

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - Group 1

From: Joan Hartmann
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2025 8:11 AM
To: Shannon Casey
Cc: CEO Clerk of the Board; Alison Laslett; Gina Fischer
Subject: Re: Local wine tax -

Shannon,

With this response, I am sending your letter to the Clerk of the Board and asking that she distribute to other board members. The Brown Act prevents me from doing that directly. I will also copy Alison Laslett so your comments are taken into account.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Joan

From: Shannon Casey <shanoliveoil@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2025 2:24 PM
To: Joan Hartmann <jHartmann@countyofsb.org>
Subject: Local wine tax -

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Joan:

I meant to get to the public comment but thought it was in February, so I am sorry I missed it. I have several issues that I would like to discuss.

I am against the proposed tax for the following reasons:

1. We are in the middle of a global grape/wine glut. I don't believe you can market your way out of this situation. I don't believe there are many farmers on the board, but my farmer friends are telling me that we are overplanted by 25-30%. That is a lot, and grapes are being pulled out.

Wineries are not honoring their contracts.

2. The association has been struggling for years. If the local wineries won't support it, why should the taxpayer/consumer have to?

There are wineries that are owned by multi-millionaires. Why should consumers have to line those pockets? If the wineries won't support the association, it is a problem with the association, not the public.

3. If it is just pennies on the dollar, then why are the wineries not paying it? They can afford it.

4. The younger generations are not drinking wine. Marketing won't change that.

=5. Given the surgeon generals recent statements regarding alcohol and cancer, having the county promote wine is not in the interest of public health.

Also, did the association submit a proposed budget? Are their milestones? I can see someone getting a six figure salary in the near future. How do you know if it is working?

If this tax goes through (and hope it does not) there should be some oversight or at least a sunset clause. If things don't improve in a year, the tax should be removed. If you can't improve sales in a year it should be stopped. You can check sales via sales tax.

Thanks for listening.

I would like to send this to the entire board of Supervisors.

best,

Shannon Casey

Santa Ynez

805-686-9653


Carr

RECEIVED
2025 JAN 17 P 2:16
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

January 9, 2025

Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
105 East Anapamu Street, Room 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to protest the proposed Santa Barbara County Wine Improvement District (SBCWID) and levy of an assessment on wine tasting facilities.

Please contact me with any questions at 805.689.3569 or ryan@carrwinery.com.

Sincerely,



Ryan Carr
Owner
Carr Winery Inc.

Lo-Fi Wines LLC
448 Bell St. Unit B
PO box 574
Los Alamos, CA 93440
1/20/2025

2025 JAN 31 P 1:48

Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
105 East Anapamu Street, Room 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Written Protest Against the Establishment of the Santa Barbara County Wine Improvement District (SBCWID)

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to formally protest the establishment of the Santa Barbara County Wine Improvement District (SBCWID) and the associated assessment proposed in the Resolution of Intention adopted on December 17, 2024.

As the owner/operator of Lo-Fi Wines, I have significant concerns about the financial, administrative, and constitutional implications of this proposed assessment. Below are the key points of my objection:

Impact on Customers and Business Reputation:

While the 1% assessment is intended to be passed on to customers, this additional fee functions as a tax on visitors. It risks alienating customers and discouraging wine tourism, ultimately harming the very businesses the SBCWID purports to support. The added fee may also create confusion or resentment, negatively impacting our customer relationships and business reputation.

First and Fourteenth Amendment Concerns:

The mandated assessment raises serious constitutional issues, including potential violations of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Compelling businesses and their customers to fund speech or promotional activities that they may not agree with infringes upon the First Amendment's protections. Additionally, the lack of equitable representation for all businesses in the decision-making process raises Fourteenth Amendment concerns about equal protection under the law.

Taxation Without Representation:

The SBCWID assessment amounts to a form of taxation without proper representation. Many affected businesses have had little to no opportunity to meaningfully participate in or consent to this initiative. The process for establishing the SBCWID has not adequately considered the voices of smaller businesses or those who may fundamentally oppose the program.

Administrative Burden:

The requirement for businesses to conduct additional reporting and remittance of the assessment fee introduces yet another administrative headache. Many small businesses already struggle to meet the demands of existing regulatory agencies, and this program would require further time, resources, and money to comply. These burdens disproportionately impact smaller operations with limited staff and resources.

Unclear Benefits and Lack of Transparency:

The proposed SBCWID lacks specific, measurable goals and a clear plan for how funds will be allocated. There is little assurance that the programs will meaningfully benefit all assessed businesses, particularly smaller facilities that may not see a proportional return on their contribution. Without transparency and accountability, this initiative risks becoming a financial drain without delivering tangible benefits.

Overreach by Third-Party Collection Agencies:

Entrusting a third-party collection agency to manage assessments, penalties, and interest adds another layer of administrative complexity and creates opportunities for disputes. Businesses should not be subjected to additional fees or penalties for a program they did not consent to join, especially when the funds are controlled by a private association with limited oversight.

Given these substantial concerns, I strongly urge the Board of Supervisors to reconsider the establishment of the SBCWID and the imposition of this assessment. Furthermore, I request that

my protest be officially recorded and counted toward the 50% threshold required to prevent the district's formation.

Thank you for considering this protest. I look forward to a resolution that better supports the diversity of businesses in our community.

Sincerely,

Michael Roth

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Roth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Owner/operator

Lo-Fi Wines

mike@lofi-wines.com

Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

To Whom it May Concern,

I whole-heartedly protest to the SBCWID.

Matthew Kowalczyk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MK', written in a cursive style.

Owner

Buscador Winery LLC

84A Industrial Way

Buellton, CA. 93427

RECEIVED
105 FEB -4 P 2 44
CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

To Whom it May Concern,

I protest to the SBCWID.

Andre Ibarra

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a long horizontal line.

Owner

Tierra y Vino

140 Industrial Way

Buellton, CA. 93427

RECEIVED

2025 FEB -4 P 2:45

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS