

Bill would benefit U.S. wine industry

By Bill Swindell, Santa Rosa Press Democrat

North Coast Rep. Mike Thompson proposed a series of federal tax breaks Monday for the U.S. wine industry, including a proposal to slash a tax on sparkling wine that has lingered since the aftermath of Prohibition.

The St. Helena Democrat, who owns a vineyard in Lake County, teamed up with Rep. Dave Reichert, R-Wash., to propose a sweeping overhaul of the laws that brought in \$1.07 billion in federal excise taxes from the U.S. wine industry during the last fiscal year.

Thompson and Reichert contend the bipartisan legislation will help spur new and innovative products by modernizing federal excise taxes on wine. While the cost of their bill has not yet been calculated, it would provide a major benefit for the North Coast wine industry, which harvested \$1.1 billion in wine grapes for the 2015 vintage.

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