



napa valley vintners

August 21, 2014

Chairman Bob Fiddaman
Napa County Planning Commission
County of Napa
1195 Third Street, Suite 301
Napa, CA 94559

**SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR INCREASING COMMERCIAL IMPACT FEES TO
ASSIST WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Dear Chairman Fiddaman:

The Napa Valley Vintners (NVV), the non-profit trade association representing 500 Napa Valley wineries, shares the County of Napa's concerns related to workforce and affordable housing here in our valley. Like the County, NVV has long believed that it is desirable that our work force, the life blood of our economy, have the ability to live locally. The benefits of workers living near their place of employment go beyond the obvious, and extend to helping to resolve the traffic challenges we face here in the Napa Valley. Reducing commuting distances lessens time spent on the road driving back and forth to work, therefore resulting in fewer cars on the road.

The NVV closely monitored the work of the Joint City/County Affordable Housing Task Force and took to heart the Affordable Housing Multi-Year Action Plan, the resulting document from the task force's efforts. The Action Plan established an annual financial goal for affordable housing solutions in our county and prescribed percentage-based responsibilities per local industries triggering housing needs.

An NVV task force worked with County staff to examine opportunities and we are pleased that one of the ideas appears to be a feasible method of securing additional finances from the wine industry for affordable housing financial support: an increase in Commercial Impact Fees. The Non-Residential Jobs-Housing Nexus Study Update, prepared for the County by Keyser Marston Associates, demonstrates the direct connectivity between commercial development and the need for additional housing it triggers. In unincorporated Napa County, commercial development is often related to wineries.

County staff estimates that the fee increase, as proposed by Keyser Marston, would result in approximately an additional \$1 million annually for affordable housing projects in Napa County. **The NVV Board of Directors has voted to support an increase in Commercial Impact Fees in the County specifically to raise funds for more affordable housing.**

Our Board of Directors also recommends the County of Napa establish a financial oversight committee to monitor the use of these finances to ensure that the money is indeed going towards its purpose -- to establish more affordable housing in Napa County. The NVV is interested in having a seat on that oversight committee.

Lastly, while the Napa Valley wine industry is the principle employer in the county and the center of its financial well-being, we recognize other key industries exist locally and contribute to the need for affordable and workforce housing as well. Therein, we look forward to those industry bodies coming forward with ideas of their own and collaborating with the wine industry and County government to come up with solutions to this important local issue.

Thank you for your leadership on this topic.

Sincerely,



Russ Weis
Chairman
Napa Valley Vintners Board of Directors

CC: Napa County Board of Supervisors
Napa County Planning Commission
Housing & Intergovernmental Affairs Director Larry Florin
Planning Director David Morrison