

Watchdog Winery LLC
10143 Highway 200
Dixon, MT 59831

November 13, 2024

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

My name is Alyssa Griffith. My husband Ben Griffith and I own Watchdog Winery along the lower Flathead River located between Dixon and Perma. We have started with a small (one acre) vineyard and winery while continuing to pursue our own careers. We have space and plan to expand our local production in the future. We have strived to reduce the impact of glass bottles by unique new flexible packaging helping us find our niche market. Our flexible packaging reduces the carbon footprint by 80% when replacing heavy glass bottles. The pouch is much lighter to take skiing, hiking or on the river and can then be recycled making it more sustainable.

I am also the vice president of the Montana Grape and Wine Association. The goal of the association is to promote the development of viticulture and enology in Montana, prioritizing vineyard production.

The vineyard and winery industry has the potential to bring much revenue into the state of Montana. There is currently a strong market for supporting local, Farm to Table, Made in MT/ Grown in MT products and agritourism. We were fortunate to start our winery business on my family farm, diversifying production adding a family value-added farm business.

According to Headwaters Economics, a nonprofit research group based in Bozeman and Helena working to improve land management decisions, farm employment in Montana shrank by nearly 20 percent between 1970 and 2019. We have the opportunity to develop viticulture and enology training programs to Montanans to expand vineyards and wine production in Montana. We must evolve as things change. Promoting vineyards and wineries in Montana is value added agriculture and assists in upholding agriculture as a Montanan way of life.

Proposed legislation allowing farm winery licensing and Montana grown wine at farmers markets will help increase the supply of Montana grown grapes to new and existing wineries.

Thank you,

Alyssa Griffith
winerydog@watchdogwinery.com
406-544-2945

