

Long Range Planning <longrangeplanning@co.yakima.wa.us>

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To: Olivia Story <olivia.story@co.yakima.wa.us>

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**From:** Eduardo Oliveira <eduardo@freehandcellars.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 3:55 PM

**To:** Lisa Freund <lisa.freund@co.yakima.wa.us>; Long Range Planning <longrangeplanning@co.yakima.wa.us>; Amanda McKinney <amanda.mckinney@co.yakima.wa.us>; Ron Anderson <Ron.Anderson@co.yakima.wa.us>; LaDon Linde <ladon.linde@co.yakima.wa.us>

**Cc:** Tyra Bleek <tyra@freehandcellars.com>; James DeSarno <james@freehandcellars.com>

**Subject:** Feedback on RN2019-00010 -- Agritourism [Freehand Cellars]

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As a winery owner who loves the Valley and wants to see it flourish economically and in recognition as a beautiful destination, I would appreciate your serious consideration to my feedback of the current proposed modifications to the code.

**It should be a stated goal for the Yakima County Planning Commission to encourage and support agritourism.** The Yakima Valley, based on its location, weather, scenery, and existing agricultural production is very well suited to define its image as an agritourism destination within the state. Leavenworth attracts tourists as the Bavarian town, Chelan as the Lake destination. Yakima Valley is the natural Wine/Beer/Orchard county. People crave to reconnect with nature, in orchard or agricultural settings. This type of tourism can bring exciting businesses to the Valley and create enjoyment, pride, and economic development.

**The blanket reduction of allowed overnight units from 12 to 6.** It does not seem necessary to establish this reduction and yet it impacts the ability to develop small tourism destinations in the valley. Out of all changes, this is the most concerning.

**Locations should be able to obtain long-term permits for events with more than 100 guests,** without the need to reapply every time since the evaluation of the venue is the most important part, and that does not need to be done each time. This provides greater certainty to businesses when signing contracts for the events, and alleviates administrative burden for both the business and the County.

**Changes should take effect only in 2023.** The implementation of these changes, which I presume will involve a permitting process and additional administrative work for the existing wineries, should not be done during a time that everyone is still trying to recover from the COVID hardship and frequent changes to health regulations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eduardo Oliveira

**Freehand Cellars, Owner**