

**Proposal for the Approval of a New Subdivision of the
Okanagan Valley Geographical Indication**

NARAMATA BENCH SUB-GI

23 April 2018

Prepared by the Sub-GI Committee, Naramata Bench

Introduction

This document is to request the recognition of a new Sub-Geographic Indicator (Sub-GI") within the geographical indication of the Okanagan Valley as per **section 29** of the *Wines of Marked Quality Regulation* ("the Regulation"), to be named **Naramata Bench** and delineated as per description and maps included in Appendix A: "Naramata Bench Sub-Geographic Indication, January 2018 Technical Description and Geographic Extent". It is further requested that **section 27(5)** of the Regulation be interpreted to include this sub-GI, in consideration of the long-standing business concerns located in the proposed sub-region.

The Regulation

Section 29(3) of the Regulation states:

"(3) The process to be developed under subsection (2) must take into account the following criteria:

- (a) a geographical indication or subdivision must represent an area that is geographically distinct and has clearly defined boundaries;*
- (b) grape production in a proposed geographical area or subdivision must have reached commercially viable levels;*
- (c) at least two thirds of practice standards certificate holders in a proposed geographical area or subdivision, who produce at least two thirds of the total production of wine made from grapes grown in that area or subdivision, must have voted, by ballot, in favour of the proposed geographical area or subdivision;*
 - (c.1) at least two thirds of registrants in a proposed geographical area or subdivision, who produce at least two thirds of the total grape production in that area or subdivision, must have voted, by ballot, in favour of the proposed geographical area or subdivision;*
- (d) appropriate consultations must have taken place within the region of the proposed geographical area or subdivision and there must not have been any credible objections that claim that the proposed geographical area or subdivision is not distinctive;*
- (e) Repealed. [B.C. Reg. 307/2016, s. 10(c).]"*

The Defined Area

Naramata Bench is roughly defined as the bench lands extending from Penticton Creek to Okanagan Mountain Park on the east coast of Okanagan Lake, and at time of this proposal includes 181 BCWA registered vineyards and 32 BCWA registered wineries. For specific delineation of this area see Appendix A: "Naramata Bench Sub-Geographic Indication, January 2018 Technical Description and Geographic Extent", prepared by Scott Smith M.Sc., P.Ag, Eterna Consulting, and Pat Bowen, PhD, Summerland Research and Development Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada.

Commercial Viability

The Naramata Bench has long been known for its agricultural production. The first orchards were planted in the early 1900's, when founder "*John Moore Robinson acquired the land, some 3500 acres, from the South Okanagan Land Company to develop it for sale into 10-acre fruit tree lots that would appeal to eastern farmers and British settlers.*" (discovernamamata.com/discover/history). These parcels were planted primarily with tree fruits and some table grapes.

In the late 1980's, vinifera varieties replaced table grapes, local and hybrid varieties, and some orchards, augmented by new plantings. Implementation of NAFTA stimulated this growth and precipitated the creation of a BC "farmgate" license, allowing growers to make wine to sell from their cellar door. Two of the first three such licenses were granted to Naramata Bench wineries, as their owners had been key players in convincing the BC Government of the need for such a license.

In 2003 the Naramata Bench Wineries Association (NBWA) was formed as a marketing organization promoting awareness of Naramata Bench wineries throughout BC and Alberta. This vibrant group became well known for "taking it on the road" with spring release trade/media and consumer events in Vancouver and Victoria, and occasionally Calgary and Edmonton, and has become the model for other such associations promoting BC's sub-regions. A voluntary association, the NBWA currently boasts membership of over 3/4ths of the Naramata Bench wineries and has also provided a strong social connection between wineries over the years. Other initiatives include a wine club--"Best of the Bench", and its renowned "Tailgate Party" which is an annual sell-out.

In 2014 an open group, Naramata Bench Wine Growers, was formed, offering a means of widely sharing information, challenges, needs etc., with other winemakers and grape growers on the Bench. They conduct post-harvest

debrief meetings, as well as occasional peer tastings, in an open forum, sharing experience and advice.

Wine media and professionals also recognize the Naramata Bench as an established premium wine growing area within the Okanagan Valley:

- Naramata Bench Worth Exploring, Anthony Gismondi, Vancouver Sun - <http://vancouversun.com/life/food/anthony-gismondi-naramata-bench-worth-exploring>
- Naramata Bench: 14 kilometers jammed with wineries, John Schreiner - <http://johnschreiner.blogspot.ca/2016/05/naramata-bench-14-kilometers-jammed.html>
- David Lawrason, Canadian wine journalist, educator <https://twitter.com/DavidLawrason/status/751396529148047362>

As required by **Section 29(3)(b)** the commercial viability is satisfied

Voting by Ballot

It is understood that the British Columbia Wine Authority ("BCWA") will conduct a vote by ballot of the practice standards certificate holders within the proposed Sub- GI, **Section 29(3) (c)**.

Consultation

In early 2017, serious consideration of creating a certified sub-GI began with a town-hall style meeting, with a comprehensive contact list invited. This discussion, and a subsequent survey indicated that interest in this initiative was strong and widespread. A group e-mail list, provided by the BCWA, and drop-box account were set up to share all relevant information with all parties, and the technical report (Appendix A) included herein was commissioned.

A further, mediated, town-hall style meeting was held in the fall of 2017, sharing the preliminary soils report, survey results, media input, as well as pros-cons, and FAQs. The invitees included all who had previously shown interest, augmented by the lists of registered wineries and growers provided by the BCWA, and numbered 31 attendees. Interest has remained high and a call for financial support received overwhelming response, largely covering the cost of technical consultation. We believe **Section 29(3) (c)** of the Regulation to be satisfied.

Conclusion

As noted in Appendix A: “Naramata Bench Sub-Geographic Indication, January 2018 Technical Description and Geographic Extent”, prepared by Smith and Bowen, the proposed Naramata Bench Sub-GI is a unique and distinctive region within the Okanagan Valley and the classification of this region as a Sub-GI will help consumers identify with the grapes and wines grown within this region. It is respectfully requested that this application be approved.