

Santa Barbara County
Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Item #5 Special Events Ordinance Consideration

April 1, 2013

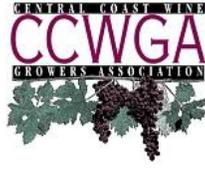
Sent via e-mail

Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors:

The Central Coast Wine Growers Association is the leading trade organization in Government Affairs, Advocacy, and Outreach on behalf of the winegrowing regions on the Central Coast. One of our key objectives is to foster and encourage open dialogue between the wine grape community, local government representatives, environmental groups, and the general public to promote an accurate understanding of industry issues. In regards to your hearing of April 2, 2013 regarding modifications to the Special Event provisions affecting all properties within the jurisdiction of Santa Barbara County we submit the following comments:

- Adoption of any Special Events provisions at this time could have far reaching consequences to the potential growth and opportunity to our local economy through agritourism. Rather than going forward with a countywide Ordinance intended to close a couple of loop holes, the Board should suspend activities on a Special Events Ordinance or Winery Ordinance until a thorough analysis on the benefits of agritourism to Santa Barbara County is conducted.
- A collaborative stakeholder approach should be developed with the input and feedback from the diversity of organizations having interest in this topic, including but not limited to: Economic Development Organizations (Chambers of Commerce and EconNSBC), Community Alliances (Central County Coalition and COLAB), Hospitality and Winery Sectors (Visitor Bureaus and Vintner Associations), Agricultural Organizations (Central Coast Wine Growers and Cattleman Associations) and Residential Stakeholders (Santa Ynez Valley Alliance and Orcutt Community Advisory Board).
- Any adopted Ordinance addressing Special Events should contain qualifying statements based on recognizing the important role that events play including promoting countywide tourism, providing an additional source of income to agriculturalists and landowners, as an educational or recreational tool for the public and for the support of non-profit organizations.
- Any ordinance standards should recognize the inherent benefits of events, while balancing the potential to negatively impact surrounding residential or agricultural uses by increasing traffic, dust,

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noise and lighting that may negatively affect the rural and neighborhood character, the essential quality upon which tourism and the county's economy depends.

- Good neighbor policy and practices should be a priority to reduce impacts to neighbors, whether the primary use of the adjacent property is for residential or agricultural purposes.
- Constitutional rights to gather, assemble, freedom of speech, and private property are paramount and need to be taken into consideration before any ordinance is adopted.
- Any ordinance needs to incorporate a "floor" for the protection of constitutional rights and freedoms that provides a distinction between a gathering and temporary special events. We support the recommended floor of up to 75 attendees is a gathering and does not constitute a special event subject to permit standards or requirements.

In summary, we believe the topic of Special Events sparks the relevant conversation for consideration of Agritourism. Agritourism plays a vital role in economies throughout the state, country, and world. Before any ordinance modifications to the existing Special Events Ordinance occur, a thorough and complete analysis of the benefits of Agritourism should be conducted. Moreover, a collaborative stakeholder-driven process should be developed to include the involvement of all the Economic, Citizenry, Hospitality, Agricultural, and Residential Sectors in developing streamlined ordinances and procedures for the allowance of agritourism, including Special Events.

Please find attached statistical data generated through the University of California Small Farm Program on the relevance of agritourism to the state. The Central Coast Wine Growers Association appreciates the opportunity to address the Board of Supervisors on this matter and will be willing participants in developing policy for the betterment of our county.

Kind regards,

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Attachment:
Statistical Data regarding Agritourism

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Statistical Information on Agritourism:

- The University of California Small Farm Center has been actively involved in promoting Agritourism throughout the state since the 1980's. Agritourism is defined as:
 - A commercial enterprise at a working farm, ranch or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment or education of visitors, and that generates supplemental income for the owner.
 - Agritourism can include farm stands or shops, U-pick, farm stays, tours, on-farm classes, fairs, festivals, pumpkin patches, Christmas tree farms, winery weddings, orchard dinners, youth camps, barn dances, hunting or fishing, guest ranches, and more.
- The UC Small Farm Program, working with county-based UC Cooperative Extension farm advisors, provides resources for agritourism operators and hosts California's statewide directory of agritourism operations. The UC Small Farm Program is an excellent resource of information on the economic, cultural, environmental, and social benefits of agritourism opportunities throughout the state and country.
- Agritourism, including weddings, special events, retreats, and public assembly on agricultural lands is a growing sector of our economy. Agritourism is well established in Europe. In the United States, interest and desire for agritourism has been growing steadily.
- Over 2.4 million visitors experienced agritourism attractions at California's farms and ranches in 2008 (UC Small Farm Program). They stayed at guest ranches in the Sierra foothills, picked peaches in the Sacramento Valley, played in corn mazes up and down the state, shopped at on-farm stands along the coast, held weddings in fields and vineyards from the coast to the Sierra, and participated in the myriad of activities included in agritourism.
- Agritourism is becoming a statewide movement connecting agriculture with tourism launching from the successes of the wine industry. According to the UC Davis Agriculture and Natural Resources Publication 3484:

“Agri-tourism is a rapidly growing consumer trend connecting agriculture with the tourism industry. Agri-Tourism draws on our increasingly urbanized population, rising incomes, the search for “down-to-earth” fun, and declining recreational opportunities in urban areas. Urban residents long to experience the countryside but have few family and friends who farm. Agri-tourism, including weddings, concerts, fundraisers, and educational tours provide the agriculturalist the opportunity to diversify and protect themselves from fluctuating markets and allows them to benefit from wise use of their land.”
- CA has largest tourism industry in the US, with 338 million domestic visitors traveling to and through CA in 2008, 86% being other Californians. That same year tourism contributed \$97.6 billion to California's economy, providing 924,000 jobs and generating \$5.8 billion in state and local taxes.