



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING**  
**Notice of Exemption**

**PLN-1123**  
**3/22/2018**

**Project Title and No.: Thin Blue Wine / Minor Use Permit; N-DRC2023-00031 (ED24-071)**

**Project Location:**

5595 El Pomar Drive, Templeton, CA 93465  
 APN: 033-291-012

**Project Applicant/Phone No./Email:**

Michele and Dave Harrington  
 949-433-4706  
[michele@thinbluewinecellars.com](mailto:michele@thinbluewinecellars.com)

**Applicant Address (Street, City, State, Zip):**

1 Bearberry, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project**

A request by David and Michele Harrington for a phased Minor Use Permit to allow the phased development of a 2,000 square foot winery facility and tasting room with 3,016 square feet of outdoor use areas. Phase 1 will consist of an approximately 1,000 square-foot building to include a tasting room, barrel storage, production area, case good storage, and restroom; exterior use areas will include a 272 square-foot covered patio and 1,295 square-foot uncovered crush pad. Phase 2 will consist of a 2,000 square-foot building to include barrel storage, production area, and case good storage; the exterior use area will include a 1,449 square-foot crush pad. The project will result in the disturbance of approximately 2.96 acres with 2,195 cubic-yards of cut and 2,545 cubic-yards of fill on an approximately 28-acre parcel. The proposed project is within the Agriculture land use category and is located at 5595 El Pomar Drive, approximately 4 miles southeast of the City of Paso Robles. The site is located within the El Pomar-Estrella Sub-Area of the North County Planning Area.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** County of San Luis Obispo

**Exempt Status: (Check One)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ministerial {Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268}             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exemption. {Sec. 15303; Class: 3} |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Declared Emergency {Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a)}   | <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Exemption {Sec.____}                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Project {Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c)} | <input type="checkbox"/> General Rule Exemption. {Sec. 15061(b)(3)}               |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Not a Project _____                                      |

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

This project qualifies for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), which covers the construction and location of a limited number of small structures, including, per subsection (c), “[a] store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous materials, and not exceeding 2500 square feet in floor area...”

The project proposes a new winery facility that would be 2000 square feet in size and is a use similar to a store (wine retail) and restaurant (public tasting room). The winery would include a 272-square-foot covered patio, which is an accessory structure to the winery and is covered by subsection (e) of the exemption (accessory structures). The project’s site improvements, including road widening, extension of water lines, construction of a wastewater system, and extension of electrical service is covered by subsection (d) of the exemption. The proposed improvements are of a reasonable length to serve the proposed winery, as required by the exemption. The construction of a winery and associated ancillary uses / structures at this location is consistent with the general plan designation, and all applicable regulations. The project, as proposed, meets

all applicable community standards for development.

The project does not trigger any of the exceptions of the exemption, as follows:

- a) **Location.** The project site is not located in a designated, precisely mapped, or officially adopted area with environmental resources of hazardous or critical concern. The project site is not located within the County's mapped kit fox habitat area, is not within a US Fish and Wildlife Service or California Department of Fish and Wildlife area of mapped critical habitat, does not contain any recorded siting of special status species as identified on the California Natural Diversity Database (the nearest species siting is approximately 2 miles northeast), is not within a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Essential Habitat Connectivity area, does not contain known archaeological or paleontological sites, and is not located within an airport land use plan area. A phase 1 archaeological study was conducted by Padre Associates, dated March 2024, and concluded that a records search did not reveal any previously recorded resources within the Project site or a 0.25-mile search radius. Subsequently, a pedestrian survey of the Project site was completed on February 28, 2024, and no cultural resources were observed. Therefore, no proposed Project impacts will affect cultural resources and no further archaeological study, or monitoring, is warranted. In the event archaeological resources are unearthed or discovered during any construction activities, the Project would be subject to County Land Use Ordinance (LUO) Section 22.10.040.

The project site is located within the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (PRGWB), and the area of severe decline (spring well decline). Additionally, the winery facility would be located within a previously disturbed area of the project site that has historically been used for agricultural purposes. The crops that previously occupied the project area have been moved to an adjacent, and vacant, portion of the parcel and has received County approval via an agricultural offset (County Project File CON2022-00021), in compliance with County Code. Improvements to the driveway that are required for the project to adhere to County standards will remove three oak trees and impact another three oak trees; however, the Applicant has proposed as part of the project landscaping to replant removed oak trees at a 4:1 ratio, and impacted oak trees at a 2:1 ratio (18 new oak trees), consistent with County policy.

The PRGWB has been assigned a Level of Severity (LOS) III by the 2016-2018 Resource Management System Summary Report (most recent available report). The County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 2015-288 in 2015 to establish the Countywide Water Conservation Program (CWWCP) in response to the declining water levels in the PRGWB. A key strategy of the CWWCP is to ensure all new construction and new or expanded agriculture will offset its predicted water use by reducing existing water use on other properties within the same water basin. New development requiring a discretionary land use permit within the PRGWB is required to offset the project's net new water demand at a minimum 2:1 ratio (LUO Section 22.94.025). LUO Section 22.94.025 exempts agricultural processing uses (including outdoor and accessory use) from the offset requirement. The project's estimated water demand is between 0.37 acre-feet-per-year (AFY) and 0.6 AFY. Per County ordinance, the project is required to offset the non-agricultural water associated with the project's tasting room and non-advertised winemaker activities (0.01 – 0.05 AFY), and a condition of approval is included to install a weather station for improved irrigation efficiency.

- b) **Cumulative Impact.** There is no substantial evidence that the project would contribute to a significant cumulative impact due to successive projects of the same type in the same place over time.

- c) Significant Effect. There are no unusual circumstances that apply to the project site which may result in the project having a significant effect on the environment.
- d) Scenic Highways. There are no designated state scenic highways within the viewshed of the project site. The nearest designated scenic highway is State Route 1, along the coast. US 101 is an eligible state scenic highway, but is not designated, and is not visible from the project site.
- e) Hazardous Waste Sites. The project site is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code.
- f) Historical Resources. The project site does not contain any listed or eligible historical resources, and the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Mason Denning (mdenning@co.slo.ca.us)

(805) 781-1298

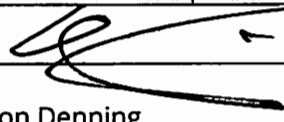
**Lead Agency Contact Person**

**Telephone**

**If filed by applicant:**

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding
- 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes  No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

11/18/2024

Name: Mason Denning

Title: Project Manager

On November 1, 2024, the project was Approved by:

- Board of Supervisors
- Subdivision Review Board
- Other Planning Dept.
- Planning Commission
- Planning Dept Hearing Officer
- Staff