



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

April 19, 2023

The Honorable Chris Holden
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 54 – SUPPORT
As Introduced December 5, 2022**

Dear Assembly Member Holden:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we offer our support for Assembly Bill 54 (Aguiar-Curry). This measure provides funding for research and an advisory committee to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on the impacts of smoke exposure to winegrapes and wine. RCRC is an association of forty rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

California's wildfire patterns and resulting impacts have dramatically changed in the past decade, exacerbated by climate change and inattention to fuels treatment. While the catastrophic impacts to communities, including potential for loss of human life, habitat destruction and degraded air and water quality, have been well documented in recent years, the impacts of smoke on winegrapes and wine is in dire need of examination.

California's wine producing areas, many in our member Counties, are significant contributors to the state's economy. California is fourth in the world in wine production, produces 90 percent of the nation's wine and provides more than 400,000 jobs in 49 counties statewide.¹ A number of these counties routinely face severe smoke impacts from wildfires, either in their own communities or neighboring counties, and the smoke is damaging the viability of winegrapes and wine being produced in some of California's most prominent regions.

¹ *Economic Impact Report (2022)*. California Association of Winegrape Growers. https://www.cawg.org/Wine1/Resources/Economic_Impact_Report/Shared_Content/Resources/Economic_Impact_Report.aspx?hkey=24519c1d-0ef8-44fc-b4d4-6561453d66be

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AB 54 would create an advisory committee of experts and direct funding to CDFA in order to fully explore the damage wildfires are causing to the state's vital wine industry. For these reasons, RCRC, respectfully requests your "Aye" vote when this bill is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me at sheaton@rcrcnet.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Staci Heaton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

STACI HEATON
Senior Policy Advocate

cc: The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jay Dickenson, Chief Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus