



April 10, 2026

Napa County Board of Supervisors
1195 Third Street, Suite 310
Napa, CA 94559

RE: Joint Wine Industry Regulatory Policy Recommendations

Chair Manfree and Supervisors:

The Napa County Farm Bureau, Napa Valley Vintners, Napa Valley Grapegrowers, and Winegrowers of Napa County speak today with one voice on behalf of Napa's agricultural community. The recommendations attached to this letter, developed collaboratively and approved by each of our Boards, represent both immediate actions and longer-term General Plan priorities that support the continued viability of agriculture in Napa County. The recommendations address specific, actionable opportunities across permitting, water policy, conservation, and long-term General Plan priorities, and strengthen Right to Farm protections.

We are grateful and encouraged that your Strategic Plan recognizes that a thriving agriculture and wine industry is central to a healthy and prosperous community. The attached recommendations directly support your Board's strategic goal to safeguard the Agricultural Preserve and shape land use policies that sustain Napa County's agricultural economy.

Agriculture contributes over \$11.7 billion in economic benefit to Napa County, funding local government services, driving charitable investment in our communities, and supporting nearly 72% of the local workforce. That contribution, and the land use values that make it possible, deserve thoughtful and active protection.

The agricultural industry already carries a significant regulatory burden at the federal and state level. Local over-regulation, time delays, and outdated policies compound that burden, not only for farmers and growers, but for County staff and the communities that depend on a stable agricultural economy. Addressing these challenges is an opportunity for County and industry to work in concert toward shared goals.

We offer these priorities as stewards of both industry and community, seeking to balance meaningful change with the land use values that have protected Napa's scenic beauty and open space since the Agricultural Preserve was established nearly 60 years ago. We believe that honest feedback and thoughtful flexibility are themselves acts of stewardship, and that a resilient agricultural future depends on the willingness of the industry and County to adapt together. We are confident in your Board's commitment to that work and look forward to the conversation ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michelle Benvenuto".

Michelle Benvenuto
Winegrowers of Napa
County

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Linda Reiff".

Linda Reiff
Napa Valley Vintners

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Caleb Mosley".

Caleb Mosley
Napa Valley
Grapegrowers

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Rumble".

Peter Rumble
Napa County Farm
Bureau



DRAFT WINE INDUSTRY REGULATORY POLICY POSITIONS

APRIL 2026

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES:

Project Approvals

- Update Napa County interpretation and application of AB 720 to include vineyards located on winery parcels.
- Update Napa County "Winery Signs" code to remove "By Appointment Only" sign requirement, allowing wineries to welcome walk-in visitors. Existing use permit visitation limits would remain in full effect and would not be expanded or modified by this change.
- Allow administrative approval for Marketing Plan changes that result in no net increase of intensity.
- Establish a clear process to quickly identify and manage incomplete applications to reduce staff burden.
- Streamline Zoning Administrator qualified projects to provide review of minor and CEQA-exempt changes.

Water Policy

- Adjust Groundwater Management Fee implementation - recalibrate fees based on realistic costs rather than a worst-case budget acknowledged to be about 20% inflated and redirect the County's contribution toward reducing initial agricultural fees rather than building reserves.

Conservation and Regulatory Modernization

- Include updated baseline tree canopy metrics in the BDR.
- Encourage offsite mitigation options.

Appeals Process (via County Counsel)

- Allow prevailing parties to recover county fees.
- Require appellants to disclose all parties in interest.

LONGER TERM/GENERAL PLAN CONSIDERATIONS:

WDO Changes

- Limit wine-related activities only by site capacity/infrastructure.
- Allow trade meetings without counting toward visitation limits.
- Maintain 75% Napa grape sourcing requirement.
- Support processing and sale of Napa-grown ag products (excluding hemp/cannabis).
- Expand permissible wine marketing activities, excluding weddings.

Zoning & Agriculture

- Protect agricultural zoning and maintain minimum lot sizes.
- Enforce fixed urban growth boundaries.
- Emphasize Right to Farm protections.
- Maintain existing definition of agriculture.

Conservation & Mitigation

- Implement comprehensive offsite mitigation strategies.
- Protect biodiversity through vegetation preservation.
- Invest in water infrastructure for treated urban water use.

Urban Planning

- Recognize vineyards as fire buffers.