

My wife Sue and I farm grapes and make wine in Elkton Oregon. We discovered this region after a long search for the ideal climate to make the types of wines we love, cool climate aromatic whites and pinot noir. You do not find climate change deniers in the grape and wine industry. It's a fact that with a warming climate global viticulture is moving up in both altitude and latitude. Oregon's global reputation for fine wines is based on the wonderful climate that can produce our wines of quality. We all do recognize that with our changing climate we need to be aware of how to navigate to continue to grow these kinds of grapes and turn out the kinds of wines on which our reputation is based. Research will lead the way in those efforts. And, now we have the impact of wildfires to contend with as well. In Elkton we were at least 30 miles west of the closest penetration of the Archie Creek fire that devastated the North Umpqua drainage. Though it was quite smokey for several days, our hope was that we would avoid the severe impacts of taint to our grapes and wines. In conversations with notable people in the wine industry, we had heard that new smoke and proximity to the fires created the highest risks. That turned out to be wishful thinking. The whites that we made from 2020 fruit, that was whole cluster pressed as soon as it hit our crush pad in early cool mornings have turned out ok. All of the red wines fermented on the skins we made from 2020 have smoke taint that is severe enough that we don't think we will be able to bottle them with our name and reputation on our bottle. This carries across for all of the wines made, from our own vineyard and from those local vineyards we purchase fruit from. As I'm sure you are aware, the Oregon wine industry is a major economic driver for Oregon. Last surveyed the wine industry contributed over 5.7 billion dollars to our Oregon economy. We believe that research and testing of grapes and wines impacted by wildfires is of critical importance to being able to continue to put out the quality products expected of the Oregon wine industry. Last year research facilities were overwhelmed and could not keep up with needed analysis and data regarding the grapes, and how best to deal with the decision making and strategies for how one may be able to turn out a quality product. We are aware that Oregon has received relief funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. The highly respected research team at Oregon State University has requested 2.68 million dollars for new testing equipment, building the infrastructure to facilitate smoke taint research and to train the technicians necessary to use these new technologies. I also serve on the OWB Research Committee and review the grant applications submitted annually. I rated this request right at the top, graded it very highly and recommended funding. All of the Oregon wine industry believes in the necessity of this research. On behalf of ourselves as farmers and winemakers, and on behalf of the Oregon Winegrowers Association, we hope that you will view this request favorably as a useful tool to help maintain the stature of Oregon wine. We request that this project be funded in full.

Thank you,
Terry Brandborg
Brandborg Vineyard and Winery
Board Director, OWA