



Attention: Brad Wagenknecht, Chair
Napa County Board of Supervisors
1195 Third Street, Suite 210, Napa, California
(707 253-6170)
Brad.wagenknecht@countyofnapa.org

January 31, 2018

Dear Chair Wagenknecht and Napa County Supervisors,

On behalf of Napa Valley Grapegrowers' (NVG) 700 grower and vineyard manager members, with a mission 'to preserve and promote Napa Valley's world-class vineyards'—we are writing to express our deep concern over the Napa Valley Unified School District's (NVUSD) recent decision to purchase a 7.6-acre property at 5266 Old Sonoma Road for use as a future school site. As you are aware, this property is zoned as AWOC, agriculturally designated land. The development of a new school at this site would constitute a rare conversion of ag land to urban use, in conflict with the intent of the AW zoning established nearly 50 years ago.

NVG understands that, as a school district, NVUSD's decision falls outside the jurisdiction of both the Napa County Board of Supervisors and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). Considering this, we encourage the Board, throughout this discussion, to consider a review of those policies in place that prevent public hearings for this kind of development.

NVG is grateful for the comments made on behalf of the County in the Napa Valley Register article titled, "[Napa County has questions about proposed school site in Carneros region](#)". NVG supports the Board in voicing these concerns and believes that the County and NVUSD should thoughtfully consider the compatibility of this use and this particular site. The property currently consists of undeveloped agricultural land in the Carneros region:

- Where development such as a school site could cause significant growth inducement
- Where the County must consider access to sufficient water supply
- Where new precedents could be set on land (where ag is designated as the highest and best use of the land)
- Where siting a new school on ag land, adjacent to longstanding farming operations will force them to conform to new and unexpected land use conditions
- Where legal action could result from introducing an incompatible use in close proximity to current farming operations

When meeting with NVUSD in December of 2016, NVG openly discouraged purchasing ag land for the re-location of a charter school. At the time, NVG encouraged NVUSD to consider all options to improve safety on the current property prior to finalizing the decision to move the school. NVG representatives

noted that should charter school parents and NVUSD continue to find the current property untenable due to safety concerns, rather than opt for agricultural land, first consider:

- The use of another property currently owned by NVUSD, such as their property adjacent to Vintage High, which already includes a farm and is suitable for a school development of this scale
- The purchase of land within the city limits

Furthermore, if the current site is deemed unsafe for children, NVG will not agree with it being determined suitable for farmworker housing, as was presented by NVUSD in the recent Register article referenced above.

Finally, NVG hopes for the best outcome for the students of the charter school. The agricultural program provided is unmatched in other communities and deserves a permanent home in our valley, where our agricultural heritage is cherished. 2018 marks the beginning of the 50-year anniversary of Napa County's Agricultural Preserve (AP)— the first of its kind in the nation. This landmark set of zoning laws, which encompasses AP and AW lands, established agriculture as the highest and best use of the land in Napa County. Keeping the Ag Preserve intact and strong is central to the mission of the Napa Valley Grapegrowers, and we greatly appreciate your consideration of the points made in this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Garrett Buckland".

Garrett Buckland, President
Napa Valley Grapegrowers