

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2025

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harris and Ranking Member Bishop:

As you and the members of the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies draft the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Appropriations bill, we respectfully request \$7.5 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 2023 and FY 2024, Congress appropriated \$5 million and \$5.5 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 for the wine industry. The requested \$7.5 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.

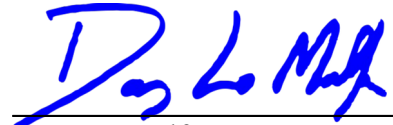
Sincerely,

Congress of the United States

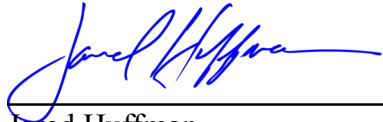
Washington, DC 20515



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



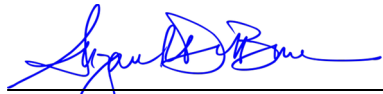
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Andre Carson
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



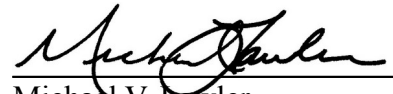
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



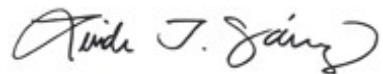
Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



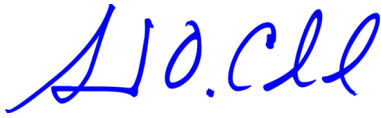
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



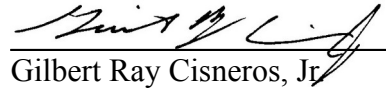
Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



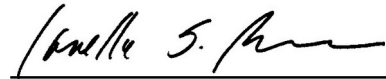
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



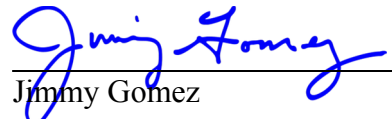
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



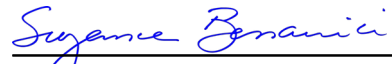
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States

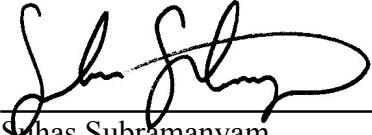
Washington, DC 20515



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager Dove
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress



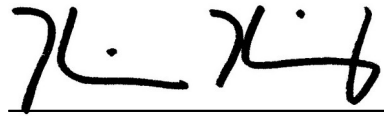
Robert Garcia
Member of Congress




Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



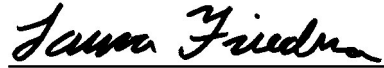
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Kevin Kiley
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress