

---

## State Water Resources Control Board

October 8, 2026

Jen Chard  
County of Sonoma  
2550 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA, 95403

COMMENT LETTER ON THE COUNTY OF SONOMA (LEAD AGENCY), INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT) FOR THE KOSTA BROWNE WINERY AND TASTING ROOM (PROJECT); STATE CLEARINGHOUSE # 2026090570

Dear Ms. Chard:

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.”

Please see the attached [What is a Public Water System flyer](#).

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 Preliminary Technical Report to the DDW 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.

See the [Permits for Water Systems](#) webpage for more information including Preliminary Technical Report Guidance.

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

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | ERIC OPPENHEIMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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).

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

- The Project proposes developing a new winery which would host tastings, vineyard tours, and agricultural and industrial events (PDF pp. 4 and 60). Between 24 and 43 employees would also be employed, depending on the season (PDF p. 50). Water from the Town of Windsor is the preferred source for potable demand of the winery (PDF p. 44). However, if the Town of Windsor is unable to serve the project, the Project will include a new public water system served by an existing groundwater well. If the proposed Project is served by the existing well, the water system may meet the definition of a public water system. If this is the case and 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.
- In the Environmental Document please consider the infrastructure needed to extend domestic water service from the Town of Windsor to the Project site and the associated environmental impacts of the installation and operation of that infrastructure.
- If a new public water system will be created by the Project, please consider:
  - The new and existing system components, including water storage, treatment, and fire flow in addition to the existing well.
    - When considering treatment consider any hazardous waste that may be produced and/or waste discharges.
    - When considering fire flow, consider the capacity needed for storage if it will be part of the public water system.
    - Also, discuss the staff required to operate the public water system.
  - If the water meets domestic water quality regulations (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 22, chapter 15) and if the well meets the Waterworks Standards (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 22, chapter 16).
  - Note, drinking water service lines and domestic supply wells shall be separated from sources of potential contamination (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 22, §§ 64572, 64560), such as septic, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure.
    - Consider if the regulations can be met or if a waiver or alternative to Waterworks Standards (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 22, § 64551.100) will be needed. If an alternative is needed, the water system will need to apply to the DDW Sonoma District office.
  - If a water pipeline will need to be installed from the adjacent well property to the winery property. If so, please consider the environmental impacts of

the installation. Include a map or consider the location within the Project area, as applicable.

- That documents incorporated by reference must be made publicly available (Cal. Code Regs. § 15150 [b]). Please provide the Biological Assessment, Water / Wastewater System attachment, and Groundwater Resource Impact Assessment attachment.

Once the Environmental Document is adopted, please forward the following items in support of the new water system's permit application to the State Water Board, DDW Sonoma District Office at [ddwsantarosa@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto: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](mailto:Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov), for questions regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,

**Lori Schmitz**  Digitally signed by  
Lori Schmitz  
Date: 2026.10.08  
07:49:06 -07'00'

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

Cc:

State Clearinghouse

Misha Anderson  
District Engineer  
Sonoma District