

From: [RICHARD W SVENDSEN](#)
To: [Morgan, Greg](#)
Cc: [PlanningCommissionClerk](#)
Subject: Re: 5/18/2021 Notice of Public Hearing - Mountain Peak Appeal Denial Reconsideration
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 3:51:08 PM
Attachments: [Mountain Peak Remand PHN.pdf](#)

[External Email - Use Caution]

Why would anyone consider ANY of these winery modifications since we are in a horrendous drought! There should be an absolute ban on any Napa County projects that necessitate any increase of water. These are nuts

Richard Svendsen
Calistoga

On Friday, May 7, 2021, 11:55:21 AM PDT, Morgan, Greg <greg.morgan@countyofnapa.org> wrote:

Please find attached the above-referenced notice of public hearing, which has also been published in today's Napa Valley Register.

Thank you,

GREG MORGAN | Deputy Clerk of the Board

Napa County Executive Office | 1195 Third Street, Suite 310 | Napa, CA 94559

Tel. (707) 299-1515 | greg.morgan@countyofnapa.org

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Morgan, Greg

From: Janice Andrade <grandmajan9795@att.net>
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2021 4:12 PM
To: PublicComment
Subject: Remand Hearing on Mountain Peak Winery

[External Email - Use Caution]

Board of Supervisors:

I am dumbfounded by the fact that you, Board of Supervisors, are considering giving this winery the go ahead for any kind of increase in their ability to entertain more customers at this particular site. There have been enough fires now in that area to shut down this winery totally. How dare you allow this activity to continue after the devastating, deadly fires that occurred this last summer, 2020. And just what are you going to do if the worst case scenerio should occur and 100 or???? so people are trapped on that mountain top. Stop, stop this now so it never can happen in my life time or anyone else's. This valley doesn't need another winery in the first place, let alone one in a high fire zone, off a narrow road. Use some common sense for once, please. Janice Andrade 707 812-3674

Morgan, Greg

From: calti@comcast.net
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 1:16 PM
To: Morgan, Greg
Cc: Dillon, Diane
Subject: FW:
Attachments: 20201223_073753_resized.jpg; 20191022_093855_001_resized.jpg; 20191023_153910_resized.jpg; MOUNTAIN PEAK APPEAL BOS LETTER.docx

[External Email - Use Caution]

Dear Greg,
Please insert these comments in the Mountain Peak Winery Appeal file.
Thank you,
George Caloyannidis

George Caloyannidis
2202 Diamond Mountain Road
Calistoga, CA 94515
calti@comcast.net

May 12, 2021

To the Napa County Board of Supervisors
RE: MOUNTAIN PEAK WINERY APPLICATION

Several studies including one by the University of Colorado in 2012 and adopted by the National Academy of Sciences have identified human activity as the cause of 84% of all wildfires. This includes industrial and farming operations, vehicle traffic, service providers, vendors, residents, visitors, arsonists and numerous others. Policies which invite and increase human activities in Napa County's fire-prone forested areas, inevitably increase the likelihood of wildfires.

Farming and crop processing operations invite the highest number of persons. Since Napa County has determined that agriculture (including visitors and events) is its best and highest land use, this does not mean that such activities ought to be entirely disallowed. However, if they are allowed, they ought to be minimal so that its operations do not significantly increase the risk of fire and the loss of life.

In the very least, adequate access and evacuation routes must be an integral part of all such permits.

As devastating the wildfires in 2017 and 2020 have been in Napa County, they did not play out a worst-case scenario. People had adequate warning to evacuate and wind conditions were low. In no case did the situation arise where the fire was instant under high wind conditions with heavy fire fighting equipment and panic evacuees simultaneously using the same substandard access routes.

Such a worst-case scenario played out in the Paradise fire where 85 people lost their lives because they were trapped, unable to escape on one road simultaneously used by firefighting equipment with many of its sections practically impassable by ordinary vehicles due to fire during a panic evacuation.

Despite substantial fuel reduction efforts in the Napa County hillsides by Napa County, PG&E and including by the local Fire Safe Councils formed only following the 2020 fires, **it would be foolish to assume that Napa County is immune to a worst-case scenario playing out. In fact, such likelihood has significantly increased in our current drought conditions.**

It is therefore imperative that crop processing operations be permitted only where they are served by two alternate routes and that both roads comply with the minimum Napa County Standard Road of 20 feet paved with 2 feet of drivable shoulder for a total of 22 feet. It is

imperative that both roads comply with this standard because if one of them is blocked by fire, fallen trees or other obstacles deeming them impassable, the other must be equally suitable to accommodate both incoming heavy fire fighting equipment and simultaneous panic evacuations.

Even on 22-foot-wide roads, simultaneous truck and opposing vehicle traffic is problematic if wideouts are not available at regular intervals because both types of traffic occur in chains of vehicles. But it is a much better minimum requirement than the one Napa County currently applies and was willing to apply in approving this application.

The upcoming Mountain Peak winery hearing is the result of a court order requiring the Board to also consider data collected during the 2017 fires. However, it would serve the interest of the public well, if it also considered the insights acquired from the 2020 fires. After all, the measures undertaken by Napa County, PG&E and the formation and actions of the local Fire Safe Councils were a result of the 2020 fires not of the 2017 fires. To my knowledge, Napa County has not solicited input from the various Fire Safe Councils in connection to this application.

The Mountain Peak winery application is served by Soda Canyon Road many sections of which do not comply with the Napa County minimum standard road, neither is the winery served by a public secondary access road but rather by a narrow, winding dirt road over private property patently inadequate to accommodate concurrent traffic as described above.

The approval of this application will unnecessarily heighten the possibility of a wild fire occurring in the first place with inadequate firefighting access and escape routes during a worst-case scenario incident as described above, thus heightening the likelihood of the loss of life.



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Morgan, Greg

From: calti@comcast.net
Sent: Saturday, May 15, 2021 11:23 AM
To: Morgan, Greg
Subject: MOUNTAIN PEAK WINERY APPLICATION
Attachments: 20201223_073753_resized.jpg; 20191022_093855_001_resized.jpg; 20191023_153910_resized.jpg; MOUNTAIN PEAK APPEAL BOS LETTER.docx; NAPA - COLLECTOR ROAD SPECIFICATION.pdf

[External Email - Use Caution]

Dear Greg,

One more note on this Application:

Napa County has labeled Soda Canyon Road a "Collector Road" thus avoiding the (in this case) 1-mile maximum length specification for a dead end road. However, a Collector Road is not a Collector road unless it complies with the Napa County applicable specification which I attach.

As you can see, this specification requires 28 feet paved width plus 12 feet of shoulders, 5 of which must be drivable. In addition, this specification applies only if the road is "Without Parallel Parking Lanes". This, clearly is not the case with Soda Canyon Road in its current condition both in terms of width and in terms of parking. Currently there is no parking prohibition along many stretches of Soda Canyon Road.

If parking is permitted along any stretch of the road, the Napa County specification for a Collector Road With Parallel Parking Lanes applies which is 46 feet paved width, 2 feet of curb and gutter (one foot on each side) plus 20 feet of drivable flat shoulders within a total of 68 feet right of way.

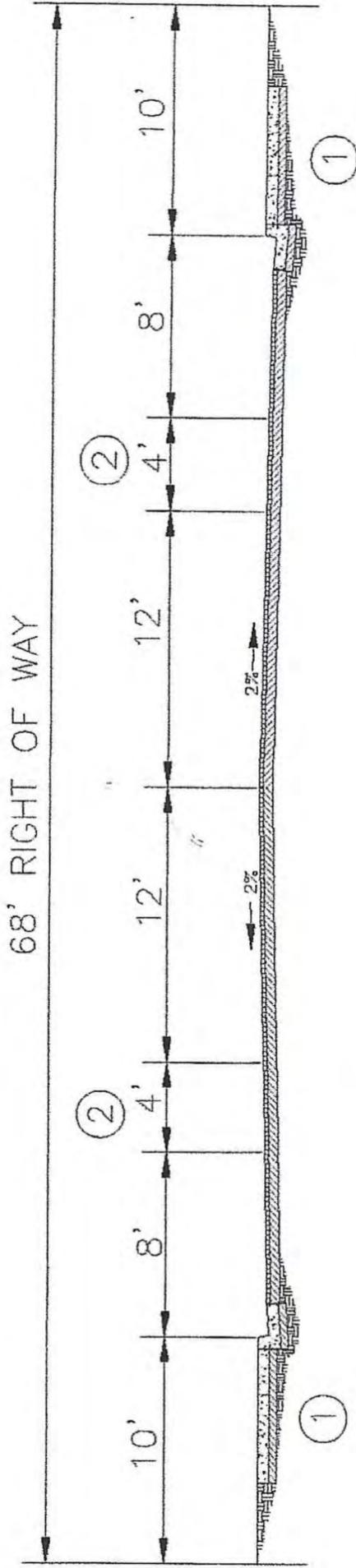
Presumably, if parking lanes are permitted on one side only, half the road would need to comply with the former and the other half with the latter specification. This would be 38 feet paved, 16 feet of shoulder of which 10 must be drivable, plus a 1-foot gutter, all within a 54 feet right of way.

Obviously, none of these specifications are satisfied by Soda Canyon Road to be a Napa County Standard compliant Collector road in fact rather than in name.

George Caloyannidis

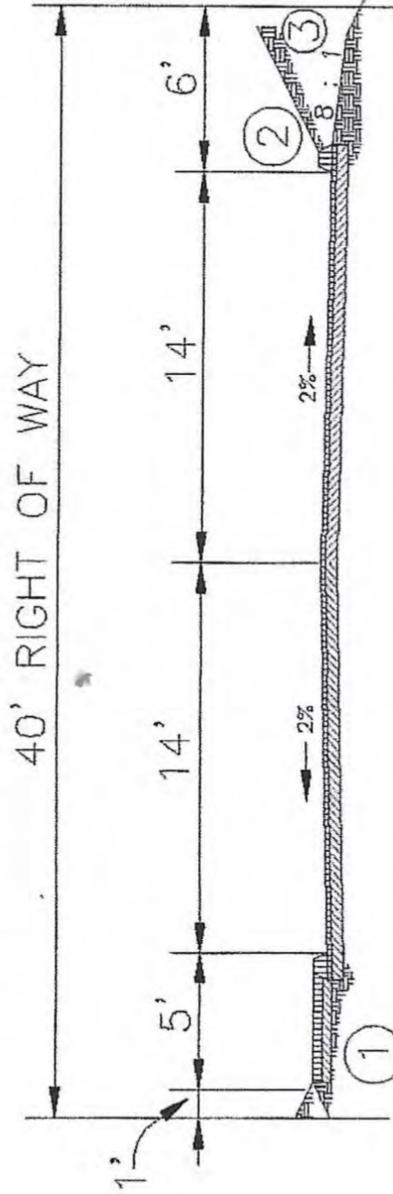
From: calti@comcast.net <calti@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 4:16 PM
To: 'greg.morgan@countyofnapa.org' <greg.morgan@countyofnapa.org>
Cc: 'diane.dillon@countyofnapa.org' <diane.dillon@countyofnapa.org>
Subject: FW:

Dear Greg,
Please insert these comments in the Mountain Peak Winery Appeal file.
Thank you,
George Caloyannidis



COLLECTOR WITH PARALLEL PARKING LANES

1. 5' P.C.C. SIDEWALK.
2. BIKE LANE.



COLLECTOR WITHOUT PARALLEL PARKING LANES

1. 4' A.C. SIDEWALK ON FILL SIDE.
2. A.C. DIKE IN CUT AREA. BERM REQUIRED WHERE FILL HEIGHT EXCEEDS 10 FEET.
3. 4' SHOULDER IN FILL AREA.

NOT TO SCALE

COLLECTOR CROSS SECTIONS	DESIGN SPEED - 35 M.P.H. A.D.T. 1,000 TO 5,000 VEHICLES PER DAY
COUNTY OF NAPA DEPARTMENT OF PBES	DATE: JUNE 2016
	 ENGINEERING MANAGER RCE 57273

Morgan, Greg

From: calti@comcast.net
Sent: Sunday, May 16, 2021 11:21 AM
To: Morgan, Greg; Dillon, Diane
Subject: FW:
Attachments: 20201223_073753_resized.jpg; 20191022_093855_001_resized.jpg; 20191023_153910_resized.jpg; MOUNTAIN PEAK APPEAL BOS LETTER.docx; FIRE ORIGINS BY HUMANS.pdf

[External Email - Use Caution]

Dear Greg,

Attached are the scientific findings regarding the origins of wild fires by human activity as cited in my letter.
George

From: calti@comcast.net <calti@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 4:16 PM
To: 'greg.morgan@countyofnapa.org' <greg.morgan@countyofnapa.org>
Cc: 'diane.dillon@countyofnapa.org' <diane.dillon@countyofnapa.org>
Subject: FW:

Dear Greg,

Please insert these comments in the Mountain Peak Winery Appeal file.
Thank you,
George Caloyannidis

THE SMITHSONIAN, February 28, 2017

Study Shows 84% of Wildfires Caused by Humans

Over the last 21 years, debris burning, arson and campfires have combined with climate change to make the fire season much longer



(Wikimedia Commons)

By Jason Daley
smithsonianmag.com
February 28, 2017

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In the last decade, mega-wildfires have become routine news. In 2015, fires burned a record 10 million acres of U.S. wildlands, and 5.5 million burned in 2016, including major fires in California and a blaze that started in Great Smoky Mountains National Park that damaged 2,400 buildings in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and killed 14 people. While wildfires are a natural phenomenon usually sparked by lightning, it turns out the recent destruction isn't all Mother Nature's fault. A new study shows that 84 percent of wildfires in the United States are started intentionally by humans or by human activity.

According to a press release, researchers from the University of Colorado, Boulder's Earth Lab took a deep dive into the U.S. Forest Service's Fire Program Analysis-Fire Occurrence Database, analyzing all wildfires recorded between 1992 and 2012. The researchers found that humans caused more than 1.2 million of the 1.5 million blazes in the database.

The cost of those human-induced fires is staggering. The researchers estimate that man-made fires have tripled the average fire season over the past 21 years from 46 days to 154 days. It now costs over \$2 billion per year to fight the fires, and that figure does not include the impacts to recreational lands or local economic impact that fires can have.

“We are playing a really substantial role in shifting fire around,” Jennifer Balch, fire ecologist at the Earth Lab and lead author of the study in *PNAS*, tells Christopher Joyce at NPR. “I think acknowledging that fact is really important particularly right now when we have evidence that climate is changing, and climate is warming, and that fires are increasing in size and the fire season is increasing.”

Thomas Swetnam, professor emeritus at the University of Arizona who studies forest fires, tells Doyle Rice at USA Today that it’s not necessarily the case that more people are maliciously setting fires or that Smokey Bear has failed in his mission to educate the public. Instead, Swetnam says that climate change is the biggest driver of increased fires. An increase in drought, fuel buildup in unburned forests, earlier springs and higher temperatures are all contributing to more combustible forests. So the same actions that might have caused a small, easily extinguished fire decades ago are now creating dangerous infernos.

“[This is a] very well done study,” he said. “We have known for a long time that fires set by people are an extremely important factor in the wildfire problems, but this study shows in detail how important people are in lengthening the fire season and contributing to increasing numbers of large wildfires.”

Rice reports that debris burning starts the most human-caused fires, at 29 percent, with arson the cause of 21 percent of fires. Equipment use causes 11 percent of fires, while campfires and children playing with fireworks or matches each cause 5 percent of fires. The Fourth of July, predictably, is the biggest day for wildfires, with 7,762 fires ignited on that date over the 21-year study period.

Balch tells Joyce that there is a solution. She suggests conducting more prescribed burns on forest land to decrease the amount of fuel in the forests after 100 years of fire suppression.

About Jason Daley

Jason Daley is a Madison, Wisconsin-based writer specializing in natural history, science, travel, and the environment. His work has appeared in *Discover*, *Popular Science*, *Outside*, *Men's Journal*, and other magazines.

115

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35

USA TODAY, February 2, 2017

Study: People start 84% of U.S. wildfires

Dovle Rice, USA TODAY Published 3:03 p.m. ET Feb. 27, 2017 | Updated 4:53 p.m. ET Feb. 27, 2017



(Photo: Brandon Reese, The Tennessean)

The horrific wildfire that scorched Gatlinburg, Tenn., last November, killing 14 people, was human-caused — and that's not unusual: Whether deliberate or accidental, a whopping 84% of all wildfires in the U.S. are started by people, says a new study.

The remaining 16% are started naturally, by lightning, according to the report, one of the most comprehensive fire studies to date.

The study also found that humans have added almost three months to the national fire season on average. "Thanks to people, the wildfire season is almost year-round," said study lead author Jennifer Balch of the University of Colorado. Humans also account for nearly half the acreage burned each year.

Balch and her study co-authors looked at 1.5 million wildfires from 1992 to 2012 and found that the human-ignited fire season was three times longer than the lightning-ignited fire season and also added an average of 40,000 wildfires per year.

"Fires are burning earlier in the spring in the Southeast and later in the fall in the West," Balch said. Fighting wildfires in the U.S. has exceeded \$2 billion in recent years, the study said.

"To our knowledge, this is the most comprehensive assessment of the role of human-started wildfires across the United States over the past two decades," the authors said in the study.

"Although considerable fire research in the United States has rightly focused on increased fire activity (larger fires and more area burned) because of climate change, we demonstrate that the expanded fire niche as a result of human-related ignitions is equally profound," the study said.

WILDFIRES: HUMANS vs. NATURE

Fires in the Lower 48 states, 1992-2012:



Human caused

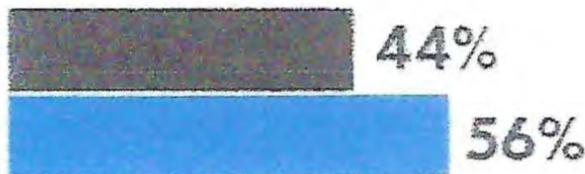


Lightning caused

Number of wildfires



Acres burned



Average length of fire season (Days)



SOURCE Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences
Janet Loeferle, USA TODAY

A series of catastrophic, deadly, expensive and massive fires has scorched the western U.S. over the past decade. Several states, such as Washington, Oregon, Colorado and California have seen some of their largest wildfires ever recorded.

The wildfires in the study were ones that required firefighters to suppress them, not ones that were allowed to burn in remote areas.

Thomas Swetnam of the University of Arizona, who was not involved in this research, called the report a "very well done study. We have known for a long time that fires set by people are an extremely important factor in wildfire problems, but this study shows in detail how important people are in lengthening the fire season and contributing to increasing numbers of large wildfires," he said.

It's not that people are becoming more careless about fire or that more arson is occurring, Swetnam said. He said that lightning-caused fires are also increasing in the West because of warming temperatures, earlier springs and increasing droughts, which mean "that climate change is still a primary driver of the trends in this region."



A firetruck drives past a home destroyed by the Fourmile Canyon fire in Sunshine Canyon, west of Boulder, Colo., on Sept. 11, 2010. (Photo: Jae C. Hong, AP)

The most common day for human-started fire by far was July 4th: There were 7,762 total wildfires started on that day over the course of the 21-year period in the study. Of the human-started wildfires with a known cause, the top five reasons are: debris burning (29%), arson (21%), equipment use (11%), campfires (5%) and children (5%), Balch said.

And what about Smokey Bear's indelible message that "only you can prevent forest fires?" She said the widespread policy to stop all fires was "a 100-year experiment that failed."

She said we should be starting the "right kind of fires," saying that it's better to proactively start smaller fires than to react to huge ones when it's an emergency.

"People are living in flammable landscapes," Balch said, noting how more houses are being built on the edge of forests, the so-called "wildland-urban interface," especially in the West.

The study appeared in the peer-reviewed journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

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Morgan, Greg

From: Donald Williams <dwcc@sonic.net>
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2021 5:17 PM
To: PublicComment
Subject: Mt. Peak Winery

[External Email - Use Caution]

Napa County Board of Supervisors,

I am a member of the Calistoga City Council but in this letter the views are my own, not the Council's.

Yesterday I drove to the end of Soda Canyon Road. There is NO WAY visiting tourists should be permitted up there. You know the road is narrow and inhospitable to any volume of traffic, especially that which is unfamiliar with the road (not to mention under the influence). With the history of fire there, and the state's sensible recommendation not to allow long dead-end roads, any decision allowing wine-tasting there would be incomprehensible.

*Who do you listen to?---hired staff, or your **constituents**. At the top of the command chain is the public, your constituents. Your job is to take their direction. Be brave, and be wise: deny the Mt. Peak Winery.*

--
Donald Williams
P.O. Box 273
Calistoga, CA 94515
www.donaldcalistoga.com
707-479-8660

Morgan, Greg

From: Kellie Duckhorn <kduckhorn@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Saturday, May 15, 2021 11:57 AM
To: PublicComment
Subject: Mountain Peak Winery/Mountain Peak Vineyards, LLC Use Permit No. P13-00320-UP

[External Email - Use Caution]

Dear Board of Supervisors,

Although I am not a resident on Soda Canyon Road, I am deeply interested in the agenda item on the May 18th Agenda to reconsider the denial of the appeals filed by Kosta M. Arger, Cynthia Grupp, William Hocker, and Glenn Schreuder to a decision made by the Napa County Planning Commission (Planning Commission) on January 4, 2017, to approve the Mountain Peak Winery/Mountain Peak Vineyards, LLC Use Permit No. P13-00320-UP (the Mountain Peak Winery or the Project).

As a 29-year resident of Angwin, any additional commercial activities that are approved in our mountain environments give me deep reservations about the County's regard for the safety of both residents and visitors. Our rural mountain roads are not adequate to support commercial traffic in the best of climate conditions, least of all during a wildfire event. The Paradise Fire should be a stark reminder of how devastating a fire event can be to anyone attempting to egress on a dead-end, rural mountain road. The Mountain Peak Winery will add approximately 40,000 additional vehicle trips per year to Soda Canyon Road. This is unconscionable!

Rather than continue on a path of commercial development in high fire/severe fire zones why not re-evaluate the opportunities to allow for expanded commercial development in more appropriate locations? We can all see that recently vacated commercial office space in our industrial zones could offer a multitude of options should the County and City governments opt for creative and generous solutions to re-think these zoning definitions. Permits to conduct commercial business on parcels located in the Ag Preserve/Ag Watershed or in defined high fire/severe fire zones should be based on existing infrastructure that can easily support ingress/egress and ensure safety for all.

I respectfully ask that you consider what is at stake for the safety of the residents of all Napa County mountain communities. We know that the \$45 million dollar funding request for the CWPP is just the tip of the spear to create a sustainable and actionable plan to reduce wildfire risk to our mountain communities. Let us feel the safety that these solutions may provide before adding additional risk to areas already reeling from the impact of recent wildfires.

Be well.

Best,

Kellie Duckhorn
255 Cold Springs Road
Angwin, CA 94508
(707) 529-6110 cell

 Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

Morgan, Greg

From: Ester Akerslout <heliosascarta@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 15, 2021 7:09 PM
To: PublicComment
Subject: Mountain Peak Winery Development Hearing

[External Email - Use Caution]

My name is Ester Akerslout, a resident of Napa County living in the City of St. Helena. On behalf of residents living on Soda Canyon Road in Napa County, and the danger to the environmental health of our Napa Valley. I wish to state my opposition to the Mountain Peak Winery Development at the very end of Soda Canyon Road in Napa County, coming before the Napa County Board Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 2:00PM.

There are several issues raised by the project:

1. Increased traffic and noise on a narrow two-lane dangerous winding road.
2. The environmental danger of moving millions of cubic feet of earth within feet of two blue line creeks.
3. Insufficient consideration of fire danger on a dead-end road.
4. Insufficient analysis of groundwater extraction, so necessary in our doubt prone environment.
5. Disputed analysis of noise impacts.
6. It would set a precedent for major tourism commercialization of the community and of other remote areas throughout the county, destroying a unique rural existence valued by residents and spoiling our quality of life.
7. Concern for more toxic chemicals polluting the environment.

Respectfully Submitted

Ester Akerslout

St. Helena

email address: heliosascarta@gmail.com

Morgan, Greg

From: Ester Akerslout <heliosascarta@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 15, 2021 7:21 PM
To: PublicComment
Subject: Mountain Peak Winery Development Hearing

[External Email - Use Caution]

My name is Ester Akerslout, and I wish to make a correction of #4 of my previous email from doubt prone environment to read drought prone environment.

Thank you.

Ester Akerslout

Morgan, Greg

From: Barbara Guggia <tahoemtgirl@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 16, 2021 12:25 AM
To: PublicComment
Subject: Mountain Peak Hearing Tuesday, May 18, 2021

[External Email - Use Caution]

Napa County Board of Supervisors:

As a property owner in Napa County and a victim of the 2017 Atlas Fire, I have been closely following the steps the county has taken to address fire prevention and public safety issues and overall have been disappointed with the county's limited response. However, last month with the acceptance of the County Wide CWPP and the financial support for fire prevention and fuel reduction, I finally felt Napa County was approaching this major problem head on. I applaud the BOS for supporting the Napa Communities Firewise Foundation, providing the resources to make our community more fire resilient, and acknowledging the overwhelming impact fires have had on all aspects of community life in Napa County.

With the Mountain Peak Project once again coming before the BOS, I urge the county to continue to show the leadership and concern for it's citizens by looking at the Mountain Peak Project with "fresh eyes" and reevaluate the project regarding fire safety. Of course it would be easy and a safe way out of a sticky situation to follow the staff's typical and expected recommendation. This is not the right project for Soda Canyon.

Supervisor Pedroza wrote in a recent FaceBook post regarding fire safety, that the county is taking "bold actions and focusing on practical solutions", and I can't think of anything more practical than seriously looking at the fire safety issues involved when you allow a large commercial/tourist project to be developed up a narrow, winding, dead end country road, within a rural community that is in a high fire risk area. I would urge the BOS to be bold and focus on the issues at hand, be practical and consider the risks to workers, tourists and homeowners, and most importantly... do the right thing.

Thank you,
Barbara Guggia

Morgan, Greg

From: Iris Barrie <barrie001@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, May 16, 2021 3:01 PM
To: PublicComment
Subject: Mountain Peak Winery expansion

[External Email - Use Caution]

To the Napa County Board of Supervisors

Please register my comments against future expansion of this winery. Here are my reasons:

There is only one way out. In the past few years I regularly drive Soda Canyon Rd. to visit a friend who lives several miles up the road. She has, on several occasions over the years, needed to evacuate due to fire danger. Her need to do this increased significantly since 2017. Evacuation of residents is a harrowing experience on that narrow, curving road with large trees on either side which, if on fire, could (and did!) fall into the road making the trip even more perilous.

Internet connectivity is spotty. At her home I am unable to access the internet. Receiving alerts and information in the event of fire is very unpredictable. If the notice of impending or required evacuation is received in the middle of the night, residents may easily miss it.

Any winery allowing tastings and/or events at the end of a narrow, winding, dead end mountainous road is a recipe for disaster!

If our spate of wildfires and the expected drought this year don't convince you that expansion of this winery/event center is the wrong move, just drive Soda Canyon now and see the destruction to property the recent fires caused, to say nothing of loss of life and the resulting PTSD the 2017 fire left in its residents.

Thank you for your consideration,

Iris Barrie
219 Montecito Blvd.
Napa

Morgan, Greg

From: Bill Hocker <bill@wmhocker.org>
Sent: Sunday, May 16, 2021 5:16 PM
To: PublicComment; Hawkes, Trevor
Subject: Comments on the Mountain Peak Remand, May 18, 2021

[External Email - Use Caution]

14 May 2021

To: Napa County Board of Supervisors
Re: Mountain Peak Winery Remand Hearing

Supervisors,

I am a neighbor of the proposed Mountain Peak Winery project, an appellant of your decision to approve the project and one of the Soda Canyon residents opposing the project in court. I ask that you consider the following comments in your review of the project in light the new evidence of the 2017 Atlas Fire.

Concerning the fire:

On Aug 22, 2017 you approved the use permit for the 19-employee, 14,575-visitor/year Mountain Peak Winery 6 miles up the dead-end Soda Canyon Road. Soda Canyon residents had presented ample first-hand experience and data-based assessments of fire danger on Soda Canyon Road at Planning Commission and BOS appeal hearings for the project. Yet you dismissed those concerns in your findings. You found that "in the event of a fire that results in mass evacuations from this area, the road has sufficient capacity and roadway width to accommodate all outgoing traffic while allowing incoming fire response units."

Six weeks later, on Oct 8th, the Atlas fire erupted in fierce winds and quickly engulfed lower Soda Canyon Road. A fallen tree blocked traffic coming down the road and fire trucks coming up as the fire burned on all sides. A frantic effort cleared the road just enough to let the line of cars get by. Fire trucks were unable to continue up the road. Dozens of residents, unable to make it down through the fire, had to be evacuated by helicopter from the top of the road. 134 of the 163 residences on Soda Canyon Road were damaged or destroyed, 118 of them a complete loss. Tragically two lives were lost. Resident declarations vividly present the chaos of the night.

Following the fire, residents petitioned Napa Superior Court to include the new, relevant evidence of the fire as part of their CEQA case against your approval of the project. The Court agreed and ordered that the project be remanded to you, noting that "the catastrophic nature of the Atlas Fire, and in particular the mass evacuations, many by helicopter, that resulted from the fire constitute truly new evidence of emergent facts that were not presented to the Board."

There has been much said in government meetings about the need for evidence-based decision-making. Unfortunately, rather than confront an approval based on findings countered by evidence, the County and the developer challenged the Court's remand order three times in Appellate Court trying to avoid reconsideration of the approval in light of the fire evidence. The Appellate Court rejected all three appeal attempts, underscoring the importance and credibility of the new evidence.

Concerning the staff report:

For this hearing, Staff is apparently recommending that you ignore the intent of the remand, and once again dismiss the import of residents harrowing fire experiences that highlight the inadequacy of your original finding. Staff does **not** address the intent of the remand: to consider project impacts and mitigations in a future fire-related blockage of the road and required evacuation. Staff does **not** recommend reducing the size and scope of the project in recognition of the danger of its constrained access. Instead they suggest, somewhat casually, that up to 125 visitors and 19 employees might shelter in the vineyards or in the cave. Neither is an instinctive or reliably safe response. Caves can become smoke-filled and oxygen-depleted. Vineyards DO burn.

As the declarations of residents fleeing the fire make quite clear, the first instinct in confronting a wildfire would be to drive down the road. As happened in the Atlas fire, Cal-Fire helicopters would already be blaring a message over loudspeakers to evacuate immediately. Employees and visitors would already be in their cars adding to the vehicles of residents and vineyard workers trying to escape. And the escape scenarios that residents so vividly described in their declarations would again play out, only this time with up to 150 additional people, perhaps 70 vehicles, trying to escape. The one way the project can avoid adding to the dangers of a mass evacuation is to not have people there in the first place, either by not allowing visitation during fire season or by not building a tourist attraction in such a remote, high fire risk area in the first place.

Staff concludes that the road, with fewer trees, some new paving and guardrails, NOW has "sufficient capacity and roadway width". But the road is now no wider, straighter, or flatter than before. The physical conditions and access constraints remain. And there are now more dead trees waiting to fall. New underbrush will soon be denser than the old. Fire events seem to be increasing in severity. Power lines can still come down. And, by continuing to add vehicles that need to be evacuated, the danger of a road blocking accident in the fiery, smoky chaos of an evacuation on the blind curves, steep grade and narrow stretches of the road increases.

Staff concludes, "No credible evidence established that the addition of another winery along Soda Canyon Road would significantly increase the risk of fire or significantly hinder rescue efforts". As if the additional thousands of people and vehicles the project will bring into the canyon each year will not statistically increase risk of fire mishap or mischief. As if trying to evacuate several dozen additional vehicles or asking helicopter pilots to risk their lives for an additional 150 people would not exacerbate rescue efforts. This is another finding awaiting contradictory, and perhaps tragic, evidence in a future fire.

Staff also notes the project's compliance with the State Fire Safe Regulations for high fire hazard zones like Soda Canyon Road. Those regulations put severe limits on the length of dead-end "local" roads: 1 mile for existing roads, 1/2 mile for new roads, knowing that both road length and width impact fire safety. But the County has labeled Soda Canyon Road a "collector", thus avoiding a consideration of the 6-mile distance from the project to the Silverado Trail. Unfortunately fires do not know the difference between "local" and "collector" roads, particularly in constrained, high fire risk canyons. As the Atlas fire showed, a dead-end collector is still a dead-end road, and the length along which a fire can wreak havoc to block access is a significant factor in its safety. Also, as a "collector", Soda Canyon Road is substandard in width, curve radius and grade slope, measured by the County's own Road and Street Standards. And it even fails the lesser 20' State regulation in some areas. Being labeled a "collector", as the fire showed, does not mean it is safe.

Finally, Staff analyzes the 19.4% service ramp under the State Fire Safe Regulations, finding that it "nearly" complies but doesn't actually comply. The 400' ramp of 19.4% required an exception under previously used NCRSS standards. It totally fails under the new FSR 300' limit for a 19.4% ramp. Fire trucks may or may not be able to negotiate it. Experts more objective than local officials and consultants, who routinely approve and justify exceptions in deference to wine industry non-compliance, should review the ramp design. (In a personal note: the ramp will tower 20 ft above and 30+ ft away from one of our property lines before its ski-jump descent onto the crush pad. It, and the water tanks and waste-water treatment plant pushed up against another property line, is an indication of a project too large for its constricted site.)

Concerning remote tourism venues:

As residents have argued for years now, the scale and scope of this project have never been appropriate for this remote site. You recognized, in your guidance to Planning Commissioners in 2010 that, in reviewing winery proposals, they should "consider the remoteness of location" and "ensure a direct relationship between access constraints and on-site marketing and visitation programs". The dangers that access constraints might pose to such tourism venues has been made painfully clear in more recent county fires as well as on the night of Oct 8, 2017.

There are reasons, aside from fire danger, why Mountain Peak is inappropriate in its location: 60 visitors and 19 employees a day and 125-person nighttime events will only add to the traffic dangers of an already dangerous road; and the precedent of this first tourist attraction in the Foss Valley will only encourage more tourism development, more traffic risk, more buildings to be defended in a fire; and, given the project's massive cave, the excavation and movement of millions of cubic feet of earth on the small site within feet of two blue line streams feeding Rector Reservoir will pose potential risks to the ecology of Rector Canyon and of siltation of the reservoir.

And there are also reasons, aside from fire danger, why tourist attractions in general don't belong in many rural areas of the county: their presence damages the quality of life of residents who treasure the quiet enjoyment of a rural place; their disruptive potential engenders animosity from residents (including vintners and growers) against the tourism-based wine industry, fueling many neighborhood battles in recent years; building projects and the commercialization of rural areas hasten the urbanization of

the county as a whole, diminishing farming as a viable activity - not to mention the vineyard acreage the projects eliminate; and a mass-tourism business model that transports large numbers of people to the remote areas of the county each day (including now apparently to tasting rooms in private homes), and attracts large numbers of tourists to the county each year, will continue to add to Napa's carbon footprint in this age of global warming. (It is also a business model that needs to change for economic reasons, according to Rob McMillan)

But obviously the potential loss of life when concentrating people in fire prone areas, in an age when raging wildfires have become all too common, should be a significant concern to you as you make your decisions to sanction these venues. The remand is an opportunity to reconsider the substantial evidence recent fires have presented of the dangers of further building development in the watersheds. It would be unfortunate if the County fails to take this opportunity to begin to reduce their promotion of tourist attractions in the high fire hazard areas of the county.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Bill Hocker
3460 Soda Canyon Road

Morgan, Greg

From: L & L Carr <carr4x4@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 16, 2021 7:45 PM
To: PublicComment
Subject: Mt Peak Winery Use Permit #P13-00320-UP
Attachments: Mt Peak Winery comment letter 2021.docx

[External Email - Use Caution]

To the Napa County Board of Supervisors,

Please see my attached comment letter.

Thank you,
Lisa Hirayama

16 Dogwood Court
Napa, CA 94558
May 16, 2021

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

RE: Mountain Peak Winery, Use Permit #P13-00320-UP

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing once again to register my opposition to the possible approval of the use permit for Mt. Peak Winery. Napa County and the developer have appealed the Superior Court's remand three times in the Appellate Court and lost each time. The Supervisor's were told to consider the new evidence the Atlas Fire raised contradicting the County's findings that Soda Canyon Road has the capacity to allow evacuations and an emergency response in the event of a fire. The Atlas Fire completely debunked that premise and presented a reality check.

Besides allowing a 100,000 gal/yr winery, 33,400sf of caves and an above ground 8000sf tasting room, the impact of adding an annual 15,600+ visitors and tourists on Soda Canyon Road is ill conceived. That annual number doesn't even include the construction traffic that will occur while the winery is being built. This radical change to residents lives will be immeasurable.

Did the County even revisit this project and factor in the Atlas Fire relevance as the Court ordered? The environmental review done by the County was obviously deficient when it came to potential evacuation danger. There are no proposals on how to protect or evacuate the additional daily winery visitors/employees. The suggestion in the Staff Report that those people might shelter in the caves or vineyards completely ignores the reality of those solutions in the face of the chaotic situation that occurs as people follow their immediate instincts, such as winery guests and employees would do, to drive down the road. What if the road is blocked -- what mitigations are being proposed for such a situation? Absolutely none.

I have raised drought issues in past letters to the Board referencing that Napa County does not have an unlimited supply of water, yet I have witnessed new vineyard developments being continuously approved for years . The insufficient and inaccurate analysis of groundwater extraction for this project and others is an ongoing issue in Napa Country. California is in yet a another year of extreme drought which goes hand in hand with elevated fire danger. Having had to evacuate my home in Circle Oaks twice in three years, fire is now another annual threat. How does Napa County not see the deficiencies in approving a winery located at the top of a dangerous and deteriorating six mile dead end, narrow two-lane winding canyon road with steep drop offs for shoulders.

In my 21 years of commuting to Napa on Hwy 121, I am used to driving on rural roads and have done so during two fire evacuations. In contrast, I have driven the entire length of Soda Canyon Road and would not want to drive that road under the stress of an approaching fire. In my opinion, SCR is a much more dangerous road for the inexperienced and tourist drivers than Hwy 121.

Approving this winery project will further add to the dangerous precedent for major commercialization of remote areas throughout the county. When will common sense prevail and Napa County will finally deny a project in an inappropriate location. Each Board Member is elected to serve in its constituent's best interests, but consistently time after time, it appears the Members are serving in the wine industry's best interests.

Sincerely,
Lisa Hirayama