa.org](mailto:michael.parker@countyofnapa.org)

**Re: Support for Paloma Vineyard — Please Approve a Feasible, Safety-Equivalent Roadway Plan**

Chair and Members of the Napa County Planning Commission:

Titanium Winery LLC dba Aadland Moody Vineyards is a small, family-owned producer on Spring Mountain. We are currently under construction on our winery, tasting room, and new access road—work made necessary by the 2020 fire. We value the County’s commitment to public safety, emergency access, and wildfire resilience, and we want to be clear: we support reasonable standards that achieve those goals.

We write in support of our neighbor, Paloma Vineyard, and respectfully ask the Commission to approve Paloma’s alternative, safety-equivalent roadway approach and associated permit. Their proposal focuses on widening where feasible, adding line-of-sight pullouts to support emergency access, and maintaining a safe, serviceable surface—a targeted, performance-based approach that prioritizes outcomes and feasibility for a small, family-run winery.

Paloma is also a real asset to the community. In 2024, they invited and encouraged neighbors by hosting a Spring Mountain BBQ/picnic—exactly the kind of community-building effort that keeps our mountain connected and resilient.

From our vantage point—as a similarly small winery shouldering significant post-fire construction obligations—one-size-fits-all upgrades can unintentionally over-burden small producers without proportionate safety gains. We encourage the County to recognize case-by-case, performance-based solutions that meet or exceed emergency access goals and remain feasible for small, non-corporate wineries. This is consistent with the community’s request for a practical, feasible permitting path that sustains the character and economy of Spring Mountain while keeping responders and visitors safe.

Respectfully,

Titanium Winery LLC dba Aadland Moody Vineyards



Justin Moody co-owner of Aadland-Moody Vineyards

3505 Spring Mt. Road, St. Helena CA 94574

# BARNETT VINEYARDS

*Spring Mountain District*

NAPA VALLEY



November 5, 2025

Dear Napa Planning Commission,

We are writing as long-time Spring Mountain residents and proprietors of Barnett Vineyards to express our strong support for the Richards family of Paloma and their request to secure their new use permit.

The Richards family has been an integral part of the Spring Mountain community for decades. We remember Barbara and Jim Richards, who founded Paloma in 1983, with great fondness and admiration. Their vision, warmth, and dedication to the land set a lasting example for all of us on the mountain. Today, Paloma stands proudly as a third-generation family winery, continuing the legacy Barbara and Jim began more than forty years ago.

Sheldon Richards, following in his parents' footsteps, played a foundational role in helping to establish the Spring Mountain District Association, which continues to unite vintners and champion the shared values of our region. His son Caston is now following in his footsteps. As neighbors and fellow winemakers, we have witnessed the Richards family's ongoing commitment to responsible land stewardship, quality winemaking, and the preservation of Napa Valley's agricultural and family-owned heritage. Paloma has long embodied the character of Spring Mountain—hard work, integrity, and a deep respect for the land that sustains us all.

It is vital that small, family-owned legacy wineries like Paloma continue to thrive. They represent the authenticity and generational continuity that make Napa Valley so special. Allowing these families to maintain and modestly enhance their operations ensures that our community remains diverse, vibrant, and rooted in the values that built it.

We wholeheartedly support the Richards family's request and respectfully urge the County to grant the necessary use permit so Paloma can continue its important role in the Spring Mountain and greater Napa Valley wine community.

Sincerely,

Fiona and Hal Barnett

Barnett Vineyards  
Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley

**BEHRENS FAMILY  
WINERY**  
*Napa Valley*

November 10, 2025

Dear Napa County Planning Commission,

We own Behrens Family Winery on Spring Mountain and fully support Sheldon Richards and Paloma Vineyard as they seek their permit. Small, family-run wineries like those on Spring Mountain have always been a key part of our community, and Paloma has played a central role. When we bought our property in 1999, Jim and Barbara Richards invited us over for a wonderful meal and made us feel right at home. Today, Sheldon and his son, Caston, are carrying on that tradition of hard work, great winemaking, and building community.

The rules for wineries seeking permit changes are especially tough on small, family businesses, which have always been the heart of Napa Valley's wine industry. We've experienced this ourselves at Behrens Family Winery, since we had to meet very challenging conditions to get our use permit about ten years ago. We support Paloma's alternate road proposal because it's a practical and effective way to address the road improvement issue. It lets them meet the requirements without putting their business at risk. Some county requirements can be so demanding that they threaten the survival of small businesses.

The Richards have always been great friends and neighbors here on Spring Mountain. Sheldon helped establish the Spring Mountain District Association, which brings wineries and growers together for more than just marketing purposes. The group also organizes community barbecues, road cleanups, and offers support and friendship during fires and other emergencies.

While we recognize and appreciate the County's efforts to support public safety and best land use practices, the regulations and requirements should offer common-sense solutions for the individual businesses that make Napa County such a special place to live, work, and visit.

Thank you,

Lisa Drinkward & Les Behrens  
Behrens Family Winery

4078 Spring Mountain Road St Helena, CA



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December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

To the Members of the Napa County Planning Commission,

I am writing on behalf of Bergin Screen Printing & Etching in strong support of Paloma Vineyard, a family-owned winery that has been a respected and valued part of the Napa Valley community for more than 40 years.

Bergin has worked with The Richards Family and Paloma Vineyard for over two decades. Throughout that time, we have consistently experienced Paloma as thoughtful operators, responsible stewards of their property, and engaged contributors to the broader wine community. Their commitment to quality, safety, sustainability, and good-faith compliance has never been in question.

What is deeply concerning is the scale and financial burden of the current permitting requirements being imposed as part of Paloma's use permit update. The proposed infrastructure demands, particularly related to road widening and associated construction, represent costs that are extraordinary and disproportionate for a small, non-corporate winery. These requirements far exceed what is reasonably feasible and risk forcing a long-standing, responsibly run business out of operation, despite the availability of alternative solutions that meet safety objectives at a significantly lower cost.

This situation reflects a broader challenge facing small and mid-scale wineries throughout Napa Valley. Increasingly, independent producers are being required to meet standards and absorb costs that appear designed for much larger operations. The cumulative effect undermines the very character, diversity, and agricultural heritage that Napa Valley is known for and that county policies often state an intention to protect.

Paloma Vineyard is not seeking exemptions or shortcuts. They are seeking a fair, proportional, and feasible permitting path. One that acknowledges scale, history, and demonstrates stewardship. From the perspective of a long-term supplier and industry partner, we believe Paloma and the Richards Family have earned that consideration.

We respectfully urge the Commission to reconsider the current requirements and to work collaboratively toward a solution that ensures public safety while allowing Paloma Vineyard, and wineries like it, to remain viable contributors to Napa Valley's future.

Sincerely,

*M. Bergin*

**Mike Bergin**

President & CEO | [mike@berginglass.com](mailto:mike@berginglass.com)

**BERGIN SCREEN PRINTING & ETCHING**

To the Napa Planning Commission,

We are writing to you as friends and neighbors of Paloma Vineyards.

When we broke ground, Barbara and Jim Richards farmed the land together. They were ten years ahead of us and a constant inspiration. They too shared the dream of "back to the land" and were not afraid of the work. We remember the day when their Merlot was elected "best Merlot of the world"! I remember Barbara's humble pride shining through her smile. I also remember her driving the tractor on the hilly, rocky terrain. I see her toolkit, solidly fastened to the tractor, equipped with a 22 in preparation of an encounter with a fat rattler of which there were many. We would call each other sharing observations we made in the vineyard, we met for a picnic or shared a meal around the kitchen table. This all was not a lifestyle but a way of life, a lot of work which left you with dirty hands, tired feet and a lot of satisfaction. The houses up on Spring Mountain are far apart, the friendships close, we are a neighborhood and behave like it.

Paloma was passed down to Sheldon, who is an active and engaged man in our community, be it in organizing a street clean up, a neighborhood BBQ, a fire fighting orientation, a red blotch seminar and many more. And next in line is Caston, his son, grandchild of Barbara and Jim. What a beautiful legacy! I grew up believing that this was the way of the land and the farm, a deep rooted organic truth. But obviously there can appear a not anticipated boulder, threatening the way forward.

My husband Carroll and I ask you to please work out a solution which keeps Paloma alive. We need our neighborhood functioning. We believe diversity is the key to this valley and its beautiful lands. Small fishes and big fishes, not one or the other - coexistence!  
Please grant Paloma the future it deserves.

Sincerely,

Christina and Carroll Ballard  
Ballard Vineyard

**Fish Friendly Farming Program**

California Land Stewardship Institute

11/10/2025

**To the Napa County Planning Commission and the Napa Community,**

On behalf of California Land Stewardship Institute and its Fish Friendly Farming Program, I am writing to express my strong support for **Paloma Vineyard**, a long-standing steward of the Napa Valley landscape and a valued participant in our regional conservation network, in its effort to secure appropriate permits to enhance its sustainability practices at its Napa Valley location.

As longtime participants in the Fish Friendly Farming program, Paloma has demonstrated a deep commitment to sustainable viticulture and watershed health through practices that protect soil, improve water quality, and maintain native habitat on their property.

We understand the regulatory challenges that small agricultural producers face and believe that maintaining a feasible, proportional permitting path for existing, family-owned wineries is critical to preserving the diversity and sustainability of Napa's agricultural heritage. The County's policies should recognize and support landowners like Paloma who have already demonstrated their commitment to environmental responsibility and community values.

Thank you,

**Connor Bennett**

Director of Sustainability and Certification

Fish Friendly Farming Program

California Land Stewardship Institute

March 5, 2025

Napa County Planning Commission  
1195 Third Street, Suite 210  
Napa, CA 94559

**Re:** Support for Paloma Vineyard — Approval of a Feasible, Safety-Equivalent Roadway Plan

Chair and Members of the Napa County Planning Commission:

I am writing in strong support of Paloma Vineyard and to respectfully ask the Commission to reconsider the road improvement requirements currently placed on this property. I bring to this matter more than 20 years of hands-on experience with the St. Helena Fire Department, having served as a firefighter, engineer, and engine and crew captain. That experience — including direct response to this exact area — forms the basis of my professional opinion that the existing driveway at Paloma is safe, serviceable, and fully adequate for the proposed use.

The current county standard requiring a 20-foot paved roadway with a 1-foot shoulder on each side is, in many circumstances, the right and necessary requirement. I want to be clear that I support that standard where it genuinely applies. However, applying it uniformly — without regard to the specific character of a road, the number of properties it serves, or its length — produces results that are disproportionate, unnecessarily costly, and in some cases environmentally damaging. For Paloma Vineyard, the requirement as currently applied falls into that category.

The road in question is less than one-quarter mile in length, is constructed of a stable all-season surface, offers clear lines of sight at every turn and pullout, and currently serves only two properties — one of which is not occupied. I have personally operated fire apparatus in this response area, and I can say with confidence that every piece of equipment in the county's fleet could respond to this property safely under existing conditions. Two-way emergency ingress and egress — the core purpose of the new standard — can be readily and safely achieved on this driveway as it stands today.

To illustrate the distinction, consider Langtry Road, located just a short distance away. Langtry Road is the type of roadway the new standard was designed to address. It stretches over two miles before reaching any truly private driveways, serves numerous residences, vineyards, and wineries, and contains multiple long blind stretches where two vehicles — let alone emergency apparatus — cannot pass. In several sections, one vehicle would need to reverse hundreds of feet to allow another to proceed. That is a genuine and serious public safety risk. Requiring full road improvements on a driveway like Paloma's, which shares none of those characteristics, misapplies the intent of the standard.

Beyond the safety analysis, the financial burden of this requirement is significant — costs extending into the millions of dollars for less than a quarter mile of roadway improvement on a small agricultural property. And given the terrain involved, the environmental impact of full grading and paving should not be dismissed. There is real potential for unnecessary disruption to the landscape, drainage patterns, and surrounding land — damage that would be difficult to reverse and that serves no meaningful public safety purpose in this context.

I respectfully ask the Commission to consider a performance-based approach for properties like Paloma — one that evaluates actual emergency access conditions rather than applying a blanket standard. Based on my two decades of responding to emergencies throughout this area, the driveway serving Paloma Vineyard meets the practical and operational needs of public safety. I urge the Commission to approve a feasible, safety-equivalent roadway plan for this property.

Respectfully submitted,

**David Capponi**

Captain (ret.), St. Helena Fire Department

To whom it may concern:

This is a letter of reference for Paloma Vineyards and their owner Sheldon Richards. We are neighbors and have known him for five years. We live in Atlanta and bought a second home on Spring Mountain in November of 2019 (Just in time for the fires). We met Sheldon in 2019 and he has been a key person to acquaint us with life on Spring Mountain. It may not be obvious from the outside looking in, but when you live in this rural community you must be either very self-sufficient or have good neighbors. We rely on the latter and Sheldon is a good one.

As we have gotten to know Sheldon it is obvious that his property and this mountain are very special to him. His mother and father started the vineyard and he and now his son is carrying on the tradition. We have brought many guests to the vineyard for tastings and his is very rare in the valley. The wines are very affordable and tasting fees waved on purchase. He truly loves this land and Spring Mountain community. Our hope is that he can continue his farming for generations on the land his family began.

Ed and Melissa Clary

4036 Spring Mountain Rd

St. Helena, CA 94574

**Vendimia Vineyards Inc.**

1246 Ione Ct.  
Napa, CA 94558  
(707) 320-8644  
[frios@vendimiavineyards.com](mailto:frios@vendimiavineyards.com)

Napa Planning Commission,

As a Farm Labor Contractor part of the Napa wine community and industry. We see first hand how important small, independent business and vineyards are to the Napa Valley. Paloma Vineyard is a perfect example of a small winery that brings value to this community. The benefit of collaborating as locals is very important for maintaining our valley, which depends greatly on the reputation and success of these small producers.

We have had the privilege of providing labor for Paloma Vineyard, and our experience with them has been exceptional. They are respectful, kind, and genuinely pleasant to work with. They communicate clearly, treat people with fairness and respect, and always follow proper standards and practices. Their accuracy with payment, honesty, and organization show their integrity as a business. Beyond our partnership Paloma Vineyard values strong relationships and conducts themselves as true neighbors within our community.

We had the opportunity to participate in meetings in the Spring Mountain area, where we discussed market vineyard improvements. It was a very positive experience to connect with others who share the same goals and commitment to quality. Being included in this showed us how much Paloma Vineyard values transparency, responsibility and collaboration. Overall, our experience with Paloma Vineyard has been excellent in every aspect.

Most importantly, we believe there should be a feasible permitting path for existing small non-corporate wineries. These family run businesses are essential to the Napa Valley that preserves the culture and diversity. Paloma Vineyard represents exactly the kind of responsible community minded winery that should be supported.

Thank you,

Francisco Rios

President | Vendimia Vineyards Inc.

Dear Napa County Planning Commission,

We are writing as longtime neighbors on Spring Mountain and as fellow family-run producers who deeply value the character, safety, and agricultural heritage of this region. Our family has watched Paloma Vineyard operate for decades with integrity, humility, and genuine respect for the land and for the community around them. We strongly support approval of their use permit and their proposed, safety-equivalent roadway plan.

Paloma Vineyard has always been the kind of neighbor any mountain community hopes for. Their operation is small, thoughtful, and low-impact, and they consistently show up for the people around them. Over the years, we've seen Sheldon and his family step in quietly and consistently — helping other properties after storms, supporting cleanup efforts, building community connections, and offering help without ever being asked. Their approach to farming and winemaking mirrors the way they treat their neighbors: careful, responsible, and with a long view toward stewardship rather than expansion.

Paloma's presence is also a benefit to Spring Mountain and to Napa Valley as a whole. They bring visitors who appreciate the uniqueness of mountain-grown wine and who often explore other wineries in the AVA. Their guests are exactly the type of respectful, engaged visitors who help sustain small producers throughout the region. Their continued operation strengthens awareness of the Spring Mountain District and supports the diversity that has always been vital to Napa's identity.

We believe it is essential that Napa County preserve a feasible permitting path for long-standing, non-corporate, family-run wineries like Paloma. Many of us on Spring Mountain understand the realities of running a small agricultural business: major one-size-fits-all infrastructure requirements can pose existential challenges that large corporations can absorb but family operations simply cannot. Paloma's proposed alternative road improvements — widening where possible, adding pullouts, and maintaining a well-kept surface — are reasonable, safety-focused, and reflective of the way emergency access has worked successfully on this mountain for decades.

We all want a safe community. We all want emergency access that works. And we all want to preserve the small producers who have shaped Napa Valley into what it is. Approving a fair, proportional permit for Paloma Vineyard honors all three of those priorities.

For more than 40 years, three generations of the Richards family have cared for this land and contributed to the fabric of Spring Mountain. They exemplify the values Napa Valley was built on: hands-on farming, family involvement, quality work, and being a good neighbor. We respectfully ask the Commission to support their request and allow them a realistic path to continue operating.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jenni & Marko Karakasevic  
Neighbors, Spring Mountain District

Joan Crowley  
707-477-8039  
4054 SPring Mountain Rd  
St Helena, CA, 94574

To Whom it may concern:

Jim and Barbara Richards started Paloma Vineyard 40 years ago. Their son, Sheldon, and now Caston, his son, are carrying on the work that was begun 40 years ago, creating a wonderful Merlot Wine. This brought people to not only Spring Mtn. but to St Helena and Napa Valley to see the beautiful view from the very top of Spring Mountain, and to explore and spend money in other parts of Napa Valley.

During the 2020 fire, the local fireman used Sheldon's property as a view site. They got their trucks up the road that is now being used by trucks and cars without a problem.

It is very important to me as a small grape grower, living in Napa, to keep the small family owned vineyards, and wineries in the Valley. They are the ones who made Napa Valley what it is today.

Please do not force the closure of this renowned winery.

Sincerely,  
Joan Crowley

Nov. 5, 2025

Attn: Ryan Alsop, Chair Ann Cottrell  
Re: Napa Valley small family vineyard/wineries

Mr. Alsop, Chair Cottrell,

Corporate ownership has driven business from our valley through overpriced tasting fees, overpriced wines, bottom-line driven sales, and sterile tasting room environments. Not all of course, but the majority. Coupled with overpriced hotels and exorbitant restaurant menus—this valley is staggering to a halt. Now let's add a national wine sales slump and the virus red blotch. We have a significant problem! Let us not forget how the tariffs affecting the wine industry and a troubled national economy.

I see small and large governments across California and America helping to streamline permitting and processing so businesses can thrive! Yet it seems to me that Napa County is doing the opposite! Please remember that small family businesses drive the engine of the American economy. And that seems to me what the County is targeting.

I can't understand why? We put butts in restaurant chairs, butts in hotel beds, people in art/jewelry/retail shops. We employ people. We pay taxes. Indirectly we pay for the County to operate including your salaries. Shouldn't you work on our behalf?

Paloma was the Wine Spectators TOP PICK and we have been in their TOP 100 a few times. My father was a past president of the Family Winemakers of California. I was the founding board member of the Spring Mountain District Association which cleans our road, host community dinners for our friends and neighbors here on Spring Mountain. After the fires in 2017 I acquired a firetruck and drove it back from Green Bay. Then built a firehall and formed a volunteer fire team. We were active in 2020!

I, like Hoopes and 30+ wineries, came forward voluntarily to sign up for the amnesty program. It was a bait and switch and now we are paying the price. What about the hundreds of others that operate without permits from their homes and were smart enough not to sign up!

I cannot stress enough the importance of small producers like Lyndsay and myself who make visits to Napa so special. We are what's left of Napa from 30-40 years ago. I am the farmer, winemaker, tasting staff and a whole lot more. The third generation of my family is currently learning the ropes. What the County is doing to Lyndsay, myself and others, will put us out of business!

My lawyer suggested I provide a solution. I discussed it with Dianne Dillon before she retired. Grandfather us based on acreage or tons grown or cases produced. People understand the term and would certainly see the County in a better light.

Lyndsay is fighting for the life of her business and family. This is so wrong!

Regards,

Sheldon Richards, President, SMDA  
Proprietor Paloma Vineyard  
4013 Spring Mountain Road, St. Helena, CA 94574  
707.318.9608  
sheldon@palomavineyard.com

Mandy Masciarelli  
Masciarelli Design  
920 5<sup>th</sup> St. W, Unit J  
Sonoma, CA 95476

October 25, 2025

Napa Planning Commission,

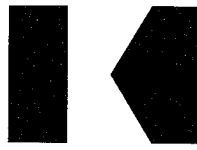
I have lived in wine country since 1988 where my first rental house was on Spring Mountain and my first job was at Whitehall Lane in the tasting room. I spent 30 years in Napa Valley and I now live in Sonoma. I started my wine label design business in 1993 and most of my clients have been small family owned wineries. Paloma has been my client since 1997. Small wineries like Paloma are the backbone of wine country. They are regular people who take a chance on creating something that supports the local community and they hire local people to support their business.

Since the 1990's I have watched the Napa Valley small wineries being bought by large conglomerate corporations. They buy up little brands, then the shareholders want more profit so they lower the quality and spend more on marketing. They don't hire local wine label designers like me. They hire large firms in New York and Los Angeles. When they fail to make enough profits to make the shareholders happy they sell off and in the case of Vintage Wine Estates, they go bankrupt and layoff our local workers.

When the Napa Planning Commission puts onerous and impossibly high fees and permitting requirements on small family wineries, they are in essence making it so the small wineries fail and only the large conglomerates have the funds to make the changes to infrastructure that is demanded. Is this really what the Napa Valley wants for its future? Just giant corporations with many brands and no family ties? Can there be a compromise for wineries making small quantities of wine? I moved to Sonoma to re-connect with small family wineries since some do still exist here. I have only a few clients left in Napa Valley. I hope you will take a look at what you are asking and come to a more reasonable solution that supports small family wineries like Paloma.

Thank you,

Mandy Masciarelli  
Mmdesignnapa.com



*Robert Keenan Winery*

November 10, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter as a longtime neighbor and colleague of Sheldon Richards. Sheldon is a second-generation vintner for Paloma Vineyard and a conscientious farmer. Sheldon continues to produce world class wines and helps to uphold the reputation of the Spring Mountain District AVA.

Sheldon has for many years held a position on the Spring Mountain District Association executive committee, helping to guide wineries and growers through challenging times. In 2019 Sheldon organized the purchase of a fire truck, transported the truck to Spring Mountain and built a storage area for the truck. I commend Sheldon for adding this firefighting asset to our remote area of the Napa Valley.

I wish Sheldon the best in continuing his family business and hope that Napa County will work with him in finding reasonable and affordable solutions to his current permit requests.

Sincerely,

Matt Gardner  
General Manager



*Robert Keenan Winery*

November 20, 2025

TWIMC,

I am writing on behalf of our good neighbor and long time friend, Sheldon Richards, owner/winemaker of Paloma Vineyards.

Sheldon and I are both 2nd generation owners of Spring Mountain wineries that were started by our parents decades ago and are now both in the process of mentoring our sons to be the next generation to carry on this noble and valuable small business.

Small multi generational family wineries are touted by the Napa Valley Vintners Association as the back bone of the Napa Valley. Our 'authentic' wineries draw visitors from all over the world to come visit the beautiful Napa Valley and spend their hard earned dollars here in our hotels and restaurants.

As is clear to anyone who is breathing right now the wine industry is facing unprecedented challenges which are testing the creativity and resources of wineries like ours.

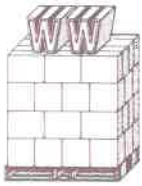
I would like to remind all of the good people who work for the County of Napa in all of its' varying departments that you all are meant to serve and help the people of the Napa Valley and not to be an unreasonable burden with excessive regulations at a time when we all can least afford it.

Reasonable applications of important regulations are essential to an ordered community but so also is the ability to see each individual case with its' unique variables and make common sense accommodations that will not adversely affect anyone and provide some financial relief from unreasonable modifications.

I hope the county can come to reasonable accommodations with my good neighbor and friend Sheldon Richards, he has been a terrific community member for quite some time.

Best,

Michael Keenan  
President Robert Keenan Winery



Napa Valley  
**WINE WAREHOUSE**

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November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Napa Planning Commission,

We here at NVWW have stored the wine of many dozens of Wineries from throughout the valley, from Sonoma to Calistoga. We have had the pleasure of storing Paloma since April 1996 and hope to be able to continue. We can say with confidence that everyone at NVWW has enjoyed working with the folks at Paloma, their kindness, understanding, hardworking nature and desire to seek excellence are virtues that all people should aspire to have and maintain.

While we have no desire to disparage any wineries, it is self-evident that the family-owned small business model represented by Paloma, that gives the valley so much of its world-famous charm, is quickly disappearing. So much of the connective tissue of this valley are families like the Richards that both employ so many of the workers in our valley but also build relationships based on mutual respect. I know in the capable hands of people like Sheldon and Caston, the interests of their neighbors on Spring Mountain and by extension Napa Valley will be viewed from the vantage of a peer and stakeholder in the community. Rather than a profit margin to shorted or expanded based on how an industry does for a harvest or two.

We humbly ask that the Napa Planning Commission work with Paloma to find a reasonable compromise to allow them to continue to enrich the culture of our valley.

Thank you for your consideration,

Signed,

Emilio Barragan -General Manager

Darlene Gonzales – Office Manager

Christian Komes – Office Assistant

420 La Fata Street ▪ St. Helena, California 94574

TEL (707) 963-8220 • FAX (707) 963-9122  
www.nvww.com

Dear Napa Planning Commissioners

I am writing in reference to the issues facing Paloma Vineyards, currently under review by your department. I am very concerned that this process is placing nearly impossible burdens on a winery that has proudly and effectively represented everything that is right with the Napa Valley, and has done so not only locally, but on an international level.

I have worked with the Richards family for more than thirty years in various projects and activities in the Napa Valley, from the Spring Mountain AVA association to support for students at Napa Valley College, and international visitors to Napa. In every case Sheldon Richards has been a wonderful example of community spirit and cooperation. He has supported his neighbors in their efforts to improve their stewardship of their land. He has hosted international visitors from the world of wine to foster relationships between vintners and viticulturalists around the world. And he has cultivated a community of friends and neighbors who tackle the issues of grape-growing and winemaking in the Napa Valley with common sense, collegial communication, and a deep commitment to the preservation of Napa Valley and Spring Mountain.

Given this track record, I am very concerned that the burdens placed on Paloma Vineyards by the Planning Commission very seriously threaten the viability of one of Napa Valley's benchmark small wineries. Paloma, despite its small size and family ownership, has been named the top wine in the world by the Wine Spectator Magazine. They have not marketed this success to create a tourist oriented gold mine on the property—instead choosing to keep a low profile, maintain their prices far below what many in Napa have charged, and continue to operate their winery with minimal impact on the environment and their neighborhood.

If we cannot find a way for such conscientious people as the Richards family to succeed in the Napa Valley without facing massive regulatory challenges from our own Planning Commission, I fear for the future not just of Paloma, but of all but the most powerfully funded wine companies in Napa.

And I don't think that's the future that anyone in Napa wants to see.

Sincerely,

Paul Wagner  
McPherson Distinguished Teacher  
Napa Valley College Wine Program

Dear Planning Commission,

As neighbors atop Spring Mountain, we have known the Richards family and their vineyards & winery since the early 1980's. They represent the kind of good neighbors, friends and farmers who have been the foundation for building America, California and the Napa Valley.

We remember Sheldon's parents Jim and Barbara working daily and diligently in their vineyards and winery until they ultimately created the Merlot recognized as the international "Wine of the Year" by the Wine Spectator (beating out the finest French Chateau. And Sheldon continues to carry on his family commitment to hard work, perseverance and dedicated to quality that has helped make Napa Valley famous.

We believe small, family-run wineries like Paloma still have a place in Napa's future, and feel your regulations are unfair to small farmers and winemakers like the Richards which are destined to put them out of business. Small family-owned wineries should be valued so they can continue to have role in shaping Napa Valley's future.

It is only fair and reasonable to provide for a feasible and affordable permitting path for existing small, family-run wineries like Paloma that value safety and sustainability, so they can remain in business and continue to support our local economy.

Sincerely,

Richard and Bev Popko

4034 Spring Mountain Road, St. Helena CA



Roxanne Karkut Prager  
1290 Vineland Ave  
St. Helena, CA 94574

November 20, 2025

Napa County Planning Commission  
1195 Third Street, Suite 210  
Napa, CA 94559

Re: Testimonial Letter in Support of Paloma Vineyard

To the Napa County Planning Commission,

My name is Roxanne Karkut Prager and I am a lifelong Napa Valley resident. I have spent more than 40 years working in the local wine industry, and I operate a small business as a local glass-etching artist serving many wineries throughout the valley. This long family connection has given me a deep understanding of the challenges and values of independent wineries. I am writing to express my strong support for Paloma Vineyard and to urge the Commission to adopt a feasible, fair permitting path for long-established, family-run wineries.

I have known the Richards family since the early 1990s. Barbara and Jim Richards were among the earliest wineries to support my work, and their patronage continued for decades. Today, I continue to work with Sheldon Richards and the Paloma team, who have carried on that same tradition of loyalty, integrity, and community commitment. Their support has helped sustain my livelihood as a local artist in a valley where independent workers and small businesses increasingly struggle to survive.

Over four decades, I have watched Napa Valley change dramatically. Many wineries are now owned by large corporations or outside investors, and I have seen long-term workers laid off while new employees are brought in at lower wages. This shift has made it extremely difficult for local workers, artisans, and long-time residents to continue living here. At the same time, organizations like the Wine Institute—whose policies and board are heavily influenced by corporate winery owners—often set statewide standards that unintentionally burden small family wineries. These corporate-driven approaches place independent wineries at a severe disadvantage.

Through all these changes, Paloma has remained a true example of what a family-run Napa winery should be—responsible, community-minded, and deeply rooted in Spring Mountain.

Their vineyard road has been maintained safely for 42 years and even supported emergency crews during the 2020 Glass Fire. The county's proposed requirement for \$2.26 million in road widening and paving is simply not feasible for a small winery of Paloma's scale. Their alternative proposal—which meets safety requirements at a realistic cost—is both responsible and aligned with the needs of non-corporate wineries that do not have the financial resources of major estates.

This issue extends beyond one permit application. It speaks to the future of small independent wineries in Napa Valley and whether they will still have a place in our community. Paloma Vineyard represents the heart of what built Napa Valley: families, farmers, small businesses, and long-standing local relationships. Losing wineries like Paloma would mean losing part of the valley's history, character, and cultural identity.

I respectfully urge the Planning Commission to support Paloma's reasonable proposal and to recognize the importance of maintaining a feasible permitting path for existing, family-run wineries. Protecting businesses like Paloma means protecting the Napa Valley that generations have worked to build.

Thank you for your time, service, and thoughtful consideration.

With respect,  
Roxanne Karkut Prager  
St. Helena, California



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City of Napa Planning Division  
1600 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Napa, CA 94558

March 5, 2026

RE: Paloma Vineyards Road Proposal

Dear Napa Planning Commission,

Ryan Mobile Bottling has been providing contract bottling services in Napa and Sonoma counties since 1995. Our company has five bottling lines, each housed in a 40-foot Peterbilt cab and chassis. These trucks have been driving up and down the Paloma driveway without issue since they became a client in 2001.

Small, family-owned wineries such as Paloma Vineyards represent an important segment of our clientele and their continued success directly supports the sustainability of businesses like ours. Increasingly, wineries such as these are being forced to reconsider improvement plans because of extensive permitting requirements. We believe required improvements should be necessary and reasonable, as reflected in Paloma's alternative road proposal. We also believe it is the responsibility of the broader community, including the Planning Commission, to support the viability of these smaller producers, especially during this period of uncertainty for the wine industry.

For these reasons, we respectfully encourage the Commission to approve Paloma Vineyard's alternative road proposal.

Sincerely,

Mary Ryan McLaughlin  
Co-Founder/Chief Administrator

**Sarah and Graeme MacDonald**

**4018 Spring Mountain Road  
St Helena, CA 94574**

**November 10, 2025**

Napa County Planning Commission  
1195 Third Street, Suite 210  
Napa, CA 94559

**Re: Support for Paloma Vineyard**

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

We are writing to express our strong support for Paloma Vineyard and to highlight the importance of their continued presence both on Spring Mountain and within the greater Napa Valley. We support a solution that ensures their modified operation under standards that remain practical and fair to small producers.

Paloma is a cornerstone of the Spring Mountain District community. As one of the few remaining small, family-run producers in Napa County, Paloma embodies the authenticity and stewardship that define Napa's identity. Their presence attracts visitors who seek genuine experiences and go on to explore and support neighboring wineries thereby contributing to the continued growth and recognition of the Spring Mountain District (SMD) and Napa Valley brands.

Paloma's multi-generational commitment to farming, winemaking, and community service reflects the very heart of what makes Napa special. Sheldon's leadership in the Spring Mountain District Association and his advocacy for our collective interests have made him an indispensable voice for the mountain. Recently, Paloma brought together neighbors and local growers to engage with UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) scientists—fostering collaboration, shared learning, and innovative approaches to sustainable farming across our region. Their initiative in creating these opportunities underscores how integral Paloma is to the Spring Mountain community.

Families like theirs represent the kind of legacy that Napa Valley was built on—and that we risk losing if small producers cannot find a feasible path forward under today's permitting and regulatory pressures. It is critical that Napa County ensure flexibility, reasonableness, and a truly sustainable permitting process for existing, small, family-owned wineries. Without such balance, the valley risks becoming a place where only large corporate entities can afford to operate. The current system threatens to push out the very families who give Napa its heart, character, and sense of community.

We urge the County to support Paloma in finding a path that allows them to preserve their legacy of contributing to the vitality of Spring Mountain and Napa Valley. Thank you for your consideration to support the small, family-run wineries that remain the heart and soul of our county.

Sincerely,

Sarah and Graeme MacDonald

4018 Spring Mountain Road

November 15, 2025

To the members of the Napa County Planning Commission:

I am writing to voice strong support for Sheldon Richards and Paloma Vineyards.

The Richards family have been dedicated stewards of their land on Spring Mountain for over forty years. They are not "checkbook vintners" who pay others to farm their vineyards and run their winery operations. Paloma Vineyards is not a vanity project for them. Three generations of their family have worked seven days a week to keep their operations afloat. They know every vine and every customer.

The stated policy of Ordinance No. 1455, the Small Winery Streamlining Statute, the statute under which Paloma Vineyards submitted its Use Permit application, specifically sets two strategic goals; 1) to improve the processes of the Planning, Building, and Environmental Services (PBES) Department to provide a healthy and welcoming business environment; and 2) " to protect family-owned businesses, local wineries, and small farmers as a vital part of the economy."

To date, Paloma Vineyards has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in engineering fees, water and wastewater studies and attorney fees, and will need to spend another \$2-3 million in construction expenses...all to just continue to do business as they have been doing for the past forty years.

The economics of small family wineries are very challenging. The wine industry is in crisis, as costs have soared, people are consuming less, and visitation to Napa is 30% down. To add to the problems, Red Blotch, a viral grape disease with no cure is running rampant throughout the vineyards, necessitating expensive replanting which I know Paloma has recently had to undertake.

I urge you to support their request for an exception to the Road and Street standards. It is critical to their survival.

Family wineries are the historic heart and soul of Napa County. Yet many of these wineries are facing financial ruin in order to comply with the ever-changing regulations imposed by Napa County. Losing family-owned businesses such as Paloma Vineyards will forever change the complexion of Napa Valley. Please support their request.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sharon Crull  
The Terraces Winery

To Whom It May Concern:

When Jim and Barbara Richards purchased their property at the top of Spring Mountain, they put their hearts and souls into sculpting the rugged land into a world-class vineyard and winery, which they named Paloma.

Their meticulous farming practices, partnered with their winemaking expertise, led to the production of award-winning wines, helping to bring the world's focus on the extraordinary wines being produced on these mountain slopes.

The spotlight on Paloma was also a beacon of light for all the surrounding small, family-owned wineries, and the popularity of wines from and wineries on Spring Mountain grew tremendously, in great part due to Jim and Barbara's hard work, dedication, and success.

We owe them our gratitude for what they helped create, and hope that Paloma will be allowed to continue to produce delicious wines and share them with customers who visit Spring Mountain.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope that you can try to help find a solution to keep them going strong.

Sincerely,

Donna Leverenz  
Hospitality Manager,  
Sherwin Family Vineyards

# **LAGIER**

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# **MEREDITH**

**LAGIER MEREDITH VINEYARD**  
4967 Dry Creek Road  
Napa, CA 94558  
Phone (707) 486-1631  
mail@lagiermeredith.com  
www.lagiermeredith.com

November 7, 2025

To whom it may concern,

We are writing in support of Paloma Vineyard's application for a modification of their use permit. We own a small vineyard on Mount Veeder and have produced wine for 25 years. We have lived in Napa County for 40 years and watched things become more and more difficult for small family-owned wineries. (We wanted to build a small winery on our own property and obtained a use permit but never had enough money to be able to meet the regulatory requirements.)

We have known the owners of Paloma for over 25 years, first the founders Barbara and Jim Richards and later their son Sheldon, who is the current owner and applicant. Barbara and Jim did not bring big money to Napa. They brought the desire to build a business from scratch and the determination to make it happen. They were hard-working people who did almost all of their vineyard and winery work themselves. Sheldon is now sustaining what his parents built with the same determination and work ethic.

Anyone who owns and operates a small business knows how hard it is, especially a wine business that must comply with not only the same basic regulations as any business but also the additional state and federal regulations that govern the production, sale and shipment of an alcoholic beverage. Although evolving regulations are intended to provide a public benefit by furthering health, safety and environmental protection, applying such rules across the board without exception often comes at the expense of the small businesses that are the lifeblood of any community. This has certainly been the case in Napa County, where an increasing proportion of vineyard and winery businesses are now owned by wealthy individuals and large corporations. Today the wine business is experiencing a serious economic downturn, making it even harder for small family-owned wineries to stay in business.

Napa County is asking Paloma Vineyard to make significant changes to their driveway, hospitality facilities and wastewater system at an estimated cost of over 3 million dollars. This may well force them out of business. This is not good for Napa County. If regulations are applied uniformly across the board with no regard for specific circumstances, we will soon have a local wine industry that is completely owned and controlled by large corporations and wealthy individuals. Allowances must be made for individual situations, especially small businesses like Paloma Vineyard that have been here for over 40 years.

We are quite familiar with Paloma's driveway, having driven it many times. As it presently exists, it is easily drivable by large trucks and emergency vehicles. During the 2020 Glass Fire, fire engines regularly used the driveway because the Paloma property afforded them

a good view of the surrounding fire-threatened landscape. Paloma is prepared to make some modifications to the road -- to widen it in places and to add some turnouts – but to require total compliance with current road standards is unnecessary and does not serve the public interest.

We encourage you to use your discretionary power and good judgment to approve Paloma Vineyard's application with reasonable modifications that will allow them to remain in business and continue to contribute to Napa County.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Lagier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Stephen Lagier

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carole Meredith". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Carole Meredith

# PRIDE

MOUNTAIN VINEYARDS

November 10, 2025

To whom it may concern:

We at Pride Mountain Vineyards have been friends and neighbors of the Richards family at Paloma Vineyards for nearly 35 years. Jim and Barbara were well-loved stewards of their land and integral members of the Spring Mountain community.

Sheldon Richards, Jim and Barbara's son and now the owner, resident and manager of the property continues in their footsteps. Taking his parents' commitment to the mountain even further, Sheldon was president of the Spring Mountain District Association for many years and has spent countless hours advocating for winery and non-winery neighbors alike. During his time with the SMDA, he led many top-to-bottom road cleanups on Spring Mountain Road to beautify the entire area for visitors. Later, at his own expense, he purchased a fire truck to help defend our mountaintop in the event of a wildfire until professional could arrive. Sheldon's two sons, Caston and Jace, began spending time on the property at a very early age and are now involved in the family business as well.

Believing that a rising tide lifts all boats, we support the Richards family in their desire to welcome additional guests to their beautiful property and believe that by doing so, they will benefit the reputation not only of Spring Mountain, but of the entire Napa Valley as a whole.

Sincerely:



Steve Pride  
Director of Winegrowing and CEO  
Pride Mountain Vineyards

*at historic Summit Ranch*

4026 SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD + ST. HELENA, CA 94574 + 707.963.4949 / FAX  
707.963.4848

December 4, 2025

**Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,**

We would like to ask you to consider the suggested alternative solutions to help Paloma, a small winery, to cross over to the compliant side of our Napa County laws.

We, as local residents, elect you to make sure the Napa County is running smoothly for all. Yes, it's a balancing act of strictly and blindly following the laws that have come along... as well as seeing where it makes sense to be a village to find a win- win solution for all.

You are deciding on how to wisely balance new laws for an old established business.

Paloma Vineyards is a memorable small winery on Spring Mountain where Barbara and Jim Richards carved out a niche with hard work and dedication. Barbara drove her tractor until ...she was too old to carry on. Both were hard-working people who had a vision and brought a great amount of pride to all of us with the success of their wines. For 42 years the family has been the working backbone of the Spring Mountain vineyard and winery.

Now the next two generations are keeping the vineyard and winery legend alive.

We know your position is never to squelch a small business. We believe you are all very good at finding the best ways to solve these tricky situations.

As a neighbor, I hope you will find a way to work with the family to approve the suggested fixes addressing the new mandates that are so prohibitively expensive for small businesses.

The changing laws should not be what forces a 42 year old winery to close. The new laws are so cumbersome and financially unreachable. That's why grandfathering was always called upon for finding a way for 'folks' to continue to make a living.

Sheldon has weathered many challenges only to be stumped by this financial mountain beyond his vision. He is trying to find a way that solves your responsibility to find a way to blend old laws and the new in a way that carries on what works for all.

The setting has worked all these years.

We are counting on your wisdom to help find the way for grandfathered Napa Valley businesses to carry on their hard-earned legacies. They reflect on all of us.

When I drive through the valley, I'm reminded of all the great personalities that kept Napa County at the top of the list of wonderful places to visit. And when the vineyard growers and winemakers and their families sit down to meet those visitors – that's what builds the personal connections and legends of this beautiful County. You don't want to lose that.

I can only say that when a visitor left and said, "I learned so much," that made all the hard work, long hours, endless government paperwork and mandates, the never knowing if one will be able to stay in business... that rekindled the dream and made it worth while.

It's not easy being a small business.

But this is America.

We are still a can-do country.

Thank you for dedicating your wisdom and time to keep Napa Valley special.

Thank you for hearing my belief in you and in the value of our small vineyards and wineries.

*Susan Karakasevic*

Married 56 years to a Yugoslavian winemaker/distiller who immigrated with a dream.

Susan Karakasevic

4001 Spring Mountain Road

St. Helena, CA 94574

707-880-7497

August 6, 2024

To whom it may concern.

For over forty years we have been neighbors and friends of the Richards family. Their wine business, Paloma Vineyard, is now operated by the second generation, Sheldon Richards. Sheldon and his parents, before him, have been an important part of the Spring Mountain community. Sheldon has been active in the Spring Mountain District Association for many years being an advocate for the wineries of the mountain as well as for the rest of the Spring Mountain community.

It is important that Paloma Vineyard, as well as all locally owned wineries, be allowed to improve their operations for business and historic survival.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Doran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "D".

Tim Doran  
4038 Spring Mountain Road  
St. Helena, CA 94574

On behalf of Sheldon Richards and Paloma Vineyard:

I worked alongside Sheldon Richards for more than thirteen years as a fellow Spring Mountain District winery member.

During those years and beyond, Sheldon generously gave of his time and friendship to promote the Spring Mountain AVA.

He served as President of the SM District, leading a group of very independent-minded winery owners to benefit all with a steady hand and good counsel.

I hope Napa county will consider Paloma's innovative plans and alternatives so this beloved winery may continue its stewardship of the land and pursuit of its fine wines.

Sincerely,

Valli Ferrell  
Former Director of Public Relations  
Spring Mountain Vineyard (2003-2017)  
[v.ferrell@comcast.net](mailto:v.ferrell@comcast.net)  
707 339 2742

November 18, 2025

Dear Napa County Planning Commission,

We are writing to you in support of Paloma Vineyard and Winery in their pursuit of an updated use permit for their operation.

We have known the Richards since the early Ninety's. Jim and Barbara were some of our most favorite customers and some of the very best people you could ever meet. Seeing their son Sheldon having to face this serious threat to Paloma Vineyard is heart breaking. How can a small business possibly take on that kind of debt and continue?

As former winery equipment business owners in St. Helena, we had many winery customers who have been subjected to this same treatment. Any time they wanted to remodel or expand their business, they were met with extra requirements costing hundreds of thousands or, in Sheldon's case, millions of dollars. I must say, if we were hit with this same type of update requirement, anytime we wanted to make improvements, it would certainly have been the end for us.

Why wasn't the need for a wastewater system, or a wider road, or handicapped bathroom, or a separate tasting room, or a smaller limit on the number of daily customers addressed when Jim and Barbara Richards applied for their use permit years ago? Having to make decades of upgrades all at once is impossible for all but the very wealthy. From a business standpoint, we think it's very unfair.

We think Sheldon's alternate road plan and tasting room plan should be seriously considered. At the very least, spread out these new requirements over five to six years, giving them a fair chance of recovering the added expenses.

Napa County can't afford to force these small businesses out. They are such an important part of what makes Napa Valley so special, the small family winery and farm.

Sincerely,

Wayne and Laurie Burgstahler

Napa, Ca.

Some time went by, and I applied for a St. Helena business license for a winery equipment business in 1998. The city manager told me “No, my plan was a non-compliant business in that location”. I thought about it for a few days and went back to ask the question in a different way. This time I talked to the assistant manager, and he determined my plan was agriculturally related and granted the license. Then he said I couldn’t have walk-in customers! If they could dictate how many customers I could have then it wasn’t going to work.

I was beginning to think that Napa County was anti- business. I was later able to convince them to allow us walk-in business. I never thought they could later change their minds. They didn’t, but not so for our winery customers.