

Dear Chair Liberty and Columbia River Gorge Commissioners,
Thank you for taking these comments for the Sept 8 Gorge Commission meeting. They are in relation to Agricultural Products and Processing.

I understand that at the last meeting, a motion adding cideries, breweries, distilleries, and other agricultural products to the provision for wineries was not approved. The Commission asked staff to provide alternate language that could allow some additional agricultural products to be processed on agricultural land in the National Scenic Area. While I appreciate cideries being added, I will reiterate my comments submitted for the Management Plan changes overall.

As noted and supported elsewhere in the Management Plan, agricultural uses are the foundation of the economy of the Gorge. Opportunities to add value to agricultural products is essential for maintaining family farms and diverse food production throughout the NSA. Current amendments proposed would reduce the ability for family businesses who have been working on this land for generations to think creatively about how to sustain their operations. These suggested changes are not in line with the values stated elsewhere in the Management Plan for supporting agriculture.

Allowing wineries but striking out, or not including, farm produce stands goes against the goal of supporting agriculture. While wine and wine sales are important, there are several similar products that would have similar impacts on the NSA and all should be treated the same. The language for allowed value-added agricultural uses should be stated in generic terms and not be specific to any single product or occupation. I encourage consideration of the language allowing "produce or product sales or tasting facilities in conjunction with a lawful production facility" rather than specifying only wineries and cideries.

Thank you again for considering my comments,
Jessica

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Jessica Metta
Executive Director
[Mid-Columbia Economic Development District](#)
802 Chenowith Loop Road
The Dalles, OR 97058
541-399-1033 cell
541-296-2266 x1001 office