



Gallatin Public Affairs

For Immediate Release:

Media Contact: Bruce Gryniowski

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Cell Phone: 206-409-7138

King County Executive's Proposed Winery and Tasting Room Regulations Will Cripple Woodinville Wine Country

Eastern Washington Small Towns and Rural Areas Will Also Lose Jobs and Agricultural Production

Woodinville-The King County executive's office has transmitted draft regulations to the King County Council that seeks to establish new regulations for wineries and tasting rooms in unincorporated King County. Among other issues, these regulations seek to limit hours of operation, tastings and retail sales, off-street parking, and where wineries and tasting rooms can be located.

"The decisions King County will make regulating wineries and tasting rooms will either result in the promotion of a growing and thriving wine economy in our area or the loss of thousands of direct, indirect and induced jobs, millions of dollars in retail sales, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes annually" said Cliff Otis, Co-Owner of Matthews Winery.

The proposed regulations for wineries and tasting rooms will also have a statewide affect. Currently, Washington State is the second largest producer of premium wines in our nation, with over 900 wineries and 330 wine grape growers. The total economic impact of the Washington wine industry is \$4.8 billion (2016) and growing.

"The wine industry has been a significant source of new jobs in eastern Washington in recent years. Excessive regulation of the industry in western Washington risks driving industry interests, and those jobs, to other parts of the state, including eastern Washington. While we would welcome the economic, cultural and tax value of such a shift, it would needlessly damage the industry's statewide reputation, which ultimately costs us all," said Brad Peck, Chairman of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. "Excessive regulation of wineries and tasting rooms runs counter to local government's inherent obligation to foster business climates that leverage, not undermine, the economic potential of local business. Ultimately it is the citizens, more than the wine industry, that stand to lose the most."

"We hope that King County will continue to support a growing and thriving wine industry with a strong customer base here," said Marie-Eve Gilla, General Manager and Winemaker for Forgeron Cellars. "We look forward to working with the King County Council to improve these draft regulations to ensure that regulations meet the needs of King County, Eastern Washington agricultural producers, and continues to promote Woodinville Wine Country as an important wine destination in our state."

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Oregon

920 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 250
Portland, Oregon 97204
503.220.0780

Washington

240 Second Avenue S, Suite 400
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.443.8846

103 E Indiana Avenue, Suite B
Spokane, Washington 99207
509.624.7655

Idaho

702 W Idaho Street, Suite 700
Boise, Idaho 83702
208.336.1986