



Agenda Date: 12/5/2006
Agenda Placement: 6G

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Greg Clark for Dave Whitmer - Agricultural Commissioner
Agricultural Commissioner

REPORT BY: Jeffery Erwin, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, 253-4357

SUBJECT: Reauthorization of Napa County Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District for an additional 5 years, and approval of an agreement to share District Costs for another 5 years

RECOMMENDATION

Agricultural Commissioner requests the following concerning the Napa County Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District:

1. Adoption of a resolution reauthorizing the existence of the Napa County Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District for another five-year term until March 26, 2012; and
2. Approval of and authorization for the Chair to sign a cost-sharing agreement between the County and the Napa County Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District for another five-year term until June 30, 2012 to prevent the spread of Pierce's Disease in Napa County via Glassywing Sharpshooters.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Napa County Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District (District) was established in March 2002 for a five-year term which ends in March of 2007. The threat that glassy-winged sharpshooter poses to the vineyards and economy of Napa County remains serious, as there is still no cure for Pierce's disease, and viable glassy-winged sharpshooter egg masses continue to be found on plants shipped to Napa from nurseries in the infested areas of southern California. In addition, the County and District have for the past five years had an agreement to cost share program expenditures that are not covered by State monies (Agreement #4949-expiration June 30, 2007).

The District and the Napa County Agricultural Commissioner request that the Napa County Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution reauthorizing the District for another five-year term and authorize the Chair to sign a new cost-sharing agreement between the County and the District to allow the continuation of the programs that protect Napa County's agriculture.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	Yes
Is it currently budgeted?	Yes
Where is it budgeted?	Agricultural Commissioner
Is it Mandatory or Discretionary?	Discretionary
Discretionary Justification:	To assure that Napa County's agricultural industry is optimally protected from the losses that would occur if glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) were introduced or established. In addition, the County has supported a cost-sharing agreement between the County and District for GWSS program expenditures that exceed the standards mandated by California quarantine regulations.
Is the general fund affected?	Yes
Future fiscal impact:	If the Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District is reauthorized for a second five-year term, and if the Board continues to support the cost-sharing agreement, future fiscal impacts will be similar each year, with the District raising about \$150K each year, and the Agricultural Commissioner funding about \$150K each year. These funds are in addition to State funding for the program in the amount of \$424K.
Consequences if not approved:	Funding will not be available to continue the comprehensive program of inspection and trapping that we currently perform. The threat of introduction and establishment of the glassy-winged sharpshooter will increase, putting at risk Napa's prized vineyards and the economy associated with them.
Additional Information:	None

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

On March 26, 2002, the Napa County Board of Supervisors created the Napa County Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District (District) in accordance with the procedures of Chapter 13 (commencing with Section 6292) of Part 1 of Division 4 of the Food and Agricultural Code. The purpose of the District is to assist in the funding of the inspection, detection, and education of Pierce's disease, to prevent the spread of Pierce's disease by the glassy-winged sharpshooter, and to address other pests and diseases that attack winegrape plants. The initial term of existence of the District is for five years from its formation, unless the Napa County Board of Supervisors reauthorizes the existence of the District for an additional five year term, as allowed by the provisions of Food and Agricultural Code Section 6294.3.

The Board of Directors of the District (District Board), after complying with the applicable statutory noticing requirements, held a public hearing on October 11, 2006, to determine whether the conditions of Pierce's disease, the glassy-winged sharpshooter and other pests or diseases warranted the reauthorization of the District for an additional five year period. The Napa County Agricultural Commissioner prepared and presented a report to the

District Board, which report concluded that the conditions of Pierce's disease, the glassy-winged sharpshooter and other pests or diseases warranted the reauthorization of the District for an additional five year period and recommended that the District's existence be extended for an additional five year term. The District Board concurred with the recommendation of the Agricultural Commissioner, finding that existing conditions warranted recommending to the Board of Supervisors that the District's existence be reauthorized for an additional five year period until March 26, 2012, and adopted a resolution to that effect.

The funding provided through industry assessments made it possible for Napa County to have the most comprehensive glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) program in the state. It paid for GWSS exclusion and detection activities that were not funded with state funds but deemed necessary by the District to protect Napa County's world-class vineyards.

After the District was established, winegrape growers voted to assess themselves up to \$20 per year for each acre of winegrapes grown. The District sets the per-acre assessment annually at a level that provides funds to cover half of the amount not paid for by the State, as well as a percentage of the District's administrative costs. The amount of the assessment changes from year to year, based on changes in the county's winegrape acreage and GWSS Workplan activities. The table below shows the per acre assessments and the actual assessments collected for the years the District has collected these monies.

Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District Assessments

<u>Assessment Year</u>	<u>Per Acre Assessment</u>	<u>Assessments Collected</u>
2002/2003	\$4.51	\$205,877.47
2003/2004	\$3.82	\$203,790.84
2004/2005	\$2.20	\$135,388.68
2005/2006	\$1.75	\$83,067.96
2006/2007	\$4.95 (includes ~ \$1.00 for VMB Program)	Estimate: \$225,363.60

During the five years the District has been in existence, approximately 8,000 shipments of plants were inspected, and nearly 3,000 glassy-winged sharpshooter traps were placed and monitored. In 2005 and 2006, 10 shipments of plants arriving at Napa nurseries and landscape project sites were found to be infested with GWSS. The pest continues to infest most Southern California counties, from where large wholesale nurseries ship many of the landscape plants sold in Napa County's nurseries and garden centers. In addition, GWSS continues to infest portions of Sacramento and Santa Clara Counties and has been found as close as the City of Vacaville in Solano County.

In the spring of 2006, Napa's growers were asked to vote again—this time on whether they wanted to expand the District's use of assessments to include work on other pests threatening Napa's vineyards. The pest that the District was concerned about at that time was the vine mealybug (VMB), a tiny insect that was accidentally introduced into about 20 vineyards in the Napa Valley in the early 2000's, and which has now spread to over 40 locations. No funding is available to fight this pest, and allowed to spread unchecked, VMB renders grapes unusable for wine, and weakens and kills grape vines. Estimates from vineyard operators who are dealing with VMB infestations are that the costs of controlling the pest are \$1000/acre, so the high level of concern about the spread of the insect is warranted.

Growers voted overwhelmingly in favor of expanding the use of assessments, showing strong support for the work of the District and the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, who had initiated a VMB control program when the insect was first found in the County. That program included putting together a plan for eradication of the pest and working with growers toward that goal using a "compliance agreement" that specified sanitation measures for field work and harvest, as well as a program of pesticide applications.

In March 2007, the District's five-year term expires. There is still no cure for Pierce's disease—the grapevine killing bacterium that is spread by the glassy-winged sharpshooter. Add to that the fact that Napa County agricultural inspectors continue to find viable glassy-winged sharpshooter egg masses on shipments of plants coming into Napa County, and the need to continue the work of the Napa County Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District becomes clear.

And the vine mealybug continues to spread to new vineyards—13 new infestations were located this year. While some growers following the compliance agreement have seen dramatic reductions in populations, the insect is proving to be very difficult to eradicate. The Agricultural Commissioner is working with University of California Integrated Pest Management specialists to develop sustainable methods to prevent losses from VMB, and some promising studies have resulted. Further work is still needed, however.

When Napa County's agricultural interests became aware of the threat posed by GWSS and Pierce's disease, they began raising voluntary "assessment" funds to aid the Agricultural Commissioner's efforts to keep GWSS out of Napa County. In October 2001, the Agricultural Commissioner successfully sought authorization from the Napa County Board of Supervisors to enter into agreement A-4607 with the Napa Valley Grape Growers Association, the Napa Valley Vintners Association and the Napa County Farm Bureau. The agreement provided for the 50-50 sharing of the costs, not provided for by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), for the County's Glassy-winged Sharpshooter /Pierce's Disease Workplan. This agreement remained in effect until December 31, 2002.

On February 25, 2003, the Napa County Board of Supervisors gave conditional approval of a new agreement, and directed the Agricultural Commissioner to seek approval from the District. As a result, on April 1, 2003, the District entered into agreement A-4949, and agreed to share in the yearly cost of the Napa County Workplan (from FY 2002/2003 through June 30, 2007) under the same formula as used for agreement A-4607, that is; the cost of the Napa County GWSS/Pierce's Disease approved workplan is first reduced by the amount paid by CDFA. The remaining portion of the costs of the workplan would be equally divided between the County of Napa and the District. The District's commitment, under this agreement, would be limited to assessment funds collected for this purpose, and controlled by the District Board of Directors.

The cost sharing agreement is not only an integral part of the funding arrangement of Napa County's program to keep the glassy-winged sharpshooter out; it is also an important part of the continuing partnership between the County and the agricultural industry. The agreement expires July 1, 2007. In order to keep it in force and to synchronize the reauthorization of the District with the approval of a new cost-sharing agreement, both issues are being presented for consideration by the Board today. The Agricultural Commissioner requests that you approve both the District reauthorization and the authorization for the chair to sign a new cost-sharing agreement with the District.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Reauth Resolution
- B . District Reauth Res
- C . Support from NVG
- D . Support from NCFB
- E . Support from NVV
- F . Commissioner's Report to the District Board on Reauthorization

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Andrew Carey