



SOUTHERN OREGON WINERY  
ASSOCIATION

To: Oregon Senate Business and General Government Committee

From: Southern Oregon Winery Association.

March 20, 2019

Re: SB 829, SB 830 and SB 831 referencing requirements for fruit sourcing and conjunctive labeling

We are writing to you on behalf of the Southern Oregon Winery Association (SOWA) to voice the serious concerns we have with Willamette Valley Winegrowers Association (WVWA) proposals to change Oregon laws regarding labeling and fruit sourcing. SOWA represents wineries within the Rogue and Umpqua Valleys. Because our area has climate and soil conducive to growing high quality fruit, our area produces approximately 20 to 25% of the grapes grown in the State of Oregon. The proposed Senate Bills affect Southern Oregon growers and wineries directly and we'd like to address them.

**Senate Bill 829.** This proposal requires that if a wine label bears the name of an American viticultural area (AVA) identified, and that American viticultural area is wholly or partially within the boundaries of a larger American viticultural area, the wine label must also identify the larger American viticultural area.

As we understand this requirement, it applies to the Willamette Valley viticultural area only. As long as the Southern Oregon AVA and the nested AVA's within it are allowed to continue its current labeling practices with respect to listing of our AVA's on our labels, then we have no problem with this bill and can support SB 829.

**Senate Bill 830 and Bill 831.** SB 830 requires that if a wine is labeled as Pinot noir or Chardonnay and is also labeled with "Willamette Valley" AVA on the bottle, then that wine must be produced exclusively from 100% Pinot Noir or Chardonnay grapes. Additionally, SB 831 will require that 100% of the grapes in wine labeled with the "Willamette Valley" AVA must be grown exclusively in the Willamette Valley AVA. Oregon's current regulations for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are the strictest in the world. For example, today 95% of the fruit must come from the Willamette Valley. While 5% seems small, it is a significant amount for some of the small growers in Southern Oregon that assist Willamette Valley wineries with part of that 5%.

SOWA opposes both SB 830 and 831s because of their restrictive nature. Over the years our collaborative partnerships between wineries and growers in the Willamette Valley and Southern Oregon have flourished and grown. Because of the high quality of our fruit grown in Southern Oregon, the fruit has helped build the reputations of wines from the Willamette Valley as well as from Oregon. Grapes

from growers all over Southern Oregon have been purchased over the years and integrated into wines from the Willamette Valley. These bills would sever these long-standing relationships and sales of Southern Oregon fruit to the Willamette Valley wineries would virtually disappear.

The requirements in SB 830 and 831 are unnecessary. Wine makers and wineries in the Willamette Valley can choose to use 100% Willamette Valley fruit right now. There are no restrictions in our current law from doing this. Changing these requirements however takes away options that the winemaker might have which could in turn effect overall quality.

The success of Oregon wines is enhanced by our collaborative partnerships and our industry benefits from these. Stripping this away, affects much of our ability to improve and to support each other.

We believe that the sourcing requirements referenced in SB 830 and 831 will hurt the wine industry in Oregon and for this reason SOWA cannot support either of these measures.

Respectfully,



Scott Steingraber

President, Southern Oregon Winery Association