



March 3, 2015

Ms. Wynntress Balcher  
Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services  
1195 Third Street, Suite 210  
Napa, CA 94559

Ms. Balcher and Members of the Commission:

As a courtesy to the Commission, I wanted to explain my client's reasons for requesting a withdrawal of their application, which was scheduled for hearing tomorrow. We were caught completely unaware by the unprecedented recommendation from staff that the Commission should reduce visitation and marketing events numbers approved for this winery approximately three years ago. The staff suggested a 60 percent reduction in those numbers, an addition made to the staff report at the very last minute. We had no neighbor issues at this property when the winery use permit was originally approved, nor were there any for purposes of this mod. My clients have a credible grape source plan, as well.

My client's purchase of this property and his business plan for the winery were based on entitlements in place for the past three years. While we cannot know whether the Commission might have taken an unprecedented action to rescind approved entitlements, it was simply too much risk for my client to take. Who of us could risk scaling back their business plans or personal budget by 60 percent and remain financially viable? Who is safe if applicants cannot rely on entitlements the County has already approved?

I am discouraged about the loss of opportunity this withdrawal represents, as the project with the variance was environmentally superior to the original plan. In a pre-application meeting with the Planning Supervisor and Zoning Administrator, they agreed with this assessment. The findings were made in support of the variance and we could have completely avoided an encroachment into the stream setback (new roads, a wider bridge, and retaining walls). And the Vales proposed to perform the entire creek restoration project, even if the encroachment condition was eliminated via approval of the variance.

In short, the loser here was the environment. To my mind, this does not represent good planning in any sense of the word, nor does it show us as good stewards of the land.

Sincerely,

Donna B. Oldford  
Planning Consultant

**RECEIVED**

MAR 03 2015

Napa County Planning, Building  
& Environmental Services



## **Frost, Melissa**

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**Subject:** FW: Krupp Bros Use Permit #P14-00017-MOD & #P14-00195-VAR

**From:** McDowell, John  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 03, 2015 3:56 PM  
**To:** Sharma, Shaveta; Gallina, Charlene; Frost, Melissa; Balcher, Wyntress  
**Cc:** Anderson, Laura; Morrison, David  
**Subject:** FW: Krupp Bros Use Permit #P14-00017-MOD & #P14-00195-VAR

Comments on Krupp

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**From:** Bill Hocker [<mailto:bill@wmhocker.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 02, 2015 2:45 PM  
**To:** Heather Phillips; [anne.cottrell@lucene.com](mailto:anne.cottrell@lucene.com); [tkscottco@aol.com](mailto:tkscottco@aol.com); [matt pope384@gmail.com](mailto:matt pope384@gmail.com); [napacommissioner@yahoo.com](mailto:napacommissioner@yahoo.com)  
**Cc:** McDowell, John  
**Subject:** Krupp Bros Use Permit #P14-00017-MOD & #P14-00195-VAR

Commissioners,

I am Bill Hocker and I reside at 3460 Soda Canyon Road. Please forgive this second letter regarding the Krupp Bros. Winery.

### **Re: The Setback Variance**

In my previous letter I lumped the Melka and Krupp proposals together because both represent the continued abandonment of road setbacks in the approvals of new winery projects. If a reason to grant a setback variance is that a neighbor already projects into it, then there will be an ever expanding cascade of variances rendering the ordinance completely meaningless.

On my "site inspection" of the Melka winery prior to your last meeting, I saw something more alarming than the proposal being made by the Melkas: it was the Titus winery under construction directly across the road. I wrote a letter to you about it when it came before you in May of last year. I complained about the 12% of the vineyard that was to be consumed by the winery development area. (The percentage of vineyard to be consumed on the Krupp site is about the same, another permanent loss of agricultural land - although Dr. Krupp has added a few acres at the top of Soda Canyon Road in compensation).

What I also saw was that the loss of the vines is only a part of the damage being done to the agricultural resource. I use the photographs below to illustrate the point. Traveling south on the Trail toward Titus the road passes through a tree tunnel and then emerges just above the site. Previously one looked out over an iconic expanse of the valley with hills on each side and a sea of vineyards and vegetation seeming to disappear into the horizon, seen here in a Google street view taken before the Titus construction.





And now with my photo overlaid, taken from the same position. The vision of nature's endless bounty (if I can be so sappy) has now been interrupted; its magnificence gone.



This was one of the many inspiring vistas within the Napa Valley that are now less than inspiring because of construction projects. The desecration of the magnificent ridge behind Stag's Leap by houses is the most disheartening to me, but I'm sure there are dozens more lamented by the residents of other parts of the valley. We are all looking forward in trepidation for the next iteration of Yountville Hill. I don't know what our viewshed ordinance covers, but it should have been in place to protect vistas like the one above.



Both the setback and viewshed restrictions are intended to mitigate the negative visual degradation that building projects create in the Napa landscape. That degradation is keenly felt by residents who experience the change. But as I mentioned in my previous letter, that landscape is, in fact, a more valued asset for the tourism industry than is wine in this [Visit Napa Valley 2012 survey](#) (page 31). As the natural visual resource is diminished, the incentive to brave high prices and heavy traffic to visit the valley also diminishes.

The Krupp winery encroachment into its easement doesn't quite rise to the level of damage that Titus has done to the landscape, but, despite attractive "napa-esque" architecture (perhaps overly subdued in the rendering), it will play its part. What was once perceived as a vineyard landscape will now be perceived as the garnish around a building, just as will be the case with Corona and has been the case with the unfortunate Laird Wine Studio, both across the road. Admittedly much of the Trail has already been visually compromised by buildings, especially in this neighborhood. But does that mean the you should just give up in the effort to protect an agricultural Eden? You have already approved a winery on this site which doesn't create the visual or physical encroachment into the vineyard. Let that previous approval stand. Please deny this variance.

### **Re: The Visitation Numbers**

I am always a bit flummoxed by the complicated and inconsistent way in which visitation numbers are presented in these requests, so please forgive me if I am not interpreting them correctly. In your previous approval for the Krupp winery I get 21,900 t&t/yr (ave 60/day). In the new proposal I get 45,136 t&t/yr (max 868/wk ). Marketing events, the same in old and new proposals, would add 3370vis/y. Visitation has essentially doubled while the capacity has remained the same. Do I have this right? I'm not saying that either proposal is inappropriate, just that they quite different so why the change. Director Morrison has begun plotting a more rational relationship between capacity and visitation in the next item (10A) on your agenda. Under one of his proposals the Krupp winery would start out with 13,750 visitors/y before adjustments. Might it not be instructive to at least talk about the Krupp proposal in light of the analysis he has undertaken?

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