

March 13th, 2018

Eagle Foothills Grape Growers Association

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Hello Laura,

This letter is intended to show the support of the Eagle Foothills Grape Growers Association for the expansion of the research of Dr. David E. Wilkins, Department of Geosciences, BSU. Especially in regards to him placing new research weather stations and soil moisture sensors at vineyard sites in the Eagle Foothills AVA near Eagle, Idaho. The Eagle Foothills Grape Growers Association (EFGGA) is a self directed group of growers and parties interested in the promotion of wine grape growing in the newly designated Eagle Foothills American Viticulture Area (Eagle Foothills AVA). Although the growers in the area all know the challenges and trends associated with their personal vineyard sites, and many of their neighbors' sites as well, we are excited for the prospect of having a database where weather data and soil moisture data can be stored and used for future planning and to spot trends we may have missed in our more anecdotal "polls."

Dr. Wilkins worked and continues to work hard on the Sunnyslope weather stations and soil moisture probes that help that region of the Snake River Valley American Viticulture Area to collect data about weather patterns and trends as well as help the growers of the region make management decisions about their crops. The Sunnyslope weather and soil moisture data collected thus far has been used to make decisions from spray plans to water timing and so many other day-to-day decisions for growers. The growers in our sub-AVA, generally rely on their own record keeping as well as the biggest grower in the area, Three Horse Ranch Vineyards, as a resource for making those same decisions. The variation between sites can be great within our small Eagle Foothills AVA, so having data from different sites, especially at different altitudes and on different aspects of slope, will be invaluable for new and seasoned growers to make decisions for vineyard management practices.

Idaho has begun to be recognized as a world class site for growing grapes and making wine, therefore collecting data via weather stations and moisture sensors will aid the Eagle Foothills AVA in enhancing current grape/wine quality and to predict optimal locations for future vineyard plantings.

We sincerely hope that Dr. Wilkins receives the Specialty Crop Block Grant that he is applying for, so that we have the opportunity to work with him and collect scientific data about our own wine grape growing region. It will help us to understand how to address some of the

issues our growers face and hopefully attract more growers to the area. The more data we can collect the easier it will be to promote the amazing growing conditions we have and to plan for managing the current vineyards in operation. If you have any additional questions about our organization, or suggestions of how we can help to promote the research Dr. Wilkins has conducted and will continue to direct, as well as help him attain this Specialty Crop Block Grant, we would love to hear your suggestions, and share more about our little wine region with you. Here's to hoping we will be able to give you a tour of the region in person, sometime soon!

Sincerely Hopeful for Dr. Wilkins and the Future of the Eagle Foothills AVA,

Hailey Minder  
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