



Hon. Paul Brown, Chairman
New Paltz Planning Board
1 Veterans Drive
New Paltz, NY 12561

August 29, 2007

Dear Dr. Brown,

In the last several months it has been my pleasure to sit on several committees for Ulster Tomorrow, including Tourism Strategy 12A. This experience has driven home to me the major role tourism, especially agritourism, plays in Ulster County's economy. A visit to Ulster County Development Corporation's website (www.ulsterny.org) reveals how important farms, farm markets, wineries, and agritourism are to the business owners and residents of Ulster County.

In New Paltz, where tourism is arguably our economic base, we are fortunate to host visitors from all over the world. In the Chamber's Visitor's Center we constantly receive wonderful feedback regarding our region's diversity, especially its numerous wineries, farms, farm markets and the scenic outdoor attractions. It has been our experience that visitors have thoroughly enjoyed their experiences in our region's agribusinesses.

Rivendell Winery, whose application is under review by your board, specifically stands out as a shining example of our region's agricultural diversity. Rivendell has been a productive member of the New Paltz Regional Chamber of Commerce since 1996. Rivendell Winery has graciously agreed to host a number of foreign delegations on behalf of our Chamber, and among the many compliments we have come to expect, Robert Ransom and Susan Wine's impressive knowledge of the wine industry, farms, and vineyards consistently tops the list.

I cannot hope to speak to the controversy surrounding Rivendell Winery's agricultural designation any better than Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Patrick Hooker, whose expert opinion it is my understanding you have taken under consideration. We can honestly state, however, without any reservation, that Rivendell Winery has always adhered to NYS Liquor Authority and the NYS Ag & Markets regulations. Robert Ransom and Susan Wine's desire to live, farm, and continue their involvement in our region's economic development comes from a sincere dedication to this remarkable community. It is more than our opinion, but a matter of law, that they be allowed to do so.

Sincerely,

Joyce M. Minard
President

Robert Glemming
Chairman of the Board