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California Winemakers Wary of Trump's Proposed Tariff Plan

Experts Say Tariffs May Not Benefit Domestic Wine Producers as Predicted

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California winemakers are expressing concerns over President-elect Donald Trump's proposed 10 to 20% tariff on all imported goods, including wines and winemaking supplies. Announced shortly after securing a second term, the tariff plan aims to reduce trade deficits and bolster domestic businesses. However, industry experts warn that these tariffs could have adverse effects on the wine sector by increasing costs across the supply chain.

Ben Aneff, head of the U.S. Wine Trade Alliance and managing partner at Tribeca Wine Merchants, explained that the economic burden would ripple through various levels of the industry. Importers would initially absorb the tariff costs, which would then be passed along to distributors, retailers, restaurants, and ultimately consumers. These added expenses could reduce demand for imported wines without guaranteeing significant gains for domestic producers, who also rely on imported supplies for winemaking.

In a separate development, Democrat Adam Gray secured a narrow victory in California's 13th Congressional District, unseating Republican John Duarte in the final House race decided this year. The farm belt district, spanning five counties, flipped back to Democratic control with Gray winning by fewer than 200 votes. Duarte previously captured the seat in 2022 by a slim margin of 564 votes. His loss underscores the competitive nature of this Democratic-leaning district, where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by roughly 11 points. With this result, Republicans hold 220 House seats to the Democrats' 215.

In an unrelated incident, Shenghua Wen, a California resident originally from China, has been charged with conspiring to ship weapons and ammunition to North Korea. Authorities revealed that Wen, 41, allegedly worked with North Korean officials to procure military goods intended for an attack on South Korea. He was arrested without incident at his home in Ontario, California, and faces federal charges for violating laws prohibiting such shipments. According to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles, Wen entered the U.S. on a student visa over a decade ago and had been acting under instructions from North Korean officials.