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September 18, 2018

Madolyn Agrimonti
City of Sonoma
1 Plaza Square
Sonoma, CA 95476

Dear Mayor Agrimonti,

On behalf of the board of directors and members of the Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance (SVVGA), we appeal to the Sonoma City Council to discontinue the Urgency Ordinance related to a Moratorium on Tasting Room Facilities. The emergency ordinance is the outcome of a city study suggesting there was an imminent threat to public safety, health and welfare, and the Council self-imposed an intentionally short time period to not disadvantage winery businesses in the long term. This short time period has expired and winery businesses will be unnecessarily harmed if the moratorium is extended.

Throughout the duration of the moratorium, tasting room facilities have not contributed to the degradation of public safety, health or welfare of the citizens of Sonoma. In the nine months after the moratorium was passed, the moratorium has made no discernable impact on reducing threats to public safety, health and welfare of the citizens of Sonoma. As such, the SVVGA firmly believes that, at the time this ordinance was passed and at all times since, winery tasting rooms did not and do not create any adverse impact or threat to the public. Therefore, the initial course of action taken by the Council was unfounded and there is no precedent or justification to continue a prohibition of one type of business.

Following the institution of the Urgency Ordinance and Moratorium, it is clear that existing tasting room facilities have been negatively affected. News articles written about the moratorium cast a negative light on tasting room facilities since public safety was one of the stated justifications for the moratorium. Local social media boards continue to disseminate negative and false information about the moratorium and wine tasting facilities. Tasting rooms and the surrounding plaza businesses have seen a decrease in business and guest visitation since the moratorium was enacted. Finally, two tasting rooms have closed while the moratorium was in effect.

The Wine Industry and the SVVGA believe that the City can continue to work towards the goal of a diverse business landscape within the Sonoma Plaza Overlay without continuing an emergency ordinance and moratorium that unfairly targets an important local industry. We have participated with the City Manager in positive meetings and provided feedback for a proposed ordinance. Although we understand that the Council must prioritize the business and affairs of



the City, it is inappropriate to penalize one industry and business type simply because the City has not moved this forward.

Therefore, since there is no threat to safety, health or welfare caused by wine tasting facilities and due to the fact that the moratorium has negatively impacted our business (notwithstanding the Council's stated goal of imposing a short moratorium so as not to disadvantage winery businesses), the Wine Community requests that the City continue their progress to draft common sense regulations for the Sonoma Plaza Overlay without the extension of the Urgency Ordinance and Moratorium on Wine Tasting Facilities.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Juhasz
President

Bill Hooper
Government Relations Committee Co-Chair

Jeff Zappelli
Government Relations Committee Co-Chair

Maureen L. Cottingham
Executive Director

Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance