OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR

KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

May 14, 2021

The Honorable Wylie Galt
Speaker of the House
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

The Honorable Mark Blasdel
President of the Senate
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Speaker Galt and President Blasdel:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto House Bill 688, "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN INTERIM STUDY OF WINEMAKING IN MONTANA; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND PROVIDING A TERMINATION DATE."

HB 688 establishes a committee on Montana Viticulture with a member appointed by the Senate President, House Speaker, and Minority Leaders in each Chamber in consultation with the Presiding Officers of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees. The bill also appropriates $25,000 from the general fund for purpose of running the Committee. The Committee is charged with examining wine production, marketing, and federal regulations impacting the viticulture industry in Montana and reporting the results to the 68th Legislature.

Montana's viticulture industry is vibrant and expanding. Our state produces some of the most unique and high-quality wines in the region, contributing to Montana's rich agriculture portfolio. While I support the bill's intent to grow Montana's viticulture industry, the technical note on the bill highlights the uncertainty of its implementation, reading, "The Division may not be able to absorb the research, legal, secretarial, and other support duties required to support this committee."

Given the uncertainty of the technical note and HB 688's cost to Montana taxpayers, I believe there are more effective and less expensive ways to accomplish our shared goal of expanding Montana's viticulture industry.

For these reasons, I veto HB 688.

Sincerely,

Greg Gianforte
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
           Secretary Christi Jacobsen