
State Water Resources Control Board

August 27, 2026

Mr. Derik Michaelson
Sonoma County
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

COMMENT LETTER ON THE SONOMA COUNTY (LEAD AGENCY), INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT) FOR THE UPE19-0072 – AZARI VINEYARDS TASTING ROOM (PROJECT); STATE CLEARINGHOUSE # 2025050378

Dear Mr. Derik Michaelson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Environmental Document for the proposed Project. The State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (State Water Board, DDW) is responsible for regulating public water systems and issuing water supply permits pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act. This Project is within the jurisdiction of the State Water Board, DDW Sonoma District.

A public water system, as defined in the California Health and Safety Code (Health & Saf. Code) § 116275 subd. [h], is “a system for the provision of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances that has 15 or more service connections or regularly serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year.” If a new public water system will be formed by the Project, an application must be submitted, and a permit must be obtained from the DDW Sonoma District before water can be provided for human consumption. “Human consumption” means the use of water for drinking, bathing or showering, hand washing, oral hygiene, or cooking, including, but not limited to, preparing food and washing dishes.” Health & Saf. Code § 116275 subd. [e].

Note, Health & Saf. Code § 116527 subd. (b) requires that any person submitting a permit application for a proposed new public water system must first submit a technical report to the Sonoma District at least six months before initiating construction of any drinking water-related improvements. The technical report must include an examination of the possibility of connecting to or being annexed by an existing adjacent community water system. Please see the attached What is a Public Water System flyer.

The State Water Board, DDW, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has the following comments on the Environmental Document:

- The Environmental Document indicates that the Project will construct a new tasting facility that will serve up to 20 visitors, Thursday-Sunday (PDF page 1). The Project will also host seven annual winery events for up to 125 guests (PDF page 1). Two employees will work at the tasting facility, and 11 event staff will work at the winery events (PDF page 6). Food may be warmed in the food preparation area (PDF page 14), and restrooms will be provided in the tasting room facility (PDF page 6). Two 5,000-gallon water storage tanks and one well will supply water to the Project (PDF page 8). This would meet the definition of a public water system. If no nearby municipal water systems agree to serve the Project, the applicant must submit a technical report to DDW Sonoma District (Health and Saf. Code § 116527 subd. [b]) and apply to the DDW Sonoma District for a water supply permit.
- If a new public water system will be created by the Project, the State Water Resources Control Board is a CEQA responsible agency for the domestic water supply permit. Please consider:
 - Whether the water meets domestic water quality regulations (Ca. Code Regs. tit. 22, chapter 15) and if the existing well meets the Waterworks Standards (Ca. Code Regs. tit. 22, chapter 16).
 - The new and existing domestic water system components and impacts associated with construction and operation of the system, including:
 - The amount of fire flow storage needed and if it will be provided as part of the public water system.
 - All sources that will be connected to the public water system.
 - Will water treatment be needed? If so, consider what type of treatment and infrastructure.
 - Also consider the qualified staff required to operate the system.
 - Cal. Code Regs. § 64572 and Cal. Code Regs. § 64560 requires separation of drinking water service lines and domestic supply wells from sources of potential contamination such as septic systems. The Project site proposes a nonstandard septic system (PDF page 53). Please discuss how the well and pipelines will be protected from contamination and indicate if the regulations can be met or if a waiver or alternative to Waterworks Standards (Cal. Code Regs. § 64551.100) will be needed. If an alternative is needed, the water system will need to submit an application to the DDW Sonoma District office.
 - If there are sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonable foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.
 - Please attach or provide a link to the EBA Engineering, Inc. Hydrogeologic Report dated February 22, 2022. Documents incorporated by reference must be made publicly available (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14., § 15150 [b]).

- Please consider the amount of water that was determined to be available, not just the Project demand, when considering if the Project will decrease groundwater supplies, interfere substantially with recharge, and have sufficient water supplies available during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.

Once the Environmental Document is adopted, please forward the following items in support of new water system's permit application to the State Water Board, DDW Sonoma District Office at ddwsantarosa@waterboards.ca.gov:

- The Environmental Document, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP), comment letters received, and the lead agency responses as appropriate.
- The Resolution or Board Minutes adopting the Environmental Document, MMRP, and approving the Project; and
- The Notice of Determination filed at the County Clerk's Office and the State Clearinghouse.

Please contact Lori Schmitz of the State Water Board at (916) 449-5285 or Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov, for questions regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,

**Lori
Schmitz**

Digitally signed by
Lori Schmitz
Date: 2026.08.27
13:58:32 -07'00'

Lori Schmitz
Environmental Scientist
Division of Financial Assistance
Special Project Review Unit
1001 I Street, 16th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc:

State Clearinghouse

Misha Anderson
District Engineer
Sonoma District