



Agenda Date: 7/10/2007
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NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: David Whitmer - Agricultural Commissioner
Agricultural Commissioner
REPORT BY: Marcia Blackmon, Admin Office Assistant , 253-4960
SUBJECT: Adoption of a Resolution supporting the Calistoga American Viticultural Area (AVA)

RECOMMENDATION

Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures requests adoption of a resolution supporting the creation of a Calistoga American Viticultural Area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Napa County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer requests the Board of Supervisors support the establishment of the Calistoga American Viticultural Area (AVA). Many of the other communities and distinct wine growing areas of the County have established AVA's including Oakville, Rutherford, St. Helena and Yountville. Calistoga deserves this same designation. Creating a Calistoga AVA will help preserve the Calistoga area wine producing heritage and promote the distinctiveness of this viticultural area. In addition, under an AVA, the use of the Calistoga name falls under the regulations of the federal government and would prohibit the use of the name when grapes and wine actually come from other places. This would provide better truth in labeling and protection of consumers.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

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

The regulatory authority which establishes definitive viticultural areas or AVAs is the United States Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB). TTB received a petition in 2003 from James P. "Bo" Barrett of Chateau Montelena on behalf of interested parties in the Calistoga viticultural community proposing to establish Calistoga as an AVA. The Calistoga petition has been recognized by TTB as complete and accurate since 2004. This petition has been delayed by TTB due to opposition from two wineries who currently use the Calistoga name.

The Napa Valley Vintners, a coalition of wine industry members from Calistoga and Congressional Wine Caucus Co-chairs, Mike Thompson and George Radanovich have requested the US Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) to act on Mr. Barrett's petition and establish Calistoga as an American Viticultural Area (AVA). At the June 5, 2007 Calistoga City Council meeting the Napa Valley Vintners and co-owner of Chateau Montelena Winery, Bo Barrett requested the Calistoga City Council consider adopting a resolution of support for the creation of a Calistoga American Viticultural Area (AVA).

The Napa Valley Vintners in conjunction with Napa Valley wine industry have worked tirelessly to raise awareness about truth in labeling and to protect and promote Napa Valley and its various viticultural sub-areas. It is of utmost importance to protect these viticultural areas as distinct and by so doing, protect the longterm viability of Napa County agriculture. Creating a Calistoga AVA will help preserve the Calistoga area wine producing heritage and promote the distinctiveness of this viticultural area.

The establishment of a Calistoga AVA and ensuring it be identified as a name of viticultural significance, not only elevates this region in the minds of consumers, but ensures they are receiving the highest level of consumer protection in the marketplace.

The establishment of the Calistoga AVA could impact some producers of existing brands who currently use the term Calistoga. Three entities have been identified. They are: Calistoga Estate Vineyards, Calistoga Ranch and Calistoga Cellars. They or any future Calistoga brand owner could continue to use the Calistoga name in an appropriate and non-misleading fashion, on wines that qualify for the Calistoga AVA.

The resolution being considered in this item would add the Napa County Board of Supervisors to the growing list of those in support of protecting the Calistoga name as a distinct, historic, renown and unique place for the growing of grapes and making of wine. It is recommended the attached Resolution be adopted by the Napa County Board of Supervisors which will lend support to the creation of a Calistoga AVA.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Calistoga AVA Resolution
- B . Calistoga AVA Background Documents

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi