

# PRESERVE RURAL SONOMA COUNTY



## Save the date, sign up now to protect Sonoma County

**WHAT:** After several years of delays, the County is getting ready to finalize the Winery Events Ordinance. Permit Sonoma has scheduled a virtual hearing on June 3 at 1:50 PM before the Planning Commission where Commissioners may vote to approve the ordinance.

Join the Zoom meeting at: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Planning-Commission/Calendar/Planning-Commission-Meeting-June-3-2021/>

### **WHY WE NEED YOU TO PARTICIPATE:**

Many of you provided important input at the February workshop. Permit Sonoma now plans to present its draft Winery Event Ordinance to the Planning Commission for approval. A number of features we requested were incorporated, but many issues remain. ***It is critical that we attend and make our voices heard by the Commissioners.***

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## **IF THE WINE INDUSTRY GETS THEIR WAY, EXPECT:**

- increased traffic on rural roads making our roads less safe.
- increased hospitality activities in rural areas, creating more noise and traffic, negatively impacting the rural character of our neighborhoods.
- development of even more event facilities, reducing farmland and increasing water use in rural areas. More food service/restaurants at wineries will continue to hurt local restaurants already struggling to survive.

The County has already approved twice the number of tasting rooms that it assumed in the General Plan, and the proposed ordinance could allow them all to drastically increase hospitality activities to try to shore up the fact that they approved too many. They have enabled a very competitive environment and now the tasting rooms are clamoring for more events to survive.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR & E-MAIL THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

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Ask the Commissioners to:

1. Remove loopholes that allow the Wine Industry to expand of hospitality and entertainment uses without environmental review.
2. Ensure no retroactive authorization to grandfather existing or allow new unapproved hospitality uses
3. Add siting criteria to address neighborhood compatibility and road safety, while preventing new areas of over-concentration.

**BACKGROUND**

Preserve Rural Sonoma County supports our General Plan policies of preserving rural character and city-centered commercial growth. We support an ordinance that includes the following:

1. Definitions – with specific criteria and covering ALL hospitality and event uses, regardless of whether the industry labels them an Activity or Event. Impacts are impacts, regardless of what the industry calls them.
2. Siting Criteria
  - Minimum Road width of 20 feet to support emergency vehicle access
  - 20-acre minimum parcel size for new wineries to reduce impact on neighboring residences and wells
  - Density standard of no more than two wineries per ½ mile to limit the number of facilities/driveways in an area to avoid cumulative impacts and keep new areas from

becoming over-concentrated.

- No outdoor amplified sound

3. Operating Standards –so that tasting rooms do not morph into restaurants and resorts - which are prohibited on Ag land

- Retain the County’s current practices as to identifying the number, size, and limits so event noise does not extend past 10 pm

- Food service (other than for events) should be limited to appetizer size bits for food pairing. No daily service of meals (other than approved events).

- Limit noise impacts:

- No Outdoor amplified sound (except with zoning permit) and stop the reliance on sound walls (visually impactful and ineffective)

- Measure Sound / noise impact at property line, not from your bedroom window: Retain a neighbor’s right to the peaceful enjoyment of their land.

***ATTEND & SHARE YOUR CONCERNS WITH THE COMMISSIONERS.***

***IF WE DON'T SPEAK UP, THE WINE INDUSTRY WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND UNCHECKED WITHOUT LIMITS TO THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND DECIMATION OF OUR RURAL CHARACTER.***

**We are a 100% volunteer organization. Please consider making a donation to help us advance our mission. Donations can be made by sending your tax deductible checks made out to Sonoma County Tomorrow (our fiscal sponsor), c/o PRSC, P. O. Box 983, Sebastopol, Ca. 95473. Or donating online via Paypal**

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