

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

SKAHA BENCH SUB-GI

September 14, 2018

Prepared by the Sub-GI Committee, Skaha 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 **Skaha Bench** and delineated as per description and maps included in Appendix A: “Skaha Bench Sub-Geographic Indication, July 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- (e) Repealed.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

The proposed Sub-GI is geographically distinct as required by Section 29(3)(a) of the Regulation.

Dr. Scott Smith of Eterna Consulting (in consultation with Dr. Pat Bowen of the Summerland Research and Development Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada) evaluated the area and influences and narrowed the focus area on the “east side of Skaha Lake spanning a total length of approximately 10 km in a north south direction. The sub-GI covers an area just under

365 ha in which there are approximately 75 ha of vineyards, split evenly between the northern and southern portions of the sub-GI (BC Ministry of Agriculture 2016). The delineation also encompasses areas of rock outcrop, a large residential area (Heritage Hills estates) and significant areas of orchard lands.”

A copy of the map showing the proposed Skaha Bench Sub-GI’s defined boundaries as well as the justification for the boundaries are contained in Dr. Smith’s report which is attached as Appendix 1 to this Application.”

Commercial Viability

There are currently approximately 75 ha of vineyards in the proposed Sub-GI including 5 wineries producing approximately 40,000 cases. Collectively their tasting rooms welcome over 35,000 visitors annually and they are recognized both locally and internationally for their wines. Since 2010, these wineries have had 7 wines recognized with Lieutenant Governors Awards for Excellence in BC wines.

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 2018, serious consideration of creating a certified sub-GI began with a meeting between three of the winery parties. From there another winery was brought into the discussions and the group was provided a list of growers and wineries in the area by the BCWA. Further discussion indicated that interest in this initiative was strong and widespread. Once the report was completed, committee sent an email to all 18 wineries and growers included on the list provided to them by the BCWA including the report and notice of a townhall meeting scheduled for August 20th. A reminder email was sent to the entire list on August 13th and again on August 20th. The meeting took place at Painted Rock with 12 attendees including committee members, with an additional 2 emails of support from people who were not able to attend. The response to the proposal was positive.

We believe Section 29(3) (c) of the Regulation to be satisfied.

Conclusion

As noted in Appendix A: “Skaha Bench Sub-Geographic Indication, July 2018 Technical Description and Geographic Extent”, prepared by Smith and Bowen, the proposed Skaha Bench

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.