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WASHINGTON WINEGROWERS ASK FOR CHANGES TO QUARANTINE AND CERTIFICATION

The Washington Winegrowers Association is asking the Washington State Department of Agriculture to change two administrative codes: one on grape certification and the other on pest quarantines.

The request stems from three years of work by a tristate work group to create a regional approach for grapevine virus certification to harmonize quarantines and regulatory programs for grapevine nursery stock certification in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

An informational session for winegrape growers, wineries and nurseries will be held Monday, February 11, starting at 1:00 in Vista Hall at SpringHill Suites in Kennewick. The meeting coincides with the first day of the Washington Winegrowers Annual Convention being held next door at Three Rivers Convention Center.

The regional work was funded by a USDA grant: "Harmonizing Protocols in the Northwest – A Pilot Project Driven by Stakeholders". Grape industry stakeholders in the Northwest took responsibility to drive development of a "harmonized" approach by focusing on state agency rule development and quarantine alignment in all three states. The final product will serve as a national blueprint for quarantine harmonization.

The informational session is to help stakeholders understand proposed changes to nursery certification programs and quarantines in Washington, Idaho, Oregon. The meeting will summarize the requested changes and proposed language to nursery certification rules at the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Attendees will be briefed on the quarantine restrictions and hear an update on grapevine growing regulations as well as the proposed changes in Oregon and in Idaho planned over the next year.

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The Washington Winegrowers Association serves as the synergistic leader and unifying voice – through advocacy and education – for growers, vintners, partners, and policymakers.

Note: Representatives of the media interested in covering the meeting should contact Katlyn Straub directly at katlyn@wawinegrowers.org to apply for a press pass.