



October 16, 2017

Media Update: Wildfires in Northern California

Our thoughts and prayers are with all of those who have been impacted by the fires.

Journalists may contact the Wine Institute's [communications team](#) for information and background on the California wine industry. Wine Institute offices in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. are working with legislators and regulators to ensure that all possible state and federal resources are made available.

Below is a brief update of the current situation:

STATUS:

- Steady progress is being made to bring the fires under control, evacuations are being lifted and cooler weather and rain are forecast this week.

WINERIES:

- Of the approximately 1,200 wineries in Mendocino, Napa and Sonoma counties, the regions most impacted, **it is reported that less than ten have been destroyed or heavily damaged.**
- Five vineyard properties totaling about 200 acres in Potter Valley area of Mendocino are reported damaged. Because many areas were evacuated, some winery owners do not have access to their properties to assess the status, so the situation remains fluid.
- **Mendocino, Napa and Sonoma, represent about 12 percent of overall California winegrape production combined.** California accounts for 85% of U.S. wine production and is the fourth leading wine producer in the world.

HARVEST:

- Due to heat in late August and early September **the majority (90% reported in Napa Valley and Sonoma County, 75% in Mendocino County) of the 2017 harvest was completed prior to the start of the fires.** Remaining on the vines are primarily late-ripening red grapes, mostly the tough-skinned Cabernet Sauvignon, which vintners believe can withstand smoke in the short term. It is

premature to discuss smoke taint on grapes remaining on vines. Vineyard owners with remaining grapes are picking when they can and will assess quality.

- **It's been reported that vineyards have not been burning and are helping to save structures near or surrounded by vineyards.** In previous fire incidents, vineyards have acted as firebreaks. Some vineyards have been damaged in areas where the speed and intensity of the fire were greatest.
- Restricted access to properties and power outages remain obstacles with wineries using back-up generators and available staff to complete fermentations and other tasks. Power is expected to be restored by late Monday (10/16) to all areas that are able to receive it, evacuations are being lifted and controlled access is being allowed in some areas. **Smoke is not an issue for wine that is fermenting or has already been bottled.**

ECONOMIC IMPACT:

- It is too early to have details about the economic impact on the affected regions. Fires have destroyed or damaged a reported 5,700 structures – mainly homes, and many belonging to people who work in the California wine industry – but loss and **damage to wineries and vineyards has not been widespread.**
- **Many wineries and vineyards in impacted regions are operating despite the challenging conditions to finish harvest and fermentations.** The wine communities in these regions will soon emerge stronger and more connected than ever. The vintners in Mendocino, Napa and Sonoma will make outstanding wines from the 2017 vintage, which enjoyed an excellent growing season.

Below is the most recent information available on the economic impact of California wine and grapes statewide and for Napa and Sonoma counties.

California: <http://www.wineinstitute.org/resources/pressroom/08042016>

Napa: https://napavintners.com/press/press_release_detail.asp?ID_News=3621116

Sonoma: <http://sonomawinegrape.org/press-release/new-economic-impact-data-indicates-sonoma-countys-winegrowers-and-winemakers>

Resources

Here is a brief [list of resources](#) and information for wineries impacted by the fires.

How to Help

Support, assistance, donations and fund-raising efforts have been initiated by wineries, regions and others far and wide. Please see this list of [ways to help](#).