

King County Council
council@kingcounty.gov



December 1, 2019

Dear King County Councilmembers -

I am writing to urge your reconsideration of Ordinance #2018-0241 (Beverage Ordinance) to ensure protection of the rural areas of the Sammamish Valley for farmland and other natural resource purposes. I write on behalf of Tilth Alliance, a statewide organization with a mission of *working in community with Washington farmers, gardeners, and eaters for a more sustainable, equitable, and healthy food future*. As Chair of the Tilth Alliance Board of Directors, I ask that you reconsider changes you are proposing in this ordinance.

As you are aware, King County established the Sammamish Valley Agricultural Production District (APD) and Rural Area to ensure that the farmland and rural character of the Valley are protected for generations to come as required under the Growth Management Act. The adoption of this ordinance would allow urban-type development to expand within the Rural Area, not only impacting the quality of the Sammamish Valley, but also setting a dangerous precedent for other areas in the state. The existing ordinance on the books was drafted to protect the Rural Area, including requirements that products sold in tasting facilities be produced on-site. It is our understanding that most wineries, in what we know is a growing industry in the Valley, are complying with the intent of the ordinance. It appears, however, that lack of enforcement of the current ordinance has resulted in some businesses operating in the Rural Area without meeting the on-site production requirements. The changes proposed in this ordinance appear to enable those operations further, encouraging activities in the Rural Area that have the potential to increase traffic, contribute to run-off and pollution, and do little to safeguard the agricultural and rural character of the area. Further, such activity can contribute to increased land speculation that will eventually lead to land values that prohibit farming as a viable enterprise.

Given the impacts climate change may have on global food production, protecting agricultural land in Washington should not only be a priority for our organization but for you as well on behalf of all residents in King County. By not adopting the ordinance before you, you have the opportunity to ensure that King County's agricultural base continues to be protected. Please recognize the needs of all residents in the County by not supporting Ordinance #2018-0241.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature appears to read "N. Tosta".

Nancy Tosta
Board Chair
Tilth Alliance