

In Support of the Agricultural Industry of Sonoma County



Recommended Action

Adopt a Joint Resolution recognizing a crisis challenging the Sonoma County agricultural industry that includes:

1. Board of Supervisors directing a multi-departmental work plan in support of Sonoma County policy related to agricultural land use.
2. Board of Directors directing the General Manager of Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to partner with Sonoma County to implement specific components of the work plan related to land conservation and access.

Workplans

▶ **Multi-agency effort:**

- ▶ Agriculture/Weights & Measures
- ▶ Permit Sonoma
- ▶ Ag + Open Space
- ▶ UC Cooperative Extension

▶ **Timeframes:**

- ▶ FY 2026-27
- ▶ FY 2027-28
- ▶ Beyond through the General Plan Update process

Topic Areas

1. Cultivation and Fallowing
2. Agritourism
3. General Plan and By-Right Uses
4. Agricultural Employee Housing
5. Right to Farm
6. Williamson Act
7. Conservation Easements
8. Land Access
9. Food Security

Agriculture/Weights & Measures

- ▶ Evaluate updates to SCC Chapter 36, Vineyard Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance (VESCO):
 - ▶ Expand options for growers to diversify agricultural production through a replant permitting pathway for cultivated lands
- ▶ Develop guidelines for fallowing:
 - ▶ To be incorporated into VESCO, BMPs, and Uniform Rules for Land Conservation Act contracts to offer flexibility and certainty in land management

Permit Sonoma

- ▶ Develop Low Impact Camping Area (LICA) Ordinance
- ▶ Update Zoning Code Event Thresholds
- ▶ Develop Resources for New Ag Housing Regulations and Department Contacts for Permit Support
- ▶ Protect Agricultural Operations in County Noise Ordinance
- ▶ Update Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones (Williamson Act)
- ▶ County Environmental Review of Ag Uses for “By Right” Consideration in General Plan Update

Ag + Open Space

- ▶ Simplify easement language and implement mandatory ag use
- ▶ Evaluate and implement affordability tools
- ▶ Develop Stewardship Assistance Program
- ▶ Acquire a property for Buy Protect Sell and evaluate lease to own option
- ▶ Acquire a property for an Ag Park and conduct a public process to determine uses
- ▶ Evaluate Ag + Open Space and other public lands for ag use to identify affordable agricultural lease options
- ▶ Support producers including farmworkers in acquiring and/or accessing ag land

UC Cooperative Extension

- ▶ Food Security Convening
 - ▶ Learn directly from County partners about the anticipated impacts in Sonoma County from HR 1
 - ▶ Revisit and confirm validity of recommendations from the 2024 Food Distribution Assessment
- ▶ County Legislative Platform
 - ▶ Work with the CEO and Board to clearly identify opportunities for agriculture and food security
- ▶ Agricultural Ombuds Program
 - ▶ Evaluate existing resources and establish workplan to realign support for agricultural stakeholders based on current needs

Other Items for Consideration

- ▶ Prohibiting Targeted Residential Picketing
 - ▶ In general, picketing is protected speech under the First Amendment and restrictions must be narrowly tailored
 - ▶ Ordinances prohibiting picketing targeted at and in proximity to a specific residence have been upheld
- ▶ Regulation of Drones
 - ▶ There is no complete solution
 - ▶ Ordinance regulating the takeoff and landing of drones on public property, coupled with enforcement actions allowed under state law, could provide a partial solution

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Questions?

