



Testimony on SB 841
Senate Rural Communities and
Economic Development Committee
Submitted by the Willamette Valley Wineries Association
April 11, 2013

Chair Roblan, and members of the committee, I am Harry Peterson-Nedry, President of the Willamette Valley Wineries Association, the marketing, tourism and advocacy arm of those wineries based in the Willamette Valley, the viticultural area (AVA) in which more than two-thirds of Oregon's wineries are located.

I am a semi-pioneer, having been in the industry for 33 years and having seen major growth and changes in the industry. As Leigh has indicated, we have grown to contribute almost 3 billion dollars to the Oregon economy and to establish a high quality reputation worldwide for the state.

The Willamette Valley Wineries Association has worked vigorously with the OWA and others to create an industry bill that addresses key concerns of the industry and represents fairly the entire state in the process. Many facets of the bill clarify and define precisely the reality of making and marketing wine in the state today as well as providing for new business opportunities going forward, all while preserving a careful stewardship of the Oregon farmland that ultimately is the key factor in our success.

This bill balances well the needs of the state. Intentionally some provisions are different between regions, for example the Special Events protections. In these provisions the Willamette Valley permits special events, but with safeguards that allow for greater oversight, recognition that the winery and vineyard density of our valley presents unique pressures and opportunities that other regions of the state don't yet face.

Since the steadily increasing value of the Willamette Valley brand in the international wine community is almost as widely recognized as, say, Napa Valley, it is critical to maintain our focus on farming for quality, preserving the rural environment that helps attract high value customers to our state. We need to maintain its cool climate, its soils, its federally designated American Viticultural Area (AVA) boundaries and the united stance on marketing and natural resource preservation in order to continue this strong engine of economic growth.



We are proud of our industry and anticipate continued growth, so long as we are careful in maintaining the boundaries between commerce and farmland preservation. With the projection of another 1.5 million people in Oregon between now and 2050, it becomes critical that we maintain our whole state perspective, both in encouraging commerce and preserving the lands that make it possible. Our wines are special because this place is special.

We have crafted a consensus approach that is finely balanced. We appreciate your support in maintaining that balance and moving our industry forward with a single voice. We ask that the legislature enact this legislation.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.