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SCARLETT WINERY - USE PERMIT P16-00428-UP

To the Napa County Planning Commission

When I first learned of the Scarlett Winery project, I was surprised and shocked that anyone who lives on Ponti Road would consider Ponti an appropriate place to build a winery. I have been connected to the Napa Valley all my life, first as a frequent visitor from San Francisco and for the past 24 years as a homeowner. Over the years I watched the wine industry grow and flourish and welcomed the glowing reputation the Napa Valley enjoys worldwide. I appreciated that the County monitored development so that it didn't adversely impact the unparalleled natural beauty of the Valley, which is its most valuable asset. But, something has changed.

Turning what was a quintessential Northern California valley into a top wine-producing center is taking its toll. Traffic crawls in all directions, trash litters every road, road surfaces are torn up and dangerously eroded, signs are posted at entrances to homes to keep picnicking tourists off private property, and party music blasts well past the 10pm curfew - just to mention some of the issues.

It cannot be denied that our once pristine valley is in jeopardy. Has the Valley become too commercial and is it eroding the quality of life of its residents? Don't more wineries invite more visitors, more congestion, more of what has begun to negatively impact the quality of what it once was? Aren't we at or past a turning point? It is time to stop and thoughtfully assess how expansive development is damaging the Valley and determine what we need to do to preserve what we value.

The Scarlett project proposes to plunk down yet another winery on a tree lined dead-end residential road leading to homes surrounded by vineyards. Why invade a tranquil, residential neighborhood with more commercialism? Is it necessary for Mr. Reicher to have his winery adjacent to his home where it will completely change the neighborhood?

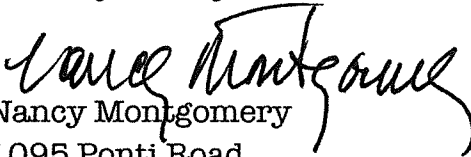
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Why not locate it in a commercial zone with other retail businesses? It is very hard to understand why anyone who appreciates and respects the ambiance of Ponti Road chooses to destroy it.

I am a cyclist and regularly ride and know well the popular cycling routes – Howell Mountain, Altas Peak, Mt. Veeder, etc. Skellenger Road is one of the most dangerous roads I ride. Two cars passing, let alone larger vehicles, leave no room for a bicycle because the road has no shoulder what so ever. Any vehicles heading to Ponti Road must drive on Skellenger and will add to the traffic on that road – a road already badly congested, especially at rush hour when cars back up past the entrance to Ponti while waiting to turn onto Silverado Trail.

I am opposed to a winery on Ponti Road. I fervently request that the Planning Commission analyze alternatives for access to the winery and sites for the building. The entrance should be off the Silverado Trail and the building should be sited where it is farther away from all neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration.


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