



March 8, 2023

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
 Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
 1020 N Street, Room 502  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting  
 Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
 1021 O Street, Room 8230  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Josh Becker  
 Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 2  
 1020 N Street, Room 502  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Steve Bennett  
 Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3  
 1021 O Street, Room 8230  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Smoke Exposure Research Funding**

Dear Chairs Skinner, Ting, Becker, and Bennett:

We write to request an appropriation of \$5,000,000 from the General Fund to assist California’s winegrape growers and wineries in addressing the impacts of wildfire smoke on California wine. The undersigned organizations represent California’s winegrape growers and wineries who make up our \$73 billion wine industry, which employees approximately 422,000 Californians and pays \$7.9 billion in local, state, and federal taxes.

California's vineyards and wineries have been severely impacted by wildfires and smoke exposure in recent years. The 2020 fires alone are expected to cost vineyards and wineries \$3.7 billion. The grapes that weren't harvested due to smoke exposure from the 2020 wildfires cost winegrape growers \$601 million and are expected to result in lost wine sales of \$2.8 billion. Since 2017, California's wineries and winegrape growers have seen significant losses in many parts of the state, the North Coast and Central Coast have been particularly hard hit by smoke impacts. Wildfires in 2021 caused damage to winegrapes in the Sierra Foothills. Consumer perceptions of the potential impact to California wine quality due to smoke exposure led to further economic losses, particularly in important export markets.

Significant investment in research to measure, mitigate, and prevent impacts from smoke is needed to help ensure the continued success of California's wine community. Funding for research into smoke exposure will help California vintners and winegrape growers better address wildfire smoke exposure in California vineyards by funding the following research: accurate measurement of smoke compounds in winegrapes and wine, methods to mitigate the damage to winegrapes and wine that can occur from exposure to smoke, and methods to prevent smoke damage to winegrapes and wine.

UC Davis, Oregon State University, and Washington State University have begun researching methods to measure, mitigate, and prevent impacts from wildfire smoke, but significantly more investment is needed to answer many difficult questions. State funding for smoke exposure research would be provided to the California Department of Food and Agriculture who would distribute the funds to qualified researchers recommended by an advisory committee made up of vintners and winegrape growers as well as a public university representative, as provided in AB 54 (Aguilar-Curry).

California's wine community has been repeatedly threatened by catastrophic wildfires. More investment in research to help limit the impacts of smoke on winegrapes will help California's wine community remain resilient.

Sincerely,



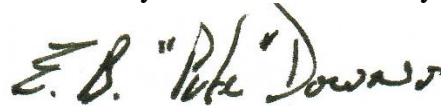
Michael Miiller  
Director of Government Relations  
California Assn. of Winegrape Growers



Chris Reardon  
Director of Governmental Affairs  
California Farm Bureau



Dave Runsten  
Senior Policy Analyst  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers



Edgar "Pete" Downs  
President  
Family Winemakers of California



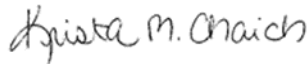
Noelle G. Cremers  
Director, Environmental & Regulatory  
Affairs  
Wine Institute



Alison Laslett  
CEO  
Santa Barbara Vintners



Keikilani McKay  
Executive Director  
Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Assn.



Krista Chaich  
Executive Director  
Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association



Linda Reiff  
President & CEO  
Napa Valley Vintners



Mary Maher  
President  
Napa Valley Grapegrowers



Ray Schnorr  
President  
San Diego County Vintners Association



Roger King  
Executive Director  
Suisun Valley Vintners & Growers Assn.



Beth Costa  
Executive Director  
Wine Road Northern Sonoma County



Kathleen Naughton  
Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Coast Wine Collective



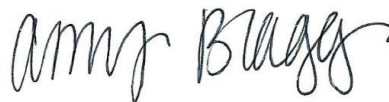
Kim Stemler  
Executive Director  
Monterey County Vintners & Growers  
Association



Tricia Geringer  
Vice President of Government Affairs  
Agricultural Council of California

**Brandi Lombardi**

Brandi Lombardi  
Executive Director  
Livermore Valley Wine Community



Amy Blagg  
Executive Director  
Lodi District Grape Growers Association



Joel Peterson  
Executive Director  
Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance

CC: The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry  
The Honorable Roger Niello, Vice Chair Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
The Honorable Vince Fong, Vice Chair Assembly Budget Committee  
Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee 2  
Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3