



# County of Sonoma

## State of California

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Date: June 2, 2026

Item Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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4/5 Vote Required

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**Urgency Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California, and the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District  
Declaring Agriculture as Critical Infrastructure and Directing a Workplan to Support  
Agricultural Resilience**

**Whereas**, agriculture has long served as a foundational pillar of the economy, culture, landscape, and identity of Sonoma County, contributing to food production, environmental stewardship, employment, tourism, and community well-being; and

**Whereas**, the County's agricultural landscape is uniquely diverse and includes vineyards, dairies, livestock and grazing lands, orchards, specialty crops, organic farms, timberlands, and coastal and inland food production systems that collectively contribute to the County's economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and cultural heritage; and

**Whereas**, agriculture and working lands constitute critical infrastructure essential to the health, safety, and economic stability of this County, including the production of food, fiber, and other agricultural goods, supply chain continuity, stewardship of working lands, emergency resilience, and the preservation of local and regional food security; and

**Whereas**, a key mission of both the County and the District is to support and preserve lands for diverse, sustainable, and productive agriculture to safeguard the county's rural character, capacity for food production, and the critical connections necessary for thriving farms, dairies, and ranches; and

**Whereas**, Sonoma County agriculture remains a major economic driver and source of regional identity, with annual crop values approaching \$1 billion according to the 2023 and 2024 Sonoma County Crop Reports, representing 18% the County's total economy (Bureau of Economic Analysis and Federal Reserve data, 2024); and

**Whereas**, the County's broader agricultural and working lands economy supports approximately 33,796 jobs, 1,930 businesses, and more than \$10 billion in annual economic activity through production, processing, tourism, distribution, and related industries (University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, *California Working Landscapes*, 2025). The wine industry alone accounts for nearly 30% of all agricultural jobs (Sonoma County Quarterly Economic Outlook, Q4 2025, Economic Development Collaborative (Economic Outlook)); and

**Whereas**, significant vineyard removals, declining grape values, and ongoing market instability are creating uncertainty for long-term agricultural investment and land use decisions across Sonoma County; and

**Whereas**, the 2024 Sonoma County Crop Report reported a 9.3% decrease in value from 2023 for the gross production values of all agricultural products. For winegrapes, both tonnage harvested and total winegrape value decreased over 12% compared to 2023. Further, winegrape prices are expected to drop another 7% due to oversupply and market pressures, and about 30% of the County's winegrapes are projected to go uncontracted, left on the vine, or sold at steep discounts (Economic Outlook); and

**Whereas**, vineyard acreage has been reduced by 2,711 acres in one year between October 2024 and August 2025 (California Association of Winegrape Growers study, 2025), and over the same period the county has issued replant permits for over 5,000 acres of vineyard agriculture authorizing vineyard removal without guaranteed replanting; and

**Whereas**, livestock agriculture—including ranching and dairying—plays an important role in the County's agricultural economy, ecological management, food systems, and rural heritage, and it is critical that regulatory approaches to this industry involve recognition its broader value and balanced consideration of agricultural viability; and

**Whereas**, the County has experienced continued contraction in the dairy sector, including the loss of 14 dairies between 2018 and 2026 (California Department of Food and Agriculture, 2026), reflecting broader economic pressures facing livestock agriculture statewide; and

**Whereas**, working lands including farms, ranches, grazing lands, and managed open spaces provide significant public benefits through wildfire risk reduction, carbon sequestration, habitat stewardship, watershed protection, groundwater recharge, and the preservation of Sonoma County's rural landscapes; and

**Whereas**, agricultural diversification, including visitor-serving uses compatible with agriculture, agritourism, farm stays, farm stands, educational events, and value-added enterprises, can strengthen farm resilience, preserve working lands, and help sustain family agricultural operations during periods of economic stress; and

**Whereas**, permitting pathways for agricultural uses and associated visitor-serving uses should be efficient, transparent, and proportional to the scale of the proposed uses, so as not to create unnecessary barriers to innovation, adaptation, and economic survival for agricultural producers; and

**Whereas**, strengthening connections between the public, local agriculture, and applied research is vital to improving agricultural literacy amongst residents, policymakers, and visitors, and to fostering informed public understanding of food production, land stewardship, the realities of farming and ranching, and agriculture's central role in the County's economy, heritage, and future; and

**Whereas**, partnerships among agricultural producers, educational institutions, conservation organizations, industry groups, and public agencies support innovation, workforce development, applied research, and climate-resilient agricultural practices through the County; and

**Whereas**, strengthening public appreciation of agriculture can promote constructive

dialogue, reduce conflict over agricultural practices, and support policies that sustain working lands for future generations; and

**Whereas**, preserving a resilient agricultural sector advances broader County and District goals related to economic sustainability, climate adaptation, open space preservation, food security, and rural community vitality.

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved** that the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Directors hereby reaffirm their recognition of agriculture as critical infrastructure essential to the County's prosperity, resilience, and identity, and declare that urgent action is needed to support and maintain its essential role in the County; and

**Be It Further Resolved** that:

1. The Board of Supervisors directs applicable County departments, in coordination with relevant stakeholders and the broader to community, to evaluate and develop policies for Board consideration as directed by the Workplan.
2. The Board of Directors directs the General Manager of the District to partner with the County to implement specific components of the Workplan related to land conservation and access.
3. The Board of Supervisors and the Board of Directors find approval of this Resolution and the Workplan is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(b) and (c), because adopting the Resolution and Workplan will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and because they do not constitute a project as defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15378, as there is no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly. The Resolution and Workplan set priorities and direct staff to consider and prepare policy options for

consideration at a later date, they do not change any current regulations or allowable development or activities, and do not commit the Board of Supervisors or the Board of Directors to any future course of action. Future approvals, if any, will conform to CEQA as applicable.

**Supervisors/Directors:**

Rabbitt:            Coursey:            Gore:            Hopkins:            Hermosillo:

Ayes:            Noes:            Absent:            Abstain:

**So Ordered.**