

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 26, 2021

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

As you and the members of the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies draft the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Appropriations bill, we respectfully request \$5 million for Mitigating the Adverse Consequences of Wildfire Smoke of Wine Grapes program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

Wine grapes exposed to smoke from wildfires can introduce compounds into the winemaking process that cause smoky, ash-like flavors and result in wines unfit for commercial sale. These off-aromas and flavors become more pronounced over time as wine ages. The science around smoke tainted wines is not well developed and there is uncertainty about when and how smoke-taint problems will be expressed in wines. There are very few practical measures available to growers and wineries to mitigate smoke taint problems.

For FY 2020 and FY 2021, Congress appropriated \$2 million and \$3.5 million, respectively, to fund much needed research. With that funding, ARS is developing an effective program of research based on input from industry representatives and working in collaboration with land grant university researchers from California, Oregon and Washington. We are encouraged that ARS is prepared to address the pressing needs of growers and wineries and reduce future economic losses related to wildfires.

There are many issues that need to be addressed concerning smoke exposed grapes and wine quality. These include determining the causes of smoke taint in wine, accurately predicting the risk of smoke tainted wine when using smoke exposed grapes, and appropriate mitigation measures. With this funding ARS can deliver the fundamental research needed to advance smoke research.

The uncertainty around testing and prediction of risk has profound economic consequences the wine industry. The requested \$5 million in funding will support improved methodologies for sampling and testing of smoke exposed grapes and smoke affected wines, provide for a comprehensive, reliable database of background levels of smoke taint compounds occurring naturally in wine grapes, and support new mitigation measures to remedy smoke taint issues. In addition, the ARS program will support focused programs of research, led by land-grant university-based scientists in California, Oregon, and Washington. All of this is essential to prepare and protect our wine industry from the damage of smoke taint.

Thank you for your consideration of this important programmatic request. We appreciate the difficult task you and the other members of the Subcommittee have and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



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MIKE THOMPSON  
Member of Congress



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DOUG LAMALFA  
Member of Congress

#### Additional Signatories

/s/

Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

/s/

Mark DeSaulnier  
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