



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Washington State Wine Commission Names New Research Program Manager

*Julie Tarara Ph.D. will manage state's V&E research program*

SEATTLE (November 3, 2025)—The Washington State Wine Commission (WSWC) has hired Julie Tarara Ph.D. as its new Research Program Manager. Tarara was selected by a committee made up of Washington Viticulture and Enology (V&E) research leaders.

“Julie brings a wealth of experience in research and agricultural projects, along with extensive technical skills,” said Kristina Kelley, Executive Director of the WSWC. “We know Washington’s V&E research program is in good hands moving into the future!”

Washington’s V&E research program is funded by all wine grape growers and wineries in the state through the WSWC. It is guided and driven by Washington wine industry, with research results accessible to all. In this role, Tarara will work to elevate the strategic importance of V&E research with key stakeholders, including winemakers, growers, researchers, students, media, research grantors, and government bodies. Working closely with the WSWC Research Committee and the Wine Research Advisory Committee, Tarara will play a crucial role in managing the industry’s research grant programs and disseminating outcomes to constituents. She replaces Melissa Hansen, who is retiring after 10 years at the WSWC.

“I am extremely excited to join the Wine Commission to advocate for rigorous research that will push the industry forward,” Tarara said. “I appreciate that I have Melissa Hansen’s big shoes to fill, and I look forward to the challenge of adding to the solid foundation that she has built over the past decade. It will be rewarding to rekindle relationships in both the industry and the research community in Washington and nationally that I have built over my career.”

Tarara started her career as a research scientist with USDA-Agricultural Research Service, studying plant–environment interactions in vineyards. Over the years, she’s collaborated with federal scientists, faculty from Washington State University and Oregon State University, and industry partners across Washington, Oregon, and California. She’s also played key roles in partnerships like the National Grape Research Alliance, and the Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research. Most recently, she was Senior Viticulturist with Results Partners, providing service to 36 clients across 42 vineyards with 44 grape varieties. Before that, she worked with Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, supporting vineyard operations, creating best practices for irrigation, fertilization, and pest control, and handling sustainability certification documentation.

#### About the Washington State Wine Commission:

The Washington State Wine Commission (WSWC) represents every licensed winery and wine grape grower in Washington State. Guided by an appointed board, the mission of the WSWC is to drive growth of Washington Wine through Marketing, Communications, and Viticulture & Enology Research. Funded almost entirely by the industry through assessments based on grape and wine sales, WSWC is a state government agency, established by the legislature in 1987. To learn more, visit [www.washingtonwine.org](http://www.washingtonwine.org).

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