



Senator Chuck Riley, Chair
Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Senate Business and General Government Committee
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

March 19, 2019

Public Hearing on SB 829, SB 830 and SB 831

Dear Chair Riley, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support SB 829, SB 830 and SB 831. Please vote yes on this suite of bills to implement stronger labeling and content standards for wines produced in the Willamette Valley and other Oregon wine regions.

SB 829 would require a wine label to include the name "Willamette Valley" if it contains the name of one of its "nested" viticultural areas. SB 830 would move the threshold on the grape variety content of certain wines labeled Willamette Valley from 90% to 100%. SB 831 would ensure all the grapes used in a Willamette Valley wine come from Willamette Valley. The three bills are open for all the wine regions to implement for their areas through an OLCC rulemaking process. These bills are a great step forward for the wine industry.

As a winemaker, I believe we should be authentic and transparent about the source of grapes in our wines and the content of grapes contained in our wines. The Willamette Valley earned its place on the world map of great wine regions because of our commitment to quality and integrity in winemaking. Our reputations and brand equity are literally on every wine label and in every bottle of wine that we produce.

The Willamette Valley Winegrowers Associations has developed the content of these bills through extensive conversations with the Oregon wine industry. We have worked hard to find consensus within our region and have traveled around the state in an attempt to accommodate concerns from other areas. These bills represent compromise and should move forward with the requested amendments. We look forward to supporting the implementation of the statutes through an OLCC rulemaking process.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony. Please vote yes on SB 829, SB 830 and SB 831.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Benza', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ron Benza
Founding Member
Benza Vineyards LLC