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WineGB says the Budget leaves English and Welsh vineyards outside £10 million duty relief

The trade body said ministers backed brewers and cider makers but ignored proposed tax and tourism support for domestic wine producers

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WineGB, the trade body for the British wine industry, said on Monday, November 2, that the government's Autumn Budget failed to provide support for domestic wine producers and left English and Welsh vineyards outside a £10 million alcohol duty relief package aimed at British brewers and cider makers.

In comments published Monday, Vincent McGovern, WineGB's policy director, said the government had spoken at length about growth, investment and support for British business, but did not act when presented with what he described as practical and affordable measures for the UK wine sector. He called the outcome "deeply disappointing" and said the industry had asked for a fair deal, proportionate support and recognition of its current and potential economic contribution.

The group said one of its main objections was that the Budget did not “level the playing field” between wine and other drinks categories. According to WineGB, the £10 million duty relief announced for brewers and cider makers does not extend to UK wine producers and vineyards. McGovern said that decision leaves behind a sector that WineGB describes as one of Britain’s fastest-growing agricultural and manufacturing industries.

WineGB said it had put forward three main proposals ahead of the Budget. The first was a Wine Tourism Relief intended to encourage investment and visitor spending in rural areas. The second was what it called a fairer approach to wine duty, which it said would ease pressure on both producers and consumers. The third was reform of Small Producer Relief so that, in the group’s view, UK wine businesses would be treated more fairly under the tax system.

The organization argued that those measures would have allowed the government to make a meaningful difference for English and Welsh wine producers. McGovern said ministers now need to explain how broader promises on economic growth will be translated into concrete action for the domestic wine industry. He said WineGB was prepared to work with ministers, but added that the sector needs decisions rather than statements of intent.

The intervention adds to wider debate over how tax and rural development policy should apply across the drinks market. While beer and cider producers received targeted relief in the Budget, wine producers say the current framework still puts them at a disadvantage. For the beverage industry more broadly, the dispute matters because differences in duty treatment can affect margins, pricing and investment decisions across categories. If those differences persist, they could limit expansion by British wineries and preserve a tax gap between wine and competing drinks.

WineGB also linked its proposals to rural economic development, arguing that wine tourism could unlock more local spending and help support jobs beyond the vineyard and winery gate. English and Welsh wine production has grown in recent years, with vineyards increasingly tied to hospitality, tourism and regional food and drink businesses. The group’s position is that tax policy should reflect that wider role in rural

economies.

McGovern said English and Welsh wine had already established itself as a serious contributor to the UK economy and that government policy now needed to catch up. A government response was not included in the published report.