



Save the Napa Valley Agricultural Preserve

Today, this extraordinary cross section of Napa Valley organizations and associations, representing everything from Napa Valley's renowned wine industry, to its associated tourism industry, the overall business community, as well as those committed to environmental preservation, join together in support of the Napa Valley Agricultural Preserve.

The Calistoga Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the Napa River, Napa Chamber of Commerce, Napa County Farm Bureau, Napa Valley Grapegrowers, Napa Valley Vintners, St. Helena Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Club Napa Group, The Napa Valley Destination Council, and Wine Growers of Napa County are deeply concerned with the potential establishment of a casino, or similar development incompatible with agriculture.

After filing a lawsuit against the United States Department of the Interior for tribal recognition, as well as the ability to take land into trust in Napa County, the Mishewal Wappo Indians of Alexander Valley are in settlement talks with the federal government. Napa County, along with Sonoma County, was admitted into the lawsuit as a co-defendant in 2010. Representatives of the Wappo are currently trying to have Napa and Sonoma Counties removed from the suit.

In many respects, the concerns jointly shared by our organizations parallel perfectly with the mission of the Department of the Interior, to "protect America's natural resources and heritage..." In 1968, visionary leaders in Napa Valley established the Napa Valley Agricultural Preserve, the first of its kind in the United States, in order to ensure that the limited land resources in Napa Valley are preserved for agriculture first and foremost. In the 44 years since its creation, amidst urban sprawl creeping throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, the Napa Valley Agricultural Preserve has maintained agriculture as the highest and best use of our land and allowed Napa County to be the only remaining county in the Bay Area to continue to count agriculture as its primary industry.

The Napa Valley Agricultural Preserve sustains the Napa Valley wine industry, the crown jewel of American agriculture. Napa Valley, a small, rural, agricultural region, comprises only 4% of California's total wine production, but a mighty 34% of the California wine industry's impact on the U.S. economy, or more than \$42 billion per year. In our small county alone, the Napa Valley wine industry provides jobs for 40,000 residents.

Napa County residents are so intent on protecting their ag lands that they removed the ability of the Napa County Board of Supervisors to approve any development within the Ag Preserve that is not directly related to agriculture; any such project must be approved by a majority of Napa County voters.

Having a sovereign nation, which the Wappo would be if they obtain federal recognition, receive trust land in Napa Valley, is troubling for the future of the Ag Preserve and all that it nourishes. Forty four years of land preservation and our agricultural heritage would be put in jeopardy by a group not subject to any City, County, State and minimal federal laws and ordinances.

Therefore, collectively, we can only support the ownership or transfer of land to an entity required by our laws to maintain the historically significant environmental land use standards set forth by the governance of Napa County and its municipalities.

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