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Legislation Introduced to Strengthen “American” Wine Labeling ***AB 1585 requires wine labeled “American” to be made from 100% U.S.-grown grapes***

SACRAMENTO, January 14, 2026 – Today, Assemblymembers Damon Connolly (D-San Rafael) and Central Valley Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom introduced legislation to require that wine labeled as “American” be made from 100 percent American-grown winegrapes. Current federal standards allow up to 25 percent of wine labeled “American” to be sourced from imported bulk wine produced outside the United States.

Co-sponsored by the California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG) and Family Winemakers of California, AB 1585, builds on California’s long-standing approach to truth in labeling by ensuring that country-of-origin claims accurately reflect where winegrapes are actually grown.

Author Statements

“The heart of America’s wine industry is right here. California wines and grapes are known all over the world for their unique flavors and high quality, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our local winegrape growers and winemakers,” **said Assemblymember Damon Connolly (D-San Rafael)**. “The quality of America’s wine is undermined by labeling wine as ‘American’ but putting cheap imported bulk wine in the bottle. Folks deserve honesty and transparency when shopping for their preferred wine. AB 1585 will give consumers confidence that they are getting what they paid for.”

“California produces 85% of all US wine with many of the California winegrapes coming from the heart of the Central Valley. San Joaquin County has a long and rich history in agriculture from Tokay grapes long ago to winegrapes today,” **said Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom (D-Tracy)**. “AB 1585 is about ensuring there is truth in labeling of a product that is important to California. It is a commonsense measure that says if you label your wine “American” it better be 100% American.”

Sponsor Statements

“We thank Ms. Ransom and Mr. Connolly for their leadership in authoring AB 1585. Wine starts in the vineyard. When a bottle is labeled ‘American,’ consumers should be able to trust that the grapes were grown in the United States,” **said Natalie Collins, President of the California Association of Winegrape Growers**. “California already applies a 100 percent standard for wines labeled ‘California,’ and extending that clarity to the ‘American’ designation is a logical, consumer-focused step.”

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“Independent, family-owned wineries are the backbone of the American wine community - especially here in California. When consumers purchase a bottle labeled ‘American wine,’ they expect it to support local growers, local jobs, and small businesses,” **said GinaLisa Tamayo, Chair of Family Winemakers of California.** “This legislation helps protect that trust and ensures wine labels accurately reflect the source of the grapes. We appreciate Mr. Connolly and Ms. Ransom for taking on this important issue.”

What AB 1585 does:

- Requires that wine labeled as “American” be made from 100 percent American-grown winegrapes, aligning the “American” designation with existing requirements that wines labeled as “California” be made from 100 percent California-grown grapes.

AB 1585 does not:

- Prohibit or restrict wine imports
- Restrict blending within California, across California regions, or within other states
- Change AVA, county, or state blending rules
- Regulate prices, contracts, or winery sourcing decisions

Industry Support

“For decades, the wine and grape industry has anchored its messaging around where grapes are grown, because consumers care deeply about origin and authenticity,” **said Stuart Spencer, Executive Director of the Lodi Winegrape Commission.** “Aligning labels with what people believe they are buying and ensuring transparency in the marketplace are fundamental to maintaining consumer trust.”

“Wine is an agricultural product first,” **said Joel Peterson Executive Director of Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance.** “If we believe that wine is grown in the vineyard, then the ‘American’ label should reflect the vineyards where those grapes were actually farmed. AB 1585 simply aligns the label with the land.”

“California has a strong heritage of multi-generational growers and wine producers that take great pride in labeling their wines to identify the origin that craft world class wines,” **said Taylor Serres Murnig, President of Sonoma Alliance for Vineyards and Environment.** “It is only fair that the consumer can have the same confidence in the origin of wine labeled as “American.”

Background:

A foundational philosophy in the wine industry is “***We grow wine.***” Wine begins in the vineyard, where grape-growing decisions shape a wine’s character, quality, and identity long before it reaches a bottle.

Wine labels exist to provide consumers with accurate information about what they are purchasing, including grape variety, vintage year, and geographic origin. Country-of-origin designations, in particular, help consumers understand where the grapes used to make a wine were grown and allow them to make informed purchasing decisions.

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Today, consumers are purchasing wine labeled as “American” with the reasonable expectation that the grapes used to make that wine were grown in the United States. Given that California produces more than 80 percent of all U.S. wine, that expectation is deeply ingrained.

AB 1585 reinforces that understanding while providing winemakers with adequate transition time. The bill applies only to wine that is bottled on or after July 1, 2027.

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About California Association of Winegrape Growers: CAWG is a statewide nonprofit trade association advocating for California's winegrape growers to ensure the sustainability of the winegrape industry. CAWG promotes the industry's long-term success by advancing the adoption of sound public policies and fostering awareness and understanding of winegrape growers' contributions to the economy, environment, and California communities. Learn more at cawg.org.

About Family Winemakers of California: Founded in 1990, Family Winemakers of California is a statewide organization representing the interests of family-owned and independent wineries. With a mission rooted in advocacy, access, and education, FWC continues to champion the needs of independent producers who are the backbone of California's wine economy. Learn more at familywinemakers.us

About Assemblymember Damon Connolly: Represents California's 12th Assembly District, which encompasses all of Marin County and a large portion of Sonoma County.

About Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom: Represents California's 13th Assembly District, which encompasses a large portion of San Joaquin County.

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