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Napa County Board Votes to End Winery Code Compliance Program After Eight Years

Wineries must now halt noncompliant operations and face stricter penalties as county shifts regulatory approach.

Thursday, March 12, 2026



Napa County’s winery code compliance program will officially end on April 30, following a unanimous vote by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday. The program, which began in 2018, was designed to help wineries correct use permit violations while continuing

their operations. Over the past eight years, 35 wineries have used the voluntary program to bring their businesses into compliance with both county and state regulations.

The compliance process often required wineries to address issues such as exceeding previously established limits on wine production, marketing, and visitor numbers. In many cases, the county raised these limits to reflect current business realities and allow for future growth. Wineries participating in the program also had to make infrastructure improvements to meet updated state requirements, including those related to groundwater use and road standards.

A total of 47 wineries expressed interest in joining the program before the March 2019 application deadline. Of those, three more are scheduled for hearings by the end of March 2026 to come into compliance, and one application is still pending. Eight applications were either withdrawn or abandoned, according to county officials.

With the program ending soon, any winery with an incomplete application will be required to stop noncompliant operations. Brian Bordona, Napa County’s planning, building and environmental services director, explained at Tuesday’s meeting that moving forward, any winery found out of compliance will need to return to compliant operations for a full year before the county will consider a permit modification. Bordona said this policy is intended to discourage future violations.

The Board of Supervisors also approved sending notifications about these changes to all winery use permit holders in the county. Supervisor Liz Alessio commented that the compliance program has been effective in addressing issues with wineries falling out of compliance. She encouraged the county to remain flexible as the wine industry continues to evolve.

Supervisor Anne Cottrell noted that while state regulations affecting wineries have changed over time, Napa County’s own winery rules did not change during the life of the program. She emphasized that applicants put significant effort into meeting new state requirements and highlighted the importance of ongoing communication and education about regulatory changes for local wineries.

The end of this program marks a shift in how Napa County will handle winery code compliance in the future. Wineries will now face stricter consequences if they fall out of compliance, reflecting a broader effort by local officials to balance industry growth with regulatory oversight.