



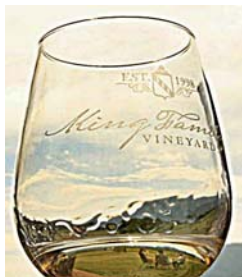
June 16, 2010

## Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry



**Todd P. Haymore**

### Ceremonial Signing of SB237/HB588 (Wine Promotion Fund)



This Saturday's bill signing by Governor McDonnell will be the capstone to what has already been an incredible year for the Virginia wine industry, both in terms of business and state support. As promised in his campaign and in visits to wineries and farms across the Commonwealth, the Governor has made the promotion of Virginia wine a signature piece of his Jobs & Opportunities agenda. It has also been my pleasure to support this industry from my first days as VDACS Commissioner and, now, as Secretary.

It's hard to believe how much we have accomplished in just six short months:

- Working with the General Assembly, we have established a dedicated source of funding for the promotion of Virginia wine and increased the annual amount of that support from \$580,000 per year to \$1.35m. These additional funds will bring us closer to our largest East Coast competitors and will be dedicated to marketing, education, and research. The Virginia Wine Board has already adopted an FY11 budget that makes dramatic increases to our marketing and research efforts. I am pleased that the Board voted in support of the Governor's recommendations, including dedicated international marketing funds and the addition of another marketing employee tasked with increasing retail sales.
- Today the Commonwealth Transportation Board, at the request of Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton, the Governor, and myself, allocated an additional \$3.5m for a wine tourism initiative in conjunction with the Commonwealth's recognition of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. The funds will be used to drive tourists from Virginia's visitor centers and rest areas to wineries through the use of enhanced signage and technology.

- Last month I traveled to the United Kingdom in an effort to promote Virginia agricultural and specialty food products and to expand their market share in that country. The Governor will lead a trade mission to Europe in July and he, the First Lady, and I will continue to promote Virginia wine on that tour as well. In the coming year, Virginia will open trade offices in Europe, Asia, and on the Indian subcontinent, further increasing opportunities for the export of Virginia wine.
- The Governor, the First Lady, and I continue to promote Virginia wine as part of our personal mission to increase the presence of local wines in restaurants and stores across the state. Due in large measure to the First Lady's Initiatives Team Effort (FLITE) tour of Virginia wineries, a number of area retail licensees have added or increased their stock of Virginia wines. In fact, one of my favorite Richmond restaurants just added three wines to its menu after participating in the First Lady's inaugural tour. We will be working with the First Lady to schedule more such tours in the near future.
- Due in part to the support of the Governor and the energy of the Virginia industry, Richmond will be the host for the 2011 Wineries Unlimited trade show. More than 2000 industry members from up and down the East Coast are expected to attend, bringing in \$1.5 million in revenue to our state.
- We supported the efforts of Annette Boyd in the Wine Board Marketing Office to recruit the 2011 Wine Bloggers Conference to Virginia. We will know if Annette's hard work pays off later this Summer.

From a business perspective, sales of Virginia wines increased in 2009 nearly 7.5 percent over the prior year. Virginia also rose to become the 5th largest wine producing state in the country. Along with that rise, wine grapes reached Virginia's Top 20 agricultural commodities list in 2009 with cash receipts of more than \$10 million.

With the hard work of this industry, the high quality of our product, and the strong support of the McDonnell administration, I can say with certainty that 2010 has the potential to see even further growth for Virginia's wineries and vineyards. I look forward to seeing you this weekend at the bill signing in Crozet and to even better things to come in the next four years.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Tom' or similar, written in a cursive style.