

Oregon Wine Industry

Collaborative Forum for Strategic Issue Resolution

Meeting Summary

August 21, 2020

9:00-11:00am

ACTION ITEMS:

ACTION	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">OWC to reach out to the OWA board when new members are constituted	OWC	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Invitation to be sent to industry organizations to provide an update report to OLCC	OLCC	September/ October

Meeting Attendees:

Project Team Members:

David Adelsheim (WV-Chehalem Mountains), Barbara Steele (OWB), Bob Morus (OWB), Brian O'Donnell (WV-Yamhill-Carlton), Carrie Kalscheuer (WV-WVWA), Elin Miller (OWC), Rob Wallace (OWC), Mike McNally (WV-WVWA), Brooke Robertson (OWA), Alex Sokol-Blosser (OWA), Justin King (OWB), Chad Day (SOWA), Andy Steinman (WV-Eola-Amity Hills), Gretchen Boock (OWC), Scott Kelly (UVWA), Terry Brandborg (OWA), Steve Marks (OLCC), Jeff Rhoades (Governor's Office)

Oregon Solutions & Oregon Consensus Facilitation Team: Robin Harkless and Jennah Stillman

OLCC Staff: Devon Morales and Kelly Routt

MEETING SUMMARY:

Welcome, Introductions and Frame for the Day

Facilitator Robin Harkless welcomed the group and provided an overview of the work plan path forward, acknowledging that there would be a brief pause in the forum's meetings for harvest season in September and October. Robin provided a quick reminder of the working agreements and a recap of the first session, held on August 11. Steve Marks, OLCC, and Jeff Rhoades, Gov's Office, offered their support and invited industry folks to share with them today any specific items the government entities could assist with in the near term. Steve noted that the RAC process on conjunctive labeling was wrapping up and yielding a clear outcome; and suggested issues surrounding the tonnage tax could be something OLCC could work on.

Small Group Discussion: State government entity support to the Industry

The forum members worked in small groups to discuss the themes of impacts and challenges to the industry (which were identified at the first session) and to identify where the state government entities (OLCC, OWB) can best support the industry in the near term.

The identified needs and findings include, but are not limited to:

- Transparently identify where industry tax dollars are spent and refine the efforts of statewide branding to more widespread regions with collective buy-in on marketing. More equity is needed on future distribution.
- Tied to the above theme around tax dollar flow, some felt a research project to inform marketing strategies would be helpful. Establish a better process of research (beyond just the OWB census of grapes grown each year, which is an imperfect process due to lack of participation in this inventory) to better assist in identifying growth opportunities for the state as a whole.
- Establish trust with the new OWB board (once appointed), recognizing that historically, industry members have not interacted much/enough with OWB.
- There's a need for more/updated spaces to add industry perspectives, foster inclusion, and ensure voices are heard and concerns are met throughout the state.
- With the past year's evolution of advocacy organizations (new OWC, newly appointed OWA Board members and bylaws, decoupling of OWA and OWB), an opportunity to organize and find a more unified voice.
- Help with facilitation of Direct to Consumer models (shipping/consumer laws), increase future flexibility and help adapt to the aftermath of COVID-19 through good working relationships.
- Investigate potential approval for same day delivery of wine or allowance of a late tax payment.

In an additional comment specifically regarding lobbying efforts, Steve Marks mentioned that there is not currently a direct system established with the OLCC and the broader wine industry for communications. In a recommendation, he noted that OLCC will be intentional and make efforts to not just speak with lobbyists, but also directly with industry members moving forward.

The group then discussed specific activities that could occur during the harvest break to support the collaborative forum conversations when they resume, which include but are not limited to:

- Begin talking about legislative issues to find a mutual position prior to the 2021 session.

- Conduct benchmarking research of other states or entities (Washington, California) to learn from past lessons regarding potential policy opportunities, principles and best practices for industry growth that could apply to Oregon as it continues to rapidly grow.
- Have industry advocacy organizations (OWA, OWC, statewide AVAs, etc) also answer the question regarding how the state government entities (OWB/OLCC) can best help the industry.
- Initiate efforts of OWA/OWC coordination and communication, especially as the new OWA board comes online.

Next Steps for the Collaborative Forum

In closing comments, Steve Marks acknowledged what he heard pertaining to the immediacy of state agency work needed, particularly around the labeling rule, DTC regulatory issues, home delivery, etc. He also noted that alcohol licensing activity is currently in a very dynamic state and there's a need for OLCC to add/redirect staff resources to deal with the higher volume and complexity of licensing issues. There will be a new online reporting system in place soon for the privilege grape tax, which should make the tracking process much easier. There is an opportunity to contribute to its development and people can reach out to Steve with any questions. Additionally, in September or October, there will be an invitation sent by OLCC to industry organizations to provide an update to the Commission, which Steve suggested could also serve as a first step in moving towards working industry cohesion.

On behalf of the Governor's Office, Jeff Rhoades acknowledged the industry's clear desire to come together and build trust with each other. In addressing the pressures from COVID19, he appreciated the forum's conversation and feedback on ideas that could be supported by the executive branch to help address these impacts. Additionally, the Gov's office will soon be conducting application reviews for OWB member appointments and will be making those appointments in October. Jeff suggested there is still time to put in recommendations or applications.

Robin then confirmed the next steps, acknowledging that the continuity of communication will be important in reflecting the group's desire to stay connected and build on positive discussions to date. It was acknowledged that this collaborative forum space can serve as the conduit for communicating out to members of the forum, before reconvening in the fall after harvest. The project team (OS/OC, OLCC staff, Gov's office) will continue to track events, board appointments, and updates throughout the next two months and will connect with the forum again to schedule the next meeting for sometime in early November.