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## **U.S. AND EUROPEAN WINE REGIONS URGE ICANN TO SAFEGUARD WINE PLACE NAMES ONLINE**

*Members of the Declaration to Protect Wine Place & Origin Host Wine Tasting in Los Angeles during ICANN51*

**LOS ANGELES** – U.S. and European wine regions hosted a wine tasting today for delegates attending the ICANN51 conference, as part of an ongoing process to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place before delegating the new generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs) .wine and .vin. Representatives from Napa Valley, Santa Barbara, Oregon, Long Island and Champagne poured their wines as members of the Declaration to Protect Wine Place & Origin to educate the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) about the importance that specific location plays in wine and how the release of these new extensions without proper rules in place would be harmful to consumers as well as many small and medium sized wine producers.

“Winemakers worldwide know that when it comes to wine, location matters,” said Morgen McLaughlin, executive director of the Santa Barbara Vintners. “The integrity of wine place names is a fundamental tool for consumers to identify the wines of great winegrowing regions. That’s why we are working together to combat any scheme that negatively impacts our ability to protect against the fraudulent use of our wine regions’ names and could seriously undermine the protection our consumers expect.”

Santa Barbara County is one of 19 members of the Declaration, which is a set of principles aimed at educating consumers about the importance of location to winemaking. Members span the globe from the United States to Europe and Australia. Representatives from the wine regions have been attending sessions at ICANN51 and raising their concerns with ICANN delegates.

“This is an issue of importance to winemaking regions across the globe,” said Steve Bate, executive director of the Long Island Wine Council. “Without effective safeguards that reflect the critical role location has in the wine industry, the new extensions will have a significant, negative economic impact on our regions and the many small and medium sized businesses we represent by increasing the potential for consumer confusion and increased cyber-squatting.”

The U.S. wine regions in the Declaration collectively represent nearly 2,000 wineries. If .wine and .vin are granted to entities unconnected to the wine industry, second-level domain names such as “napavalley.wine”, “santabarbara.wine” or “longisland.wine” could be held in perpetuity by a company or individual that has never seen a vineyard, cultivated fine wine grapes or made a single bottle of wine.

This is why nine prominent U.S. wine regions have written letters to ICANN and their congressional representatives since April 2014 to raise concerns. These regions are Long Island, Napa Valley, Oregon, Paso Robles, Santa Barbara County, Sonoma County, Willamette Valley and the New York Wine Association.

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### ***About the Declaration***

*The Joint Declaration to Protect Wine Place Names & Origin was signed in Napa Valley on July 26, 2005. Signatories of the Declaration include: Champagne, Bourgogne/Chablis, Bordeaux, Chianti Classico, Jerez-Xérès-Sherry, Long Island, Napa Valley, Oregon, Paso Robles, Porto, Rioja, Santa Barbara County, Sonoma County, Victoria, Tokaj, Walla Walla Valley, Washington State, Willamette Valley and Western Australia. To lend support and read the full text of the Declaration visit [www.wineorigins.com](http://www.wineorigins.com).*