



Outlook

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## Black Oak Mountain Vineyards CUP22-0013

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**From** angela souza <souzaangie@yahoo.com>

**Date** Tue 7/22/2025 3:14 PM

**To** Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>

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Dear Members of the El Dorado County Planning Commision,

I am writing in support of Black Oak Mountain Vineyards with regards to a continous use permit up for consideration.

Black Oak Mountain Vineyards has changed my life. Please consider the impact that this winery has made in my life.

Financially. I live in Auburn Lake Trails, about 5 minutes away. I am blessed to be a stay at home mom. This comes with huge financial challenges. Black Oak has provided me with a part time job close to home and afforded me flexibility in schedule and with my children. This has greatly improved the quality of life for my family.

Community. I have 2 children in the Black Oak Mine Unified School District. Black Oak Mountain Vineyards has graciously donated their venue to our schools multiple times for fund raisers, school dances and auction items. I am so thankful to them for their local contributions and I know our School Board Members are as well.

Personally. Black Oak and its management has made my life on The Divide so much better. It allows me a space to grow as a professional woman. It honors nature and cherishes the land. It promotes wellbeing. It embodies

community and friendship. It has given me confidence and a voice throughout motherhood.

I know what is at risk here. Everything above that I just listed.

Turning down this permit would be a devastating loss to the Georgetown Divide community, to the hundreds of amazing vendors (MANY local to our county!) and to my family.

I strongly urge the Commission to approve the permit for Black Oak Mountain Vineyards!

Sincerely,  
Angela Souza  
2020 Hidden Gold Trail,  
Cool, CA 95614  
530 906-4945



Outlook

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## Public Comment Re: CUP22-0013/Black Oak Mountain Vineyards

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**From** Lexi Boeger <lexiboeger@gmail.com>

**Date** Tue 7/22/2025 3:04 PM

**To** David Spaur <David.Spaur@edcgov.us>; Bob Williams <Bob.Williams@edcgov.us>; Jeff Hansen <Jeff.Hansen@edcgov.us>; Tim Costello <Tim.Costello@edcgov.us>; Patrick Frega <Patrick.Frega@edcgov.us>

**Cc** Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>

1 attachment (4 MB)

BOMV\_Ag\_Element.pdf;

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Clerk of the Planning Commission, please see the attached PDF to be published as public comment for CUP22-0013/Black Oak Mountain Vineyards item at the 7-24-25 meeting.

Dear Esteemed Commissioners,

Please see the attached document for your review. I am a rural business and land-use advisor and working lands advocate with a long professional career in agriculture, agritourism and the wine industry. As a former Planning Commissioner (D3) I was part of the Ranch Marketing Ordinance revisions. On the Community Economic Development Advisory Committee I participated in working groups crafting other agriculture-based policies and have held leadership positions in our tourism and working lands industries over the past 30 years. I have worked closely with and personally knew many of the stakeholders that helped to craft the original Winery and Ranch Marketing policies, the Agricultural Element of the General Plan as well as

the efforts to create and expand our Agricultural Districts. What I have prepared here for your consideration is a look through the lens of history to give context for the vision and purpose of the rural land use rights that are before you and the big-picture principles that the General Plan lays out to inform decisions that affect agriculture, Ag, rural and resource lands and the economic purpose that they are intended to serve.

For this project at hand -I am an unpaid volunteer assisting the development of this project proposal. As a deeply invested member of our El Dorado County working lands community, I have a deep interest in seeing the county, staff, the applicant and the community navigate the first CUP for events since the Ranch Marketing Ordinance revisions. How this is approached, the interpretations made, and the way in which the General Plan and its policies are applied will have implications and set precedent industry-wide.

I hope that this information attached will be additive to your discussions and considerations.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and we look forward to this great process.

Best,  
Lexi Boeger

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**Lexi Boeger**  
Working Lands Advocacy

Lexi Boeger  
Working Lands Advocacy/Volunteer  
[lexiboeger@gmail.com](mailto:lexiboeger@gmail.com)

## RE: CUP22-0013/Black Oak Mountain Vineyards

The loss of our rural lands and way of life to suburban sprawl does not happen one large obvious development at a time. It happens by undermining rural land planning one little decision at a time, one CUP at a time, one ordinance revision at a time. The General Plan does far more than consider incompatible uses to avoid conflict. More critically, it comprehends and protects the bigger picture functions of a healthy community, economy and sustainable development footprint.

### **HISTORY: Residential subdivisions in Agricultural and Rural Lands: 80's-90's**

Prior to the adoption of a county General Plan, the late 80's and 90's marked a time of rapid residential growth in El Dorado County- though it was generally centered in Cameron Park/El Dorado Hills – due to a lack of an organizing planning principle at the time- large ranch and farm properties in our most rural working lands areas began to subdivide into residential, small acre subdivisions and cash out. Our rural lands lacked the infrastructure and resources to support residential development of this nature. This, along with an almost immediate clash between these new subdivisions' sensitivity to nuisances from surrounding commercial agricultural, timber and working lands, was a key impetus to create a General Plan and more specifically- an Agricultural Element – to promote and expand agricultural, open space and natural resource activities and land-use and to **protect them from the threat of residential encroachment**.

### **RESIDENTIAL -VS- AGRICULTURAL: A TALE OF TWO INCOMPATIBLE USES**

*Residential use has priority in Residential zoning, agriculture has priority in Agricultural zoning.*

The General Plan is very clear in it's guidance on how to approach conflicts between residential and agricultural interests:

## **EL DORADO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY ELEMENT:**

### **PRINCIPLE**

*The Plan must provide for the conservation and protection of El Dorado County's important natural resources, and recognize that the presence of these resources pose a constraint to development.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Agriculture and Forestry Element addresses the conservation, management, and utilization of the County's agricultural and forest lands. In El Dorado County, these lands are regarded by residents as fundamental components of the County's rural character and way of life. In recent years, large influxes of new residents have resulted in increased development and thus a changed landscape. While this growth has benefited the County in many ways, the low-density residential growth has threatened important agricultural and forest lands. Prudent management of the County's agriculture and forestry resources is needed to provide future generations with opportunities to experience both the economic benefits and rural lifestyle residents now enjoy. This prudent management strategy involves maintenance of large parcel sizes and the minimization of incompatible land use encroachment into these resource rich lands.



HISTORY: This subdivision was speculative- created with the expectation that the Auburn Dam would make this a lake-front community.

**"INCOMPATIBILITY INTERFACE" - RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVIDING IN AG/RURAL/NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS**

**BLACK OAK**

The areas in green are zoned in the Ag/Rural/Natural Resource category and are entitled to the rights and uses in the Ag Element including the "expansion of related-uses" which includes Ranch Marketing/weddings/special events.  
**PA zoning is "planned ag"- expressly zoned for the highest level of commercial agricultural use.**



## RESIDENTIAL -V- AGRICULTURAL (cont...)

The County went so far as to put strict restrictions (to reduce conflicts) ON RESIDENTIAL USE development standards in the Ag/Rural/Timber zones:

**1) Policy 8.1.3.2** Agriculturally Incompatible uses adjacent to agricultural zoned lands shall provide a minimum setback of 200 feet from the boundary of the agriculturally zoned lands.

This includes structures, sheds, houses, garages, swimming pools, basketball courts, etc. within 200 feet of an Ag property's property line. Residential use must set itself back from agriculture in order to decrease conflicts, not the other way around.

**2)** As of the General Plan 2015 update- all real estate sales involving an Agriculturally zoned parcel, or adjacent to one, must include an **Agricultural Real Estate Disclosure** enumerating the types of activities to be expected on working lands and that buyers acknowledge the potential disturbance they may experience. It explains that EDC is a *Right To Farm* county- where the normal side effects of Ag. operations cannot be considered a legal nuisance.

### Yes... BUT WEDDINGS AREN'T AGRICULTURE.

No they are not. But they are a protected "related-use" under the General Plan's Agricultural Element and are therefore to be extended the same consideration and protection as all the other Agricultural Operations enumerated in:

#### OBJECTIVE 8.2.2: AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS

Protection of the rights of agricultural operators to continue agricultural practices on all lands designated for agricultural land use and expand the agricultural-related uses allowed on such lands.

Policy 8.2.2.1 Agricultural operations allowed by right on agricultural lands shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Cultivation and tillage of the soil, grazing, dairying, irrigation, frost protection, cultivation, growing, harvesting, sound devices, use of approved fertilizers, pesticides, and crop protection;
- B. Processing of any agricultural commodity, including timber, Christmas trees, shrubs, flowers, herbs, and other plants;
- C. Raising of livestock, fur-bearing animals, and all animal husbandry;
- D. Culture or breeding of poultry and aquatic species;
- E. Commercial practices (ranch marketing) performed incidental to or in conjunction with such agricultural operations including the packaging, processing, and on-site sale of agricultural products produced in the County; and
- F. Agricultural resource management including wildlife management, recreation, tours, riding and hiking access, fishing, and picnicking.

## WHAT ABOUT THE NARRATIVE THAT EVENTS WERE ONLY TO BE A “CRUTCH” FOR FARMERS TO GET THROUGH “HARD TIMES”?

There is absolutely no language to support this narrative within the Ag Element or the Winery/Ranch Marketing Ordinances. ***Ranch Marketing wasn't intended as a safety net or crutch.*** It was a forward-thinking economic blueprint to ensure our EDC agricultural industry was competitive and viable to ensure healthy opportunities for residents, drive tourism and visitation and build economic resilience in working lands. Special Events and weddings were included in the original suite of rights that an agricultural business would need to be successful in our unique El Dorado County conditions, namely:

- 1) **Our foothills geography** creates smaller farms that are not flat or contiguous- making large scale agronomic farming impossible. Small farms cannot pencil-out with mere wholesale crop production but rather rely on direct-to-consumer, farm-visit sales.
- 2) **Vertical Integration** is a must: If a farmer can turn apples into pies and grapes into bottles of wine they can be more profitable and sustainable. Winery/Ranch Marketing also ensures value-added product production rights and the retail rooms to sell them along with skilled labor and quality jobs expansion for lab work, winemaking, vineyard management, equipment operators, etc.
- 3) **Visitation and the land:** Events, ceremonies, gatherings, etc. are fundamental to creating your own captive consumer market and having a viable business that creates quality jobs like event management, facilities, marketing, PR, etc. Weddings in particular bring guests here for quality multi-day stays, who value our working landscapes for their beauty and who integrate the products of the land into their special ceremony. Wine and weddings have always been an interconnected industry from the first toast to the last.

## WHY IS IT SO DANG IMPORTANT TO PROTECT AGRICULTURE AND “EXPAND IT'S RELATED-USES”?

***Residential, single-family property taxes do not cover their own cost to the county for services and maintenance. Period.***

The General Plan considers the balance between residential development (a cost to the county) with commercial, agricultural and economic development in order to create balanced community land-uses and activities that generate enough revenue to pay for services and maintenance for the whole community.

Commercial Agriculture, and it's “***related uses***” (as enumerated and protected by the General Plan) are- through property tax, sales tax, and their economic multiplier effect (x10)- are cash-positive to the county and they help to subsidize land inventories that aren't. **The protection and expansion of these commercial activities on these lands is fundamental to the health and sustainability of our entire community and county economy.**



## ROOFTOPS- NOT A SUSTAINABLE CROP!

*Highest and Best Use*, the determining factor for zoning, must consider revenue to the county among other things.

If working lands businesses cannot survive *AND* thrive a new “highest and best use” will be need to be determined in future General Plan updates. **And that will most likely be residential subdividing at a density level that pencils out for property tax revenues and state housing policy.** In no world, with a housing crisis like California has, will the county be allowed to preserve the large parcel sizes in our Rural and Agricultural zones for single family estates at 20, 40 or 100+ acre sizes.

**“KEEP US RURAL”** A phrase coined by low-density residential residents who recognize, in the words of the Agricultural Element of the EDC General Plan: that **“these lands are regarded by residents as fundamental components of the County’s rural character and way of life.”**

A new understanding, that you as Planning Commissioners and Land-Use experts have an **opportunity** to unite the community around, is the simple fact that: the lands that residents feel entitled to demand remain open, bucolic, beautiful, managed and maintained for their quality of life and rural experience **DEPEND ON THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY** of the working lands businesses investing in their preservation, viability and conservation.

*“Prudent management of the County’s agriculture and forestry resources is needed to provide future generations with opportunities to experience both the economic benefits and rural lifestyle residents now enjoy.”* (Ag. Element- Introduction)

The loss of our rural lands doesn't have to happen, one small decision at a time. The big picture intent of our General Plan is clear on the importance of protecting the economic and environmental assets which are our Agricultural/Rural and Natural Resource zoned parcels **and the only sustainable mechanism we have at our disposal to preserve them is through private economic viability.**

**Dear Commissioners,**

Please let these thoughtful policies from the El Dorado County Agriculture and Forestry Plan guide your efforts to seek reasonable mitigations to neighbors concerns while protecting our county's most valuable asset: our working lands and open spaces.

## ADDENDUM Re:

12-11-24 Agricultural Commission hearing findings and recommendation.

### OBJECTIVE 8.1.4: DEVELOPMENT ENTITLEMENTS

**Consideration of the agricultural use of land prior to approvals for any development entitlements.**

Policy 8.1.4.1 The County Agricultural Commission shall review all discretionary development applications and the location of proposed public facilities involving land zoned for or designated agriculture, or lands adjacent to such lands, and shall make recommendations to the reviewing authority. Before granting approval, a determination shall be made by the approving authority that the proposed use:

- A. Will not intensify existing conflicts or add new conflicts between adjacent residential areas and agricultural activities; and
- B. Will not create an island effect wherein agricultural lands located between the project site and other non-agricultural lands will be negatively affected; and
- C. Will not significantly reduce or destroy the buffering effect of existing large parcel sizes adjacent to agricultural lands.

#### Enter one of the most oft misquoted policies in the Agricultural Element: Policy 8.1.4.1 (A)

This policy, taken IN-CONTEXT of the Agricultural Element, instructs the Commission to determine if a **project** (in this case the wedding CUP), will intensify or add new conflicts between residential areas and **agricultural activities** (in this case growing grapes on BOMV or agriculture on adjacent parcels- of which there is none. Cows exist on the adjoining parcel and the Agricultural Commissioner who holds the seat for cattle ranching said weddings/events will not impact negatively).

1: The conflict must be measured in it's **negative impact to agricultural activities- not (the other way around) to residents.**

2: Staff's recommendation said verbatim that the project "has the potential to intensify" existing conflicts- not that it WILL.

Vice Chair Bolster summed up the concept that conflicts will be determined by the details of the projects' final scope when he stated: *"I think if the applicant complies with what they're proposing in terms of conducting the amplified music events indoors and all the other proposals they're making, there certainly could be a possibility that they WOULD NOT intensify existing conflicts."*

(timestamp 17:40:50, Ag Commission Dec. 11th, 2024 CUP Hearing BOMV)



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**From:** Kendall Erlenbusch <hello@kendallmelissaevents.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 22, 2025 2:19 PM  
**To:** Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>  
**Subject:** Supporting Black Oak Mountain Vineyards

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Hello,

My name is Kendall Erlenbusch and I am a wedding planner in El Dorado County. I am a preferred planner at Black Oak Mountain Vineyards and I have been working very closely with the venue since their inception in 2020. I have had the privilege of seeing them grow into a very respected and respectful venue in our community. I have worked dozens of weddings at Black Oak Mountain Vineyards, and every, single time, they have been incredibly respectful not only of my clients, but of their community as well.

It is very disheartening to hear how much they are having to support their right to hold beautiful weddings and events at their property. I have worked at many venues in El Dorado County, Sacramento County, Sonoma, Napa, Tahoe, Placer, etc. I have also worked weddings in counties that are out of state, so I have experienced so many different types of wedding venues and their rules. I must say that one of the most respectful venues I've had the privilege of working at and with is Black Oak Mountain Vineyards. They hold their vendors to a very high standard and do not just let anyone work with them, as they want vendors who they know will be very respectful of their property and their neighbors. We all work together to ensure that our clients have a successful event AND that we are very respectful to the neighboring community. I have not dealt with many venues who care as much as BOMV does. Many venues will disrespect their neighbors, hire unprofessional vendors, and not have rules and regulations to ensure that events go off seamlessly.

Many of my clients would be completely devastated to have to relocate their wedding that they have dreamed of for months and years. BOMV is immaculate, respectful, and truly has a community of vendors who support them who are at a caliber that are



not seen at many surrounding venues in El Dorado County. I know because I have worked at many of them.

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the penalties against BOMV. The amount of business they bring to the local hotels and business in Placerville, Cool, El Dorado, Auburn, Lincoln, etc would be significant and would be felt far and wide. They are an extremely respectful entity and I know that I speak for myself and many of my community members that there would be a huge hole if BOMV were not able to operate.

I hope you take this letter into consideration.

Thank you,  
Kendall

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## Kendall Melissa Erlenbusch

Owner + Creative Director

Kendall Melissa Events

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678-462-3952

[hello@kendallmelissaevents.com](mailto:hello@kendallmelissaevents.com)

[kendallmelissaevents.com](http://kendallmelissaevents.com)





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## Black Oak Mountain Vineyards Support Letter

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From Ivan Barnyak <ivan@petiteeventsco.com>  
Date Tue 7/22/2025 1:07 PM  
To Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>

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Dear El Dorado County Planning Commission,

We are writing to express our strong support for Black Oak Mountain Vineyards as they seek to uphold their Conditional Use Permit (CUP22-0013). As owners of Petite Events Company and proud preferred vendors of the venue, we've had the privilege of being part of **over 15 events and 2 open houses** at Black Oak. Each experience has only deepened our appreciation for what they bring to this community.

Black Oak is not just a place for events — **it is known for its hospitality and the elevated experience it creates for couples, guests, and vendors alike**. Their team operates with an unmatched level of professionalism, warmth, and care, creating an environment where celebrations are seamless and memorable.

The venue also plays a vital role in supporting small businesses like ours. Their events generate consistent work for dozens of local vendors — from florists and caterers to rental providers and photographers. Beyond the economic impact, they help position El Dorado County as a premier destination for world-class events that benefit the entire region.

Their request to continue offering multi-day celebrations is a reflection of modern event needs — not an increase in disruption or volume. One wedding weekend, including a rehearsal dinner, ceremony, and farewell brunch, should not be counted as three separate events. This reinterpretation unfairly inflates their event count and misrepresents their actual operations, which have always been run with great care and respect for the land and their neighbors.

We love working at Black Oak not only for its breathtaking setting, but because of the heart and integrity behind the scenes. Denying this permit would not only impact a beloved venue — it would directly affect countless small businesses like ours and the many couples who hope to celebrate there.

Please support Black Oak Mountain Vineyards in their effort to continue doing what they do best — creating unforgettable experiences, supporting the local economy, and stewarding one of El Dorado County's most special places.

Sincerely,

**Ivan Barnyak & Alya Barnyak**

Owners, Petite Events Company  
4111 N Freeway Blvd #80

Sacramento, CA 95834

ivan@petiteeventsco.com | [www.petiteeventsco.com](http://www.petiteeventsco.com)



# Ivan Barnyak

## CO-FOUNDER

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📞 916.235.8845

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🌐 petiteeventsco.com





Outlook

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## Support for Black Oak Mountain Vineyards

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**From** Olivia Nierhake <beautyonset@gmail.com>

**Date** Tue 7/22/2025 11:24 AM

**To** Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>

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To the El Dorado County Planning Commission,

I'm writing in strong support of Black Oak Mountain Vineyards and their Conditional Use Permit (CUP22-0013). As someone who has worked closely with this venue for many years, I can speak firsthand to the professionalism, care, and deep respect they show not only for their guests, but for the surrounding community and land.

Black Oak is more than a wedding venue. It is a responsible and valued contributor to the local economy, supporting dozens of small businesses including caterers, florists, photographers, musicians, transportation services, and artists like myself. Their operations provide meaningful work and create a positive economic impact throughout El Dorado County.

Their approach has always been thoughtful and community-minded. The team at Black Oak works hard to be good neighbors and has consistently shown a willingness to listen, adapt, and operate with integrity. The recent change in how "event days" are interpreted does not reflect an increase in activity, only a change in administrative definition. Penalizing them for this shift is unjust and threatens the future of a business that has operated responsibly for years.

Venues like Black Oak represent the best of what El Dorado County can offer. They bring visitors who support local lodging, restaurants, shops, and

outdoor recreation, all while showcasing the natural beauty and hospitality of our region. Denying their permit would not only hurt one business, but also the many others who depend on their continued operation.

I respectfully urge you to approve Black Oak's permit and allow them to continue contributing to the cultural and economic vitality of our community. They have earned their place here, and their continued presence strengthens this county.

Sincerely,  
Olivia Nierhake  
Beauty on Set, LLC  
925-408-8409



Outlook

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## Letter of Support for Black Oak Mountain

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**From** David Starr <dstarr@neumannlimo.com>

**Date** Tue 7/22/2025 11:13 AM

**To** Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>

**Cc** Neumann Limousine <info@neumannlimo.com>; Jane Dildine <jane@blackoak.cool>

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Dear Members of the El Dorado County Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for Black Oak Mountain Vineyard and to urge the Commission to allow this vital venue to maintain its permit and remain operational. Black Oak Mountain Vineyard has become a cornerstone of the Sacramento and Foothills wedding industry and a powerful driver of local economic development through its support of hundreds of small businesses in El Dorado County and beyond.

This venue is far more than a picturesque event space—it is a vibrant hub for community and commerce. With every wedding or event it hosts, Black Oak Mountain Vineyard generates business for local florists, caterers, photographers, planners, bakers, transportation providers, and more. These events create real jobs and income for small, often family-run businesses that depend on venues like this for their livelihood.

Beyond economics, the vineyard has helped define our region as a premier destination for weddings and special events, drawing clients and guests from around the state and country. It contributes meaningfully to the local tourism economy and enhances the visibility and reputation of El Dorado County as a place of beauty, celebration, and opportunity.



Shutting down Black Oak Mountain Vineyard would have a far-reaching and negative impact—not only on the venue's owners and staff but on an entire network of small business owners who rely on the events held there. It would also signal a retreat from supporting the kind of responsible growth and entrepreneurship that our region desperately needs.

I respectfully urge the Commission to consider the broader implications of any decisions affecting this venue. Black Oak Mountain Vineyard is an asset to El Dorado County, and its continued operation is essential to the strength, diversity, and sustainability of our local economy and community.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,  
David Starr

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***Dave Starr***

**Outside Sales Manager** - Neumann LTD

**TCP #:10013-B**

Direct: (916) 514-5431

Cell: (925) 336-1464