



## Santa Barbara Vintners Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 | 10am – 12pm

Cambria Estate Winery

### MEETING NOTES

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Pierre LaBarge, Steven Gerbac, Dan Glaeser (Zoom), Jason Djang (Zoom), Keith Saarloos, Kristina Caruso, AJ Fairbanks, Denise Shurtleff, Mike Testa, Karen Steinwachs

**NOT IN ATTENDANCE:** John H. Haan, Jr., Andrew Murray, Chase Carhartt, Brooke Christian, Kevin Gleason

---

#### Item 1: Call to Order

- Meeting called to order (10:04am)

#### Item 2: Approve Minutes

- Approve November 2025 Meeting Minutes
  - Motion: AJ
  - Second: Denise
  - Unanimous approval
- Approve December 2025 Meeting Minutes
  - Motion: Kristina
  - Second: Keith
  - Unanimous approval

#### Item 3: Public Comment

- No public comment, online or in person

#### Item 4: CEO Update

- Financial Year Realignment
  - To line up fiscal year with BID, April to April will now be our format
  - Budget will be redone and shared with the board
- BID funds can be used to repay any costs to establish the BID (within five years)
  - Will work with new bookkeepers to determine how much the organization might repay itself each year

#### Item 5: Discussion: Issue #1:

- How to include trade activities in the BID: Trade activities are an integral part of the business development work of the association.
  - Alison & AJ frame the conversation: Determine how trade/industry/wholesale activities drive DTC; AJ does not think you can even have DTC without trade efforts, it is integral to

the success of the entire industry. Denise from Cambria agrees that trade activities are probably driving a significant portion or in person visits.

- Alison provides examples of trade activities that support the reputation of the SB wine region; having a good reputation state-wide is also important to how other regions perceive us. Outside of our County, we garner a lot of respect and recognition from other regions, as well as the Wine Institute. Attending the trade conferences solidifies that respect: WiVi, Central Coast Insights, California Wine Institute's Regional Leaders meeting
  - Other Wine BID funded regions consider these events Business Development.
- Mission SB: Wholesale focus, but leads to DTC sales since wines are purchased and consumed, which builds the relationship with the region. Eventually, a portion of those who discover the wines outside of the region come visit.
  - Additionally, the wines are sold in restaurant & wine shop settings, further reaching future consumers.
  - It is speculated that very few visitors come to our wine region without having first learned of our wines or tasted them outside of our region.
  - This year, Mission SB will be subsidized by non-BID dollars and funded by participation fees; some BID dollars will pay for staff time.
- Less than 10% of budget will apply to trade ventures
- Keith: Believes his sales are driven almost exclusively by his social media presence and location within LO. The question is raised, where did the consumers who are walking into his tasting room first learn about SBC wines, if not from him?
- Measuring how each marketing and outreach effort leads to direct sales is challenging. Similar to advertising, it would be helpful to have an idea of who much the efforts to educate the industry – somms, distributors, buyers, etc. – leads to DTC sales.
  - Alison proposes a survey to wineries to determine % of wholesale in SBC and get the vintners' perspective on how it leads to DTC sales
  - Membership Committee will work with Alison to build survey
- Conclusion:
  - A survey to assess winery wholesale activity will be sent, which is useful information to have for various reasons.
  - BID dollars may be spent on trade activities that further the reputation of the region and relationship of consumers to the region.
  - The board will not weigh in on each decision regarding a trade activity.

#### Issue #2:

- AB1585 (American Wine) – CAWG & Family Winemakers have introduced a bill to support all “American” labeled wines include 100% USA grapes. California Wine Institute has concerns this will limit some producers and that the wine industry fluctuates. It has concerns that if there are not enough grapes at some point, producers will want to be able to blend in other designations. SBV has been asked by CAWG to write a letter of support. Given the unusual positioning of the Wine Institute and CAWG being in opposition, staff is bringing this issue to the Board for consideration before they sign a letter.
- Paso Robles & Lodi are in support, with Lodi notably producing the most grapes of the regions
- If passed, only USA grapes could be included in American Labeled bottles
  - No wine from international sites could be included
  - A concern is the new law could increase the price of American labeled wines
  - International bulk wine is currently blended into American wine

- Note that all AVAs and Counties are currently allowed to blend in a certain percentage of grapes that are not from the Appellation or County. CA labeled wines currently require 100% CA grapes.
- The majority of producers at the table hope that if this law goes into effect, AVAs and Counties will actually follow suit and eventually all labels will be “accurate” and without hidden blends.
- The Board agrees that this establishes clarity for consumers.
- **ACTION**: Motion to send a letter of support to CAWG & Family Winemakers on AB1585 (American Wine) bill
  - Motion: Keith
  - Second: Mike
  - Unanimous approval
- Board asks Alison to call California Wine Institute out of courtesy to provide update before the letter is sent.

Item 6: Meeting Adjourned

- Meeting adjourned at 11:55am