



Enforcing the \$50 Million Judgement on Peninsula Township

Facts & FAQ

Core Message

Over five months since the judgement against Peninsula Township, the leadership of the Township has taken very little official action towards resolution, has refused to follow the federal court order, continues to enforce rules already declared unconstitutional, and dragged its feet in finding a resolution.

WOMP members and residents are growing tired of this issue dragging on. The wineries have farms to operate and businesses to run.

Peninsula Township's Actions Since the Judgment

- In **July 2025**, a federal judge ruled that Peninsula Township had “**repeatedly and pervasively violated the wineries’ constitutional rights.**”
- The court awarded WOMP members **nearly \$50 million** in damages for the Township’s illegal prohibition of events and guest activities.
- Since the judgment, Peninsula Township officials have publicly stated they disagree with the ruling and do not intend to follow it. One public official went so far as to say “**come and get it - bring it on.**”

- In **late October**, after three months of waiting, WOMP sent a settlement proposal and request for a response and to meet. The Township has not responded and has **stalled settlement discussions**, insisting that a private citizens’ group with no legal or financial liability—Protect the Peninsula—must be included.
- On **Nov. 21, 2025**, the Township sent a **cease-and-desist letter** to Bonobo Winery threatening to **revoke its special use permit** and shut it down.
- The Township is attempting to enforce a **noise ordinance** that its own enforcement officer publicly admitted is **“vague,” “unenforceable,” and “outdated.”**
- On December 9, 2025, five months after the judgement, the Township Supervisor created a **subcommittee of the Township Board to engage in discussions with the wineries and PTP** to “review Special Use Permits and applicable sections of the Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance.”

Frequently Asked Questions

Why Is WOMP Enforcing the Judgement Against Peninsula Township?

Unfortunately, Peninsula Township has done very little over five months time to engage in meaningful settlement discussions. In that time, they have chosen instead to:

- Challenge and ignore the court ruling,
- drag their feet on a settlement proposal,
- and allow an 11-member private group to block progress.

The wineries have been patient for months, but with no response to our proposal, facing the prospect of continued illegal enforcement actions from the Township, and interest accumulating by the day, we felt we had no choice but to act.

We remain ready to resolve this responsibly if the Township comes to the table.

Did the wineries attempt to resolve this without enforcing the judgment?

Yes. For over five months WOMP has intentionally refrained from enforcing the nearly \$50 million judgment to avoid burdening Township residents. They have invited direct dialogue and made clear they were open to mediation once the Township responded to their proposal.

To date, that has not happened.

Has the Township complied with the ruling?

No. The Township has delayed substantive settlement discussions and continues to take enforcement actions against activities the Court expressly ruled were lawful.

Have substantive conversations taken place on a resolution?

No substantive conversations or discussions have happened in over five months since the court ruling. During this time, interest on the judgment has grown at approximately **\$6,000 per day**.

WOMP offered a settlement proposal in late October and asked to sit down directly with the Township. At this point, the Township has not responded to WOMP's proposal from October, and has insisted it won't sit down unless PTP is present.

Did The Township Just Create A Subcommittee For Winery Discussions?

At the Board's December 9, 2025, meeting, five months after the judgement, the Township Supervisor created a **subcommittee of the Township Board to engage in discussions with the wineries and PTP** to "review Special Use Permits and applicable sections of the Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance." The Supervisor's memorandum to the board stated that the committee is not a deciding body.

Members of the subcommittee include:

- Maura Sanders, Supervisor
- J.P. Milliken, Trustee
- Julie Alexander, Trustee

At this time we are still unsure of the true intent or authority of the subcommittee, but look forward to engaging with the newly announced members.

Are the wineries still open to negotiating?

Yes. Even while beginning enforcement, WOMP has left the door open to discussions. They believe a fair settlement is still possible if Township officials are willing to engage in good faith.

What do Township residents think?

Survey results released by Peninsula Township in November show:

- A majority believe the Township is on the wrong track.
- Many cite the lawsuit and the Township’s handling of it as major concerns.
- Residents support normal winery operations—tastings, food service, and events.
- Residents overwhelmingly oppose using tax revenue and Township resources for continuing legal disputes.

Is there still time to avoid enforcement impacting residents?

Yes. WOMP notes there is still time for the Township to come to the table *before the judgment is assessed on next year’s taxes*. A fair agreement can still be reached with prompt action.

What Happens Next?

- The judgement would likely be placed on the next tax roll to be finalized in **March 2026**.
- The Township should work urgently to **respond to the wineries’ settlement offer** and begin direct collaborative discussions.
- We can get this settled before these taxes come due, but we need actual engagement from the Township to get that process going.
- The wineries are **ready to meet anytime** to reach an agreement.

What Can Residents Do?

- Contact Township officials and request urgency in finding a **fair and timely resolution**.
- Submit **letters or emails** for inclusion in the next Township Board meeting packet.
- Ask friends and neighbors to contact Township officials as well.
- Submit an opinion piece or comments on **Nextdoor** and the **Old Mission Gazette**.

Why is Protect the Peninsula (PTP) involved in this?

The Township is insisting that PTP participate in settlement discussions—even though PTP has no legal authority or financial liability in the case - because they became an intervenor in the case due to their members’ interests. The Township has gone so far as to say that any settlement must be approved by PTP.

According to a 2023 affidavit signed by its president, PTP has 11 members.

The Court of Appeals, in allowing PTP to intervene in the case, did so strictly because, *“these members are primarily concerned with safeguarding their land values, ensuring the quiet enjoyment of their homes, and preserving the viability of their*

farms.” The court has noted their concern was not for protecting the rights of other businesses and landowners, or the financial welfare of the Township’s financial status.

Not once during the proceedings or trial did they testify as to how their land values, quiet enjoyment, or viability of their farms was harmed.

In fact, quite the opposite. While PTP alleged its members would be harmed because property values might decrease, PTP sole witness testified that if the Winery Ordinances were overturned then property values would likely increase.