



Contact: Michael Scippa 415/257-2490  
Jorge Castillo 415/257-2488

## **New Report Debunks Myth of the California Family Winery**

### ***Marin Institute Renames Wine Institute to 'Big Alcohol Institute'***

San Francisco, CA (December 8, 2009) – At the San Francisco headquarters of the Wine Institute, alcohol industry watchdog Marin Institute today released a report titled, ***The Myth of the Family Winery: Global Corporations Behind California Wine***. Marin Institute symbolically renamed the trade association as 'Big Alcohol Institute, citing the integration of California wine interests with multinational beer and spirits corporations.

*"The Wine Institute calls itself the "voice of California wine," but it's a tool of global beer and spirits corporations, who oppose public health policies such as charging for alcohol harm,"* stated Bruce Lee Livingston, executive director of Marin Institute. *"Since multinational conglomerates such as Diageo, Constellation Brands, and Brown-Forman call the shots, we think the Wine Institute should be called the 'Big Alcohol Institute'."*

Marin Institute's new report dispels the industry-promoted image of mom-and-pop wineries in California. It questions the bucolic narrative by exposing how nearly all leading wine producers in California have become global or are owned by global beer and spirit corporations.

*"Looking past the industry-spun myth of family-grown wine from Napa and Sonoma, you see shared ownership and interest with Diageo spirits, Foster's beer of Australia, and MillerCoors controlled from London,"* said Sarah Mart, research and policy manager at Marin Institute and principal author of the report.

The report details how global alcohol giants promote the California winery storyline while steadily working to deregulate alcohol nationwide. Big Alcohol exploits California wine imagery by exerting undue influence on the political process, including massive lobbying against federal and state alcohol taxes and fee increases to balance budgets and reduce over-consumption.

The wine industry spent more than a million dollars lobbying lawmakers in California in 2008, with the major funders being London-based Diageo and Kentucky-based Brown-Forman. *"Big Alcohol uses the myth of family wineries, along with vast amounts of political funding, to defeat critical public health policies in California and nationwide,"* added Livingston.

*Download and read the complete report at [MarinInstitute.org](http://MarinInstitute.org)*

###