

From: [Bordona, Brian](#)
To: [Ayers, Dana](#); [Anderson, Laura](#); [Gallina, Charlene](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Benjamin Ranch Opposition
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:05:20 AM

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From: Beth Milliken <beth@spottswoode.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 9:19 AM
To: Bordona, Brian <Brian.Bordona@countyofnapa.org>
Cc: Anne Cottrell (anne.l.cottrell@gmail.com) <anne.l.cottrell@gmail.com>; Dameron, Megan <megan.dameron@countyofnapa.org>; joellegPC@gmail.com; andrewmazotti@gmail.com; Whitmer, David <Dave.Whitmer@countyofnapa.org>
Subject: Benjamin Ranch Opposition

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Dear Napa County Planning Commissioners Cotrell, Dameron, Gallagher, Mazotti and Whitmer,

We, the Growers/Vintners for Responsible Agriculture, write to request a delay in the hearing on the Benjamin Ranch Project, which is on your agenda for Wednesday, September 16th. This is a significant project that requires great scrutiny, and we need time to meaningfully weigh in.

As we await your reasonable action to delay this hearing, we take this opportunity to express our strong opposition to the Benjamin Ranch Winery project now before you. The words, "Responsible Agriculture" in our name express exactly why we are opposed to this project, which has inexplicably received a Mitigated Negative Declaration despite the fact that its scale is immense and it is located in our Agricultural Preserve. This proposal represents an entirely unacceptable and irresponsible development in Napa Valley's scarce and precious agricultural lands, and an EIR must be mandated.

Here are the facts:

- 12.8 acres of land to be developed out of 85.1 total acres (15% of the land!)
 - Vineyard reduction from 47.5 to 42.7 acres (a loss of 4.8 acres of agriculture)
- 87,292 square feet of buildings, which will house administration & production, with a *commercial kitchen* to accompany its tour and tasting activities
 - Operating hours of 8:00am to 6:00pm
 - 400 people a day combined for tours and special events (Potential: 146,000/year!)
 - 357 annual events for between 16-150 people per event

- Only 8 days/year closed to events
- 42.7 planted acres (a reduction of 4.8 acres) equates to 149.45 tons (@ 3.5 tons/acre), which is 25,406.5 gallons (@ 170 gallons/ton) or 128,233 bottles of wine
 - Thus, this “agricultural” operation will produce fewer bottles from its on-site vineyard than the number of visitors (146,000) they ask to receive for tours annually. This defines an event center, as production seems to be ancillary to the marketing and sales functions.
- 475,000 gallons production capacity (199,580 cases, or 2,394,960 bottles)
 - Related to the above, where are the Napa Valley grapes coming from? Certainly not from the site, whose agricultural acreage is being decreased (and we have a 75% rule that must be honored)
- 61 full-time and part-time staff people

By every metric these are astoundingly large numbers, decidedly not in keeping with the intent and spirit of our Agricultural Preserve nor our agriculturally based economy. In addition, these on-site special events and late tasting closing time (6:00pm) take business away from our local restaurants and other food-service businesses, which need our support, especially during these most uncertain times.

Projects in our Agricultural Preserve cannot be looked at individually – rather, development in the AP must be looked at holistically, taking all other existing developments into account. To not look at individual projects in the context of the whole undermines our *moral obligation to protect the integrity of our Agricultural Preserve*, and damages Napa Valley’s reputation as a National Treasure. We must preserve and protect that which we still have, as our land is special, scarce and irreplaceable. We call upon you to be responsible stewards of our agricultural lands!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Beth Novak Milliken, on behalf of Growers/Vintners for Responsible Agriculture

Laurie & Tom Clark
 Randy Dunn
 Mike Hackett
 Julia Levitan
 Beth Novak Milliken
 Cio Perez
 Joyce Black Sears
 Jim Wilson
 Warren Winiarski

Beth Novak Milliken
 President & CEO

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