

Cindy L Keck/PV/EDC
03/19/2007 04:28 PM

To Cynthia C Johnson/PV/EDC@TCP
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: Winery Ordinance Draft/microwineries

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----- Forwarded by Cindy L Keck/PV/EDC on 03/19/2007 04:28 PM -----



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03/19/2007 04:58 PM

Please respond to
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cc <tdougherty@co.el-dorado.ca.us>, Pierre.Rivas/PV/EDC
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Subject Winery Ordinance Draft/microwineries

Micro-wineries in El Dorado County Under the Proposed Winery Ordinance

- An increase in micro-wineries (250-1250 cases per year output) in El Dorado County (EDC) would increase the quality and reputation of EDC wines. The proposed winery ordinance does not adequately address micro-wineries.

- Many excellent wine grape-growing areas in EDC fall within low density RE-5/RE-10 residential zoning, and not within Ag-zoned areas.

- In order for a winery in low density residential/RE zoning to fall under the winery ordinance, the winery must exist on at least a 10 acre parcel and have at least 5 acres planted in grapes. The 5 acres provides an output of about 1250 cases per year (assuming the average 4 tons of fruit per acre), with a tasting room and 15,000 square foot building possible under the proposed winery ordinance draft.

- If a parcel in low density residential zoning/RE is less than 10 acres in size or has less than 5 acres planted, a proposed winery is limited to 250 cases per year of output under "Expanded Home Occupation" with offsite sales only. No tasting room. The 250 case limit is an arbitrary number chosen by the EDC Agricultural Commission.

- The EDC permit process does not provide for operation of a winery in low density residential/RE zoning that has less than 1250 cases per year, with tasting room (under the proposed winery ordinance) or more than 250 cases per year, w/o tasting room (under Expanded Home Use).

- Residential real estate in EDC is now very expensive and there are a limited number of

people that can purchase 10+ acres of residential land and commit 5 of those acres to grape growing. Wineries that can fall within the proposed winery ordinance (planning or agriculture draft) will become more scarce as prices increase.

- Operation of a commercial winery of only 250 cases per year output is not commercially feasible in view of the insurance and licensing costs associated with a commercial winery. Most winery permit applicants under Expanded Home Use are applicants that have 10+ acres of land and plan to expand planting of grapes to 5+ acres to qualify under the proposed winery ordinance.

- EDC should have a mechanism to permit creation of low density residential RE area wineries that fall between the arbitrary 250 cases per year limit under Expanded Home Use, and the 1250 case per year output under the minimum requirements of the winery ordinance. Many wineries in other counties operate with outputs between 250 cases per year and 1250 cases per year.

-One simple suggestion for micro-wineries for all districts mentioned in the proposed winery ordinance(s) would be, offsite sales only, no tasting room, 250 cases/yr if the Applicant has no vineyard and 250 cases/yr plus what the vineyard can produce for those Applicants with a small vineyards (less than 5 acres).

We hope the Board of Supervisors will find our input helpful, and will consider including microwineries in the proposed winery ordinance.

Best Regards,
Robert and Kathleen
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