FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAWG Applauds New Fire Insurance Protection-Smoke Index (FIP-SI) Crop Insurance Endorsement for California Winegrape Growers

SACRAMENTO, AUGUST 12, 2024 – Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released additional details on a new crop insurance endorsement to better protect California winegrape growers from the devastating impacts of wildfire smoke. The Fire Insurance Protection-Smoke Index (FIP-SI) endorsement, developed by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) in collaboration with industry stakeholders, including the California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG), is set to be available as a pilot program for the 2025 crop year.

FIP-SI will be available to grape growers in all California counties, with the deadline to sign up for coverage being January 31, 2025.

The endorsement is designed to provide grape growers with an additional layer of financial protection in the event of significant smoke exposure. This area-wide policy triggers a loss when a minimum number of cumulative Smoke Events occur during the insurance period, as defined in the policy using data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Hazard Mapping System Smoke Product.

"The 2020 wildfires sent shockwaves through the wine industry, with losses from smoke-exposed fruit felt throughout the state. Since that devastating year, we've been working diligently to find solutions to better safeguard California's winegrape growers from the impacts of wildfire smoke," said Natalie Collins, CAWG President. "The introduction of this targeted risk management tool for smoke marks a significant step forward in protecting the livelihoods of our growers and the future of the wine industry as we continue to face the challenges posed by increased wildfire activity."

Collins continued, "CAWG extends its gratitude to RMA's Product Development Team for their extensive work in crafting and introducing this critical crop insurance endorsement. We also commend U.S. Senator Alex Padilla and Congressman Mike Thompson for their advocacy in calling for action through crop insurance to better protect the CA wine industry."

CAWG will host an educational webinar on Thursday, November 14 at 10:00am, where Relation Insurance Services will present in-depth information on the new FIP-SI endorsement. The webinar will discuss how FIP-SI interacts with growers' existing policies, and answer any questions from growers.

Resources:

- **USDA Press Release:** USDA Announces New Fire Insurance Protection-Smoke Index Endorsement for California Grapes | Risk Management Agency
- **Fact sheet:** Fire Insurance Protection-Smoke Index Fact Sheet (FIP-SI) | Risk Management Agency (usda.gov)
- **Policy:** Fire Insurance Protection - Smoke Index Endorsement 25-FIP-SI | Risk Management Agency (usda.gov)
- **CAWG Webinar Registration:** Understanding the New Fire Insurance Protection-Smoke Index (FIP-SI) Endorsement for California Winegrape Growers

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About the California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG): CAWG is a statewide nonprofit trade association advocating for California's winegrape growers to ensure the sustainability of the winegrape industry. CAWG promotes the industry's long-term success by advancing the adoption of sound public policies and fostering awareness and understanding of winegrape growers' contributions to the economy, environment, and California communities. Learn more at cawg.org.

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