



June 30, 2011

To Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board

**Comment Letter – Proposed Russian River Frost Regulation**

The Sonoma County Winegrape Commission represents over 1500 vineyard owners in Sonoma County. Approximately 40% of those growers have fewer than 20 acres and 80% have fewer than 100 acres. The costs associated with this proposed regulation will be a tremendous burden to these growers.

Our board concurs with the recommendations made by the Russian River Watershed Conservation Council. The local frost ordinance in Sonoma County will generate data which are sadly lacking today. Those data can be used to better inform an regulation you may develop. A phased development of a state regulation is needed.

The inclusion of groundwater is of major concern and the requirement to prove no hydraulic connection to a stream again adds financial burden to growers, most of whom likely have no impact on stream flows.

Given the limited incidents of fish strandings that have been documented, the proposed regulation with its very broad reach is excessive. The fact that in 2011 the Russian River watershed had the largest Coho salmon return in years (3 years after the 2008 stranding events) reinforces this conclusion.

Sonoma County growers have made significant personal investments to accumulate data that are needed to understand if and where there may be conflicts with frost protection and salmonid stranding. Let the Sonoma County frost ordinance inform your board before implementing the regulation as currently proposed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Frey". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Nick Frey  
President