



California Board of Forestry  
Edith Hannigan

Dear Ms. Hannigan,

This letter is in support of the proposed minimum standards of the SRA Fire Safe amendments. Napa Vision 2050 is a citizen organization supporting appropriate land use and democratic process in Napa County. Several of us have lost our homes in recent years to fire, and most of us have spent days or weeks evacuated.

Our Board of Supervisors (BOS) sent a letter to the Board of Forestry strongly opposing the amendments, a letter supposedly representing our interests yet forwarded without the public's knowledge or opportunity for public comment. Our opinion is that the BOS is heavily influenced through campaign donations and lobbying by the wine and tourism industries. Because of this, too often, we cannot count on our local government to act for the greater good. We celebrate our county's funding Fire Safe programs for vegetation management and the creation of shaded fuel breaks. Yet, there is a disconnect here. In a year that we anticipate excessive danger of wildfire, our county continues to permit wineries in remote areas, offering road exceptions to substandard driveways with mitigations that defy the imagination. Anthem Winery is one example of this. As recently as January 26 of this year, our BOS in a vote of 4 to one approved this major commercial project bringing 15,532 visitors annually into a remote hillside area on a new road to be constructed with 17 major exceptions to existing standards.

In a 2015 presentation, Napa County Director of Planning David Morrison reported that at that time, there were 4523 parcels in Napa County where wineries could be built, 78% of these in the Ag Watershed (read mostly remote) zoned lands. Often these parcels are served by substandard roads and are forested. We should not be drawing tourists and employees into these moderate to high fire risk areas for winery tastings or events. We need the protection of the SRA amendments.

We support the differentiation of residential and commercial situations. Fire rebuilds should not be unnecessarily burdened with requirements if firefighters can reach the structure and inhabitants can safely evacuate. Housing developments and new permits for homebuilding in our remote areas, however, should be regulated. The new normal of climate disruption changes where we can safely build homes. California needs to meet housing needs, but not in our state-designated Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the SRA as well as the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones of the LSA.

Commercial development, however, brings greater intensity and density of use. In Napa County, we necessarily need to place a moratorium on new wineries with visitation in our Ag



Preserve and Ag Watershed zoned lands. To not do so risks the lives of residents already living in these areas and of first responders. We are alarmed by our County's board of supervisors giving the go-ahead on a permit for Mountain Peak Winery, one of the largest remote wineries in Napa County. dismissing the very real wildfire danger of a winery and event center at the end of the 6 1/2 mile substandard Soda Canyon Road. The permit would allow 21,510 visitors/employees a year. This decision was justifiably challenged in court. The First District Court of Appeals recently sent the issue back to the board of supervisors for reconsideration based on the 2017 fires when 82% of the houses on Soda Canyon Road burned, and two people lost their lives. At the end of the road near the site of the proposed winery, residents had to be evacuated in the windy, fiery night by helicopters at significant risk to the pilots, their crew and the evacuees. Still, the County Planner's recommendation is to uphold this permit, again ignoring the very real fire danger. And this is only one example.

Our County is placing business before the safety of our residents and the protection of our wildlands. We urge you to pass **State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations, 2021.**

Sincerely,

Charlotte Williams, President  
Napa Vision 2050