



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Board of Supervisors

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Mark Luce
Chair

May 21, 2009

The Honorable Kevin de León
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0045

**Re: BUDGET CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF
WILLIAMSON ACT SUBVENTIONS - OPPOSE**

Dear Assembly Member de León:

While the Napa County Board of Supervisors understands the severe budget crisis the Legislature must grapple with, we ask that you protect the Williamson Act and oppose any cuts to the program as a cost-savings measure. We believe such cuts would be short-sighted and have severe impacts for the future of Napa County and the state of California.

Napa County today is a world-renown wine region and California's second biggest tourist attraction behind Disneyland. Visitors come to Napa because of the County's historical commitment to protecting its agricultural land and natural beauty from development. It didn't come easy. The local laws that needed to be passed to protect the region were the result of many bitterly fought battles and a lot of hard work by a number of highly dedicated and visionary public servants and private citizens. The forces to undermine this commitment are ever-present, and we must be ever-vigilant to defend any erosion of state or local agricultural land protections.

The state of California is a direct beneficiary of Napa County's commitment to agriculture as our region today is a successful generator of millions in state and County tax revenues. A major key to this success has been the state's Williamson Act subvention program, which passed in 1965. While the cost of this program may seem small, it represents the tipping point for many farmers to continue keeping their lands in agricultural production because their property taxes are kept at affordable rates. Without this program, the incentive to sell their lands to developers will eventually become overwhelming.

Brad Wagenknecht
District 1

Mark Luce
District 2

Diane Dillon
District 3

Bill Dodd
District 4

Keith Caldwell
District 5

In closing, I ask that you please protect the Williamson Act subvention program and help us preserve our heritage and culture for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Luce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Luce" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Luce, Chair
Napa County Board of Supervisors