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Washington State Chapter

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11 March 2019

To: King County Councilmembers and County Executive Dow Constantine
Re: Proposed Ordinance 2018-0241—Response to King County Sammamish Valley Wine and Beverage Study

The Sierra Club Washington State Chapter wishes to comment on the subject proposed ordinance. We support the goals of King County Executive Constantine's proposed ordinance to *"modernize regulations to support the region's wineries, breweries, and distilleries while protecting the environment and rural integrity of unincorporated King County."* However, we believe these goals can best be achieved through the mechanism of the alternative developed by the Friends of Sammamish Valley.

In Washington, we have the Growth Management Act to provide for careful and deliberate local land-use planning to limit the extent and the costs to all of urban sprawl. Yet, the pattern of increasingly inefficient and wasteful land use which characterizes sprawl is playing out in the Sammamish Valley with detrimental impacts to farms, environmental quality, and rural residents. Due to its beautiful rural environment and notoriety, the Sammamish Valley is subject to tremendous pressures to extend the County's Urban Growth Boundary in this area (and others), which would open the door to urban sprawl at the expense of the County's Rural Area and Agricultural Production District.

While adult beverage businesses have become important to our region's economy—and we support permitting such legitimate businesses in the County's Rural Area—we believe remote tasting rooms and the promotion of large events and the venues to host them are best located in the Urban Growth Area. Most such businesses currently are permitted and successfully and legally operate in designated urban settings. The County must enforce existing land-use codes to preserve local zoning and support growth management objectives, including stopping sprawl into adjacent rural lands.

We urge the Council to carefully consider the Friends of Sammamish Valley's alternative ordinance. It contains provisions that will greatly improve the Ordinance and substitute that you are considering, especially these policy actions:

- * Remove Demonstration Project Overlays A and B that would permanently allow sales by the glass and bottle, and permanent permits for *"special event centers"* in the Rural Area. These urban-oriented commercial and retail businesses should not be allowed in the Rural Area.
- * Close loopholes that would allow drinking establishments and event centers to function as wineries even when little or no product is produced on-site. Instead, you should adopt a *"produced-on-site-only"* provision for wineries located in the Rural Area.
- * Provide a 12-month grace period to allow the illegally operating tasting rooms, retail sales outlets, and event centers to move to new legal locations.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tim Gould
Chair, Transportation and Land Use Committee
Sierra Club Washington Chapter

Mission: To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.