

# Washington Sustainable. *The Future of Washington Wine.*

The demand for sustainable products is high: from consumers, trade, and media. Sustainability will help propel the Washington Wine brand, and ultimately sell more wine, protecting the future of our industry.

It is imperative for Washington Wine that we take collective steps now to incorporate and celebrate sustainable practices, to ensure healthy, productive vineyards and wineries for generations to come, and protect the health and safety of all industry members.

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## WHAT

A **Washington Sustainable** certification program. But we won't be building it from scratch—we're already 80% there! The current Vinewise®\Winerywise™ program was developed for, by, and of the industry spanning 20 years, and was intentionally crafted to be scalable for certification.



## WHO

You. Every licensed Washington winery as well as all vineyards. Industry members from across the state have stepped up to fund the start-up costs, and now we are asking for everybody's participation.

## HOW

An industry roundtable made up of 40+ Washington growers, vintners, and marketing professionals has approved a plan to build this program. It will be guided by the industry, from bottom to top.

## WHEN

The goal is to roll out the pilot program in 2021, and have the full program up and running in 2022. We will start with vineyard certification, with an eye on adding winery certification soon after.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

The cost at this point is estimated to be \$6-\$10 an acre based on level of participation estimates, similar to existing programs. See full breakdown in the FAQ document.



# Washington Sustainable: Background & FAQ

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

After more than a year of thoughtful discussion, research, and review of proposals, the Washington wine industry determined its readiness to develop a statewide wine grape sustainability certification program. Discussions acknowledged that the wine industry, and the marketplace, is rapidly changing. An industry-based sustainability roundtable was formed in 2019 to discuss interest in and options for adding a certification component to the current sustainability platform.

## WHO IS ON THE SUSTAINABILITY ROUNDTABLE?

40+ Washington growers, vintners, and marketing professionals that represent small to large wineries, small to large growers, from various geographic regions within Washington.

## BUT AREN'T WE ALREADY SUSTAINABLE?

Yes and no. While it is clear to us that Washington wine is sustainable by nature—it's at the heart of everything we do—the marketplace demands credibility in claims of sustainability. We do not have a certification component to our current sustainability program Vinewise®/Winerywise™. This addition bolsters Washington wine by making a bold statement to the global wine industry and consumers that Washington is indeed committed to sustainable agriculture.

## WHY CREATE A NEW PROGRAM?

We won't be building a certified sustainable wine grape program from scratch—we are already 80% there. The current program was developed for, by, and of the industry over 20 years and was intentionally crafted to be scalable for certification. Adding certification would build on the current sustainability program and bring ROI on the \$1 million invested to build the current sustainability program.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Bottom line—a certified label will help sell more Washington wine and protect the Washington brand. A statewide “Washington-specific” sustainable wine grape certification program can bring a return-on-investment for the entire industry including:

- 1. Market differentiation.** Washington brand value increases and is globally recognized for future decades; better reception of Washington wine in marketplace, appealing to new consumer base.
- 2. Credibility.** Third-party certification accrediting Washington wine grape grower's sustainability efforts; credibly communicate to consumers, trade, and peers; stamp of approval on Washington wine bottles; brings transparency to growing and production processes; investment in assurance.
- 3. Authenticity.** This is grassroots; industry built the current sustainability program based on national and regional input for the purpose of education; adding certification to current program would also be built by, of, and for the Washington wine industry; drives continuous improvement.
- 4. Responsibility.** Ensures the well-being of Washington's vineyards, wineries, people, planet, and prosperity for the long-term.

## IS THIS CERTIFYING WINE GRAPES ONLY?

The scope of the certification program would support labeling (wine bottle or other container) with a sustainability claim on finished product in the marketplace by developing a vineyard sustainability certification—benefiting the full industry. The goal would be to add winery certification in due time.



# Washington Sustainable: Background & FAQ

## WHO WILL RUN THIS PROGRAM?

Every industry group will play a critical role in building and maintaining this program:

- **Washington Wine Commission** will focus on guiding the branding and creation of a certified label, in addition to marketing the program.
- **Washington Winegrowers** will manage and facilitate program operations.
- **Washington Wine Industry Foundation** will process funds raised and seek additional funding through grants, industry, as needed.
- **Washington Wine Institute** will communicate industry commitment to sustainability with policymakers.

## WHAT IS THE LONG-TERM GOAL?

To better communicate our values in a cohesive way, and to better connect with customers to ultimately sell more Washington wine. As one industry person put it:

*"Consumers are increasingly wanting to know how the products they consume are made. They want clean products from socially responsible companies. We receive consumer emails and comments on social media asking if we use pesticides in our vineyards and what ingredients are in our wines. Social responsibility is no longer an option it is an expectation for consumers and even potential employees."*

## THIS ALL SOUNDS GREAT, BUT HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

An industry-vetted proposal to build a Washington State Wine grape Certification Program is ready. The estimated one-time cost to build the program is \$181,600, which has mostly already been secured thanks to widespread industry buy-in. This will develop and launch a pilot by harvest 2021. After launch, the program must be self-funded by the program users. This proposal offers the industry the following package:

<b>Standard development</b>	<b>Pilot program supervision</b>	<b>Stakeholder meetings</b>
<b>Industry outreach for input</b>	<b>Software upgrades to add certification components</b>	<b>Platform fee</b>
<b>Certifier/audit training</b>	<b>Staffing facilitation and operations</b>	

## WHAT IS THE BOTTOM-LINE COST FOR GROWERS?

Each grower will have to weigh benefits and cost to their business model. Industry members who currently participate in like programs from other states/regions have shared potential costs and while actual costs will be driven by industry needs, the range is estimated to be between \$6-10/acre.

## MORE QUESTIONS?

Reach out to Washington Winegrowers or the Washington State Wine Commission anytime:

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