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Canada Renews Winery Aid With C$176.9 Million in Budget

The program extends support for vineyards hit by higher costs, weak markets and climate-driven losses, including in wildfire-prone British Columbia

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Canada’s federal Liberal government has set aside C$176.9 million over three years in the 2026 budget to renew the Wine Sector Support Program, extending aid for wineries in British Columbia and the rest of the country as they deal with higher costs, difficult market conditions, and climate-related damage.

The program began in 2022 and provides financial support to wineries facing pressures tied to climate change and natural disasters, including floods and wildfires. The new funding was welcomed on Monday, November 9, by B.C. Wine Growers, the provincial industry association, which said the extension should give businesses more certainty as they make long-term decisions.

Jeff Guignard, chief executive of B.C. Wine Growers, said the federal commitment would not solve every problem facing the sector, but he called it an important step at a time when many producers are still recovering and trying to keep investing. He said the funding should help wineries plan ahead and continue rebuilding, while supporting jobs linked to the industry across the province.

The industry’s concerns are not abstract. During the Bald Range wildfire near Summerland, many wine growers saw their operations disrupted. According to Guignard, much of the available water was redirected to firefighting efforts, leaving irrigation systems short of what they needed. Some crops also became overripe and could not be used.

Guignard said the support comes as wineries face the same high cost of living pressures affecting other Canadians, along with the added instability of agriculture and wine production. He said growers wait years for vines to mature and produce wine, but their regular expenses continue in the meantime, including rent or mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and other operating costs.

That makes the budget measure significant beyond the vineyard. For the broader beverage business, public support of this kind could help wineries maintain production, preserve investment plans, and recover faster from weather losses, easing some of the pressure on a sector that depends on long growing cycles and steady capital spending.

Guignard also argued that stronger local wine production has a wider economic effect in British Columbia. He said every dollar spent on a bottle of B.C. VQA wine returns five times as much to the provincial economy as a bottle of imported wine, because the grapes are grown locally and the work of farming and winemaking stays in the province.

The federal funding is aimed at wineries across Canada, but the response in British Columbia reflects how exposed the province’s producers have become to wildfire risk and other climate shocks. For growers there, the renewed program is expected to provide a measure of stability as they try to rebuild inventories, protect crops, and make new investments despite volatile conditions.