



Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association
PO Box 447 Roseburg, OR 97470

March 20, 2019

RE: SB829, SB830, and SB831

Willamette Valley Winery Association (WVWA) proposals regarding conjunctive labeling, purity of fruit sourcing and AVA labeling requirements

Dear Senator Riley,

I am writing as President of the Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association (UVWA) to express our opposition to the proposed labeling changes advocated by the WVWA. Oregon has gained a worldwide reputation for the quality of its wines and stands in a unique position for the cohesiveness of its industry and for the spirit of collaboration that has helped in great measure to bring about that desirable stature. Of worldwide winegrowing regions Oregon stands alone in having statewide representation and service to the wine industry through the collection of the statewide tonnage tax which supports the Oregon Wine Board's (OWB) efforts in education, research and marketing for the benefit of all Oregon AVA's, growers and producers.

We have listened to the WVWA's proposals and their modifications to their proposals, but we still cannot agree with these ideas.

SB 829 Conjunctive Labeling Requirement- The UVWA does not oppose this bill, if it is modified to hold for only the Willamette Valley.

We feel there is no desire or need by the other 17 AVA's of Oregon to be held to this standard.

SB 830 Variety Content Requirement- by 2023, wines from Oregon AVAs shall contain at least 95% of the grape variety on the label and other varieties listed somewhere on the label unless removed previously or part of the 18 warm climate varieties. By 2030, all Oregon wines, unless removed previously, shall be produced entirely from one variety of grape unless removed or part of the 18 warm climate varieties.

We feel that this is an unnecessary restriction. Oregon adopted labeling requirements stricter than those mandated by the Federal Government. We feel that is sufficient to protect the quality and image of Oregon wines. We feel that this requirement would limit the ability of winemakers and wineries to craft the wines that they want to bring to market. If a brand or winery wants to claim in their marketing, advertising and labeling that their product is 100% varietally true, there is no prohibition in their doing that. We do not see how this will protect their wine or their WV brand image.

SB 831 100% AVA Content- Requires that wine using an Oregon AVA as its source of origin or implying an AVA as its source be produced entirely from grapes grown in that AVA. Authorizes OLCC to grant variance or temporary exemption for specified cause and to exempt AVAs from requirement. Applies to wine labeled on or after January 1, 2023.

The WVWA has modified this requirement in that an AVA could “opt-in” for 100% AVA declaration in labeling, advertising and marketing. Again, there are no Federal restrictions to any brand or wine from making that claim. We believe this has the great possibility to interrupt commerce and cause economic hardship to growers who have historically sold their fruit to businesses in AVA’s other than their own where it is grown.

We urge you to consider our concerns when discussing and debating these bills. We strongly feel that they are not necessary. We have listened to the arguments and believe they have to possibility to do harm to what has been achieved by “Brand Oregon.” We believe the OWB, using the statewide tonnage tax to promote all of Brand Oregon would be in jeopardy. We believe the OWA which is supported by members dues for legislative advocacy would be in danger of having to pick sides in representing one AVA interests over another’s.

Please support Brand Oregon.

Sincerely,
Terry Brandborg, for the Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association

If you have any questions or concerns, please call 541-643-8102 or email terry@brandborgwine.com