



February 23, 2021

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Energy & Environment Committee
Oregon Senate
Salem, Oregon

Dear Chair Beyer and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Wine Council, which represents over fifty percent of the wine grapes grown, produced and sold in Oregon, I'm writing to ask that the legislature not move forward on any bills that would include the wine industry in an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program. Specifically, SB 581 and SB 582 are of great concern to Oregon's wine industry, given they would require mandatory participation from our members in any EPR programs and establish new Oregon-specific recycling label requirements.

As Oregon looks to adjust and adapt its many recycling program policies, it is important that the wine industry have an opportunity to engage in conversations about how our products will be incorporated into these new programs – an opportunity that has not yet been made available to the wine industry. Instead, wineries and most producers were excluded from DEQ's multi-year Recycling Steering Committee and there has yet to be an opportunity for the wine industry to engage in meaningful conversations about the inclusion of wine packaging in a future iteration of Oregon's Bottle Bill. Given the constraints of our virtual session, there simply isn't enough time in this legislative session to fully engage wine industry stakeholders in these conversations that would greatly impact our members.

While more conversation needs to be had on the possible inclusion of wine packaging in a new recycling program, it is clear that the EPR programs presented in SB 581 and SB 582 would put a significant burden on wine producers, driving up consumer costs and limiting our ability to sell our products in diverse markets, due to the incredibly burdensome "truth in labeling" requirement of creating packaging unique for the Oregon market.

As long-time leaders in sustainable farming, wine making, and environmental stewardship, Oregon's wine industry is ready and prepared to engage in conversations about how we can move forward with policies related to sustainable packaging. However, it is important that we allow enough time for these conversations to discuss the unique position of our industry as it relates to the various new recycling programs that have been proposed.

For these reasons, we ask that you please pause on moving forward any EPR legislation and instead look to meaningfully engage industry stakeholders in an interim process to discuss these issues further.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important issue impacting Oregon's broad, prized wine industry.

Sincerely,

Elin Miller
President, Oregon Wine Council