There are currently seven commercial wineries on Whidbey Island. Lacking a clear definition, those wineries have been forced to conform to, and apply for, stated uses that are clumsy at best when trying to capture the activities that are accepted as “Standard and Reasonable” at wineries throughout Washington State. Inconsistencies within the Island County Code (ICC) present difficult to follow and contradictory content that does not encourage the establishment of financially significant Agritourism endeavors within Island County. In many cases, the intent of some of the code content was good, yet too vague, and consequently the interpretation over different administrations is spotty and unpredictable. Standalone wineries take many years to achieve profitability, wineries with substantial investment in the establishment of vineyards or orchards - even longer. Great care was taken in the drafting of this submittal. The goal was to produce a document that leveraged the concerns and experiences of most of the wineries within Island County to produce a logical, easy to follow code modification / expansion that would seamlessly integrate into the existing code while working to hold to all related standards where possible. To my knowledge, all wineries with commercially planted vineyards within Island County, provided valuable input and recommended changes to this document as it evolved. The attraction of wineries and distilleries with their inherent “Event” draw will, as part of a larger Agritourism effort, allow us to maintain our rural character while we work to become financially sustainable. The first two and a half pages of the attached document spell this out in detail.

Thank you,

Carl and Rita Comfort
Comfort Farm and Vineyard
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