

Proposed Ordinance 2018-0241

Responding to the King County Sammamish Valley Wine and Beverage Study

Public Comment

November 9, 2018

GMVUAC, HHA, and UBCUAC



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To: King County Council PRE Committee Chairwoman Kathy Lambert: kathy.lambert@kingcounty.gov and Committee Members: Dave Upthegrove: Dave.Upthegrove@kingcounty.gov; Larry Gossett Larry.Gossett@kingcounty.gov; Joe McDermott joe.mcdermott@kingcounty.gov; and Pete von Reichbauer Pete.vonReichbauer@kingcounty.gov

Re: Proposed Ordinance 2018-0241: Responding to the King County Sammamish Valley Wine and Beverage Study

PRE Committee Chairwoman Lambert and Members,

Please accept comments herein on the subject Ordinance from King County Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils (UACs) / Associations: Greater Maple Valley UAC (GMVUAC), Hollywood Hill Association (HHA); and Upper Bear Creek UAC (UBCUAC). As you are aware, we research and develop solutions on issues of interest to people who live in King County's Rural Area.

We ask you to support the attached draft amendment for proposed King County Ordinance #2018-0241 developed by Friends of Sammamish Valley, which responds to the King County Sammamish Valley Wine and Beverage Study.

Keeping all of the Rural Area of King County rural provides many benefits to the citizens and businesses of King County, urban and rural alike. As this ordinance will apply county-wide, we have concerns over certain provisions in the council's current version which would open the doors to retail and industrial uses across the Rural Area. The result will be increased traffic, parking lots on rural land, pedestrian safety issues, water runoff that damages agricultural areas, lighting and noise pollution, and more.

We also recognize the Sammamish Valley in particular as a unique asset to King County. Not only is its rural ambiance vital to the continued success of the wine-related economy around Woodinville, it is also a crucial front in our efforts to contain urban sprawl. Wineries and related businesses have become important elements of our region's economy and culture. We support continuing to permit small wineries to be established in the Rural Areas. However, remote tasting rooms and so-called event centers clearly belong in the Urban Growth Area, where the vast majority already operate legally.

The attached draft amendment would clarify and strengthen regulations for beverage industries in ways that align with King County's Comprehensive Plan and Planning Policies under the state Growth Management Act. It retains positive elements in the proposed ordinance (business license, improved tools for code enforcement, etc) and seeks to balance the needs of the Rural Area and Agricultural Production Districts (APDs).

The draft amendment provides the following changes to the proposed ordinance:

1. Removes the Demonstration Project Overlays A and B from the Sammamish Valley. These overlays threaten the the Rural Area and APDs by permanently allowing urban-area commercial and retail businesses, such as bars and event centers, to operate in these , areas.
2. Improve certain provisions. Closes loopholes that would allow drinking establishments and event centers to function as wineries even when little or no product is produced on-site.
3. Provides a 12-mo grace period. This would allow the *illegally* operating tasting rooms, retail sales outlets, and event centers to move to a new *legal* location.

We welcome the committee's thorough review of the attached draft amendment to proposed Ordinance #2018-0241. We wish to continue an open dialogue with King County officials on the subject Ordinance. Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of our comments.

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