

13250 River Road  
Guerneville, CA 95446

Mr. G. R. Dickerson  
Director  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Firearms  
Department of Treasury  
Washington, D.C. 20226

Re: Petition Establishment of Viticultural Area.

Dear Mr. Dickerson:

Pursuant to the published Treasury Decision A.T.F.-60 (44-FR56692) the undersigned hereby petitions you to establish an American Viticultural Area to be known as "Russian River Valley".

I

Evidence that the area is known as the Russian River Valley. Included in the proposed designation are those areas through which flow the Russian River or some of its tributaries and where there is a significant climate effect from coastal fogs. This distinction, primarily based upon climate is one which has been both currently (see Section II below) and historically (see Section III below) recognized.

II

Evidence that the geographical features of the area are distinctive. Included within the material find with the petition a copy of a letter (Schedule A) dated February 17, 1981 from Robert L. Sisson, County Director and Farm Advisor, Sonoma County, Cooperative Extension, University of California, Sonoma County, distinguishing the climate of the Alexander Valley from the area to the south described as the Russian River Valley. Mr. Sisson designates the Russian River Valley area as being

"coastal cool" as compared to the Alexander Valley which he designates as being "coastal warm". In support of the distinguishing nature of the Russian River Valley area Mr. Sisson included information as to the heat unit records in the area concerned. A specific growing climate is the principal distinctive characteristic of the proposed Russian River Valley Viticultural Area. The area designated is a cool growing coastal area, fog intrude up the Russian River and its tributaries during the early morning hours. The results of these coastal fog intrusions give growing temperatures that are normally Region I or cooler as such a region has been defined. This area is thus distinguished from the warmer neighboring valleys such as Dry Creek Valley, Alexander Valley and Sonoma Valley.

### III

#### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY VITICULTURAL AREA

Viticulture in Sonoma County dates back to the establishment of the last of the California missions, Mission San Francisco de Salano, at Sonoma in 1824. The vineyard at the mission was planted in 1825. In the late 1850's Jacob Gundlach and Count Agoston Haraszthy established major plantings of the European vine, *vitis vinifera*, the first such plantings in the United States.

Viticulture in the Russian River Valley was well established shortly thereafter with the Korbelt Winery in 1882, Santa Rosa Wine Company in 1876, Martini & Prati Winery in 1880, and Foppiano Winery in 1896. By 1876, wine production in the area was in excess of 500,000 gallons and planted acreage totaled approximately 7,000 acres.

In 1887, the editor of the Sonoma "Enterprise" wrote, "the famous Russian River and Dry Creek Valleys, tributary to Healdsburg, which is situated near the confluence of Dry Creek

with Russian River comprise the cream of good soils that characterize 'Old Sonoma'. It is here that the largest and finest flavored fruits are grown and where the choicest wine and table grapes are produced."

In a "History of Sonoma County, California", published in 1880, mention is made of the four "great valleys" comprising the Sonoma, Petaluma, Santa Rosa and the Russian River with "others smaller in size ... chief among them are: Alexander Valley, Dry Creek Valley ... ". The water courses describe Mark West Creek & Santa Rosa Creek emptying into the Russian River. The watershed some twenty miles south of the Russian River drains northward into that river.

The use of the name "Russian River Valley" on wine labels began with Foppiano Winery in 1970, followed by Mark West Vineyards in 1977, Davis Bynum in 1978 and DeLoach Vineyards in 1979. The most recent "Connoisseur's Guide" states that "as an appellation of origin ... the name Russian River Valley has commonly been used to describe the low lying flat plain that extends south and west of Healdsburg and follows the river as it turns toward the Pacific Ocean. At Guerneville, the coastal hills close off the area and mark its western boundary. Plantings are oriented to early ripening varieties ... ".

The Russian River Valley has experienced continual growth in viticulture from its beginnings in the 1860's surviving prohibition and exhibiting tremendous growth in the 1970's and 1980's with premium wine production from the approximately 17 wineries within its boundary.

#### IV

A narrative description of the proposed boundaries of the Russian River Valley Viticultural Area is attached, Schedule B.

Enclosed is Schedule C, one copy of the U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute map covering the proposed Russian River Viticultural Area.

If there are any questions concerning this petition please contact either Don Bauer F. Korbel & Bros. 13250 River Road Guerneville, CA 95446 (707) 887-2294 or Bob Ellis, Mark West Vineyards, 7000 Trenton-Healdsburg Road, Forestville, CA 95436 (707) 544-4813.

The Appellation Committee thanks you in advance for your prompt consideration of this petition.

Yours very truly,

The Appellation Committee

- ~~Terry Harrison, V.P. Davis Bynum Winery 8075 Westside Rd Healdsburg CA 95444~~
- ~~Terry Harrison (Grower) 4395 Westside Rd, Healdsburg CA 95444~~
- ~~Andrew Stulwig (owner) from Horae Vineyards 9786 Ross Station~~
- ~~Jade Fitzgerald (winemaker, Hop Kit Winery Box 66 Road Healdsburg, CA 95448 95472 Director)~~
- ~~Robert Ellis - owner Mark West Vineyards & Winery - 7000 Trenton-Healdsburg rd Forestville, Ca 95436~~
- ~~Terry Glover, vineyard owner 9450 Vinecrest Windsor 95499~~
- ~~Dorothy Glover, Grower 9450 Vine Crest Windsor CA 95492~~
- ~~Cathy Kuhlmann, Grower, 7495 Poplar, Forestville, Calif. 9543~~
- ~~Albert Tulus owner Pyramid Vineyards, 7495 Poplar Drive, Forestville, CA 95456~~
- ~~Ed Seghiso Seghiso Winery 14730 G Street Healdsburg 95444~~
- ~~Christine DeLoach DeLoach Vineyards 1791 Olivet Rd Santa Rosa 95401~~
- ~~Michele A. Maloy Landmark Vineyards - 912 Los Angeles Rd Windsor, Ca~~
- ~~Dary DeLoach Donna Marie Vineyard 10286 Chalk Hill,~~
- ~~Bob Blum grower - 1153 Winton Dr. S. Rosa 95401~~
- ~~Bill DeLoach - Balvenie Winery Vineyards - 10810 Hillview Rd, Windsor, CA. 95492~~



SCHEDULE A

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
SONOMA COUNTY

February 17, 1961

2555 Mendocino Avenue -- Room 100-P  
Santa Rosa, California 95401  
Telephone (707) 527-2621

Mr. Robert Young  
4950 Red Winery Road  
Geyserville, California

Dear Mr. Young:

The display that follows compares the climate of Alexander Valley with the area to the south generally described as the Russian River Valley, as well as I can with the existing climate data.

The prevailing climate of the geographical area historically known as Alexander Valley is what I characterize as "coastal warm." I have used the term, coastal warm, as contrasted to coastal cool, rather than a region or combinations of regions as they are described by Winkler and Amerine, due to the strong degree of variability in growing season temperatures and general climate support conditions that occur in Sonoma County. The regional concept is based on calculations that were described by Winkler and Amerine in 1944 and are expressed as accumulations of degree days in increments of 500, beginning with the value of 2,000 as the low end of Region I. A degree day, as described by Winkler and Amerine, is a numerical value derived mathematically from the daily mean temperature and 50 degrees Fahrenheit. The term, "heat unit" is also used in place of "degree day" to describe grape growing climates, and, in my opinion, is a more understandable term for this purpose, since there are other calculations where the term, degree day, based on different calculations, is used.

The term, "coastal warm," used for this discussion describes a range of accumulated heat units between 2800 and 3500 calculated according to the Winkler and Amerine formula for degree days. The term also attempts to take into account the impact of the prevailing marine fog intrusion that influences the measurable amounts of incidental solar energy and foot candles of light on the vine's canopy that also bear an overall photosynthesis, sugar accumulation, and the seasonal time of harvest readiness. The term is also intended to take into account the duration of vine and fruit exposure to various temperature levels and not just settle for a single point of contact at the highest and lowest readings for a given day. The assumption is made that total time of exposure to the higher temperature ranges, as typified by Interior San Joaquin locations, has a distinct bearing on the retained levels of total acid at harvest.

The following climate data is based on actual field location readings--not readings taken from U. S. Weather Service observer "in town" locations. The regularly recorded and reported U. S. Weather readings are

often strongly affected by the influence of nearby buildings and the overall retained heat effect of the entire urban area where the instruments are located. A case in point may be observed by comparing the data taken from the Kreck Ranch on the outskirts of the city of Healdsburg and the "in town" Healdsburg readings for the years 1976 and 1977.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Heat Unit Accumulation Kreck Ranch</u>	<u>Heat Unit Accumulation "In-town" Healdsburg</u>	<u>Heat Unit Difference</u>
1976	2991	3681	690
1977	3029	3632	603

The difference amounts to more than one full region in less than two miles of distance.

Both locations are on the border of the prevailing marine fog intrusion that tends to separate "coastal cool" (2000 - 2800 heat units) from "coastal warm" (2800 - 3500+ heat units).

The southern boundary of Alexander Valley, as I understand it, terminates at about the northern Healdsburg City limits on the west and at the high midpoint of Chalk Hill Road on the east. These boundaries will vary slightly from year to year in terms of heat unit accumulation due to the expected variations in the intensity of the marine fog intrusion. The locations, however, accurately reflect the usual break point for the heaviest part of the intrusion when it occurs.

For example, a representative collection of Alexander Valley instrument locations all show "coastal warm" readings as displayed:

<u>Location</u>	<u>*Corrected Heat Units</u>
Alexander Valley (lower Hwy. 128)	2804 (5 year average)
Ron Dick (lower Hwy. 128)	3047 (4 year average)
Fulton (lower river Jimtown)	3163
Simi (Jimtown)	2915
Spaletta (Black Mountain)	3259 (2 year average)
Trentadue (U.S. 101 - west side)	3047
Widmer (Jimtown)	2978 (10 year average)
Young (Red Winery Road)	3022 (6 year average)
Zellerbach (upper Chalk Hill Road)	2926
Redwood Hereford (lower Hwy. 128)	<u>2796</u> (2 year average)
10 location mean =	2996



\*The meaning of corrected, in this instance, is the application of the difference for each year of the value by which the nearest long range reading location differs from its most recent 10 year mean. For example, Healdsburg, the nearest long term station, was above its 10 year mean by 179 heat units in 1973 and below its 10 year mean by 303 heat units in 1975. These difference values are applied to nearby field readings for each year to attempt to achieve an understanding of the probable long period behavior of each location.

A representative selection of recording locations from the predominantly "coastal cool" area below the southern Alexander Valley boundary displays the following:

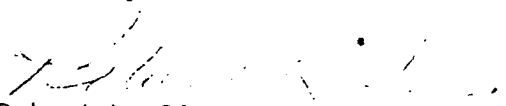
<u>Location</u>	<u>Corrected Heat Units</u>
Atkinson Ranch (Graton area)	2189
Martini Ranch (Trenton area)	2181
Korbel Ranch (lower Russian River)	2214
Sonoma Vineyards (River Road area)	2311
Benoit Ranch (lower Russian River)	2416
Fenton Acres (lower Russian River)	2581 (11 years average)
Harmeson Ranch (lower Russian River)	2682 (4 year average)
Dutton Ranch (Graton area)	2217
Hansen Ranch (Occidental area)	2391 (3 year average)
Graton Station (uncorrected)	<u>2475</u>
10 location mean =	2366

A further example of the kind of differences that tend to exist between coastal warm and coastal cool locations is displayed by the number of hours that temperatures tend to remain in the highly effective photosynthesis range between 70 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. During 1976 a typical coastal warm location displayed an accumulation of 1439 hours in this range with 519 hours between 80 and 90 degrees F. In contrast, a typical coastal cool location displayed only 925 hours between 70 and 90 degrees F. and only 255 hours between 80 and 90 degrees F. The hours above the usually used 50 degrees F. base were quite similar by contrast with the coastal cool location, showing 4061 and the coastal warm, 4273. This kind of difference helps explain the behavioral differences of varieties like the Cabernet sauvignon between the two areas. Cabernet is a typical coastal warm zone variety that requires the strength of climate support that

characterizes the Sonoma County coastal warm zone.

The data displayed should show reasonably clearly the differences between the coastal warm climate regime that associates with Alexander Valley as compared to the coastal cool characteristics of the Russian River Valley area below the southern Alexander Valley boundary.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Sisson  
County Director & Farm Advisor  
Sonoma County

RLS/bb

SCHEDULE B