



September 7, 2023

Dear Petaluma City Council Members:

The hospitality and tourism community in Sonoma County has experienced back-to-back volatile years. Recovery from the natural, global and social challenges that have beset Sonoma County requires the strength of residents and businesses, and the return of visitors. The entire tourism industry has worked hard to help the destination recover. Following each instance, the capacity to recover was possible due in large part to the Petaluma Tourism Improvement District and Business Improvement Area funds that are, by statute, required to be spent for marketing and promoting a place to overnight visitors.

While two destination organizations that represent the same geographic area might seem like competitors, it is quite the opposite. Sonoma County Tourism is looking at the county's brand as a whole, but the most compelling stories are told within the individual cities and towns. That is why the Petaluma TID is so critical – curating those stories and developing the channels through which those stories can be shared is the key to a successful marketing initiative.

Each city in Sonoma County has a unique sense of place. Petaluma is known for its walkable downtown, rolling farmland and historic riverfront. While Sonoma County Tourism promotes Petaluma through its domestic and international channels, the partnership with Marie and Visit Petaluma cannot be underestimated. Visit Petaluma keeps the pulse on what is happening in town and amplifies Petaluma's message through Sonoma County's channels. In SCT's current *Spring/Summer 2023 Inspiration Guide*, Petaluma is featured prominently in the "Locals Guide to Petaluma" feature. To complete the feature, we were able to reach out to Visit Petaluma to capture a hyper-local perspective. These are the stories that truly resonate with travelers.

We value Visit Petaluma's partnership and look forward to continuing our working relationship with them while marketing Sonoma County to visitors. We encourage all communities to ensure the destination marketing organizations are funded in a way that provides maximum benefit to the municipality, its businesses and residents.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and continued support of the tourism industry.

Warm regards,

Claudia Vecchio  
President/CEO