



Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
501 Low Gap Road
Ukiah, CA 95482

July 16, 2021

Re: Item 6a on 7/19/2021: Discussion and Possible Action Including Acceptance of Update from Cannabis Program on Cannabis Water Use

Honorable Supervisors,

MCA is grateful that the Board is considering the science backed information provided by the Berkeley Cannabis Research Center. We have previously submitted cannabis water use data¹ to this Board developed in conjunction with the CRC, and have repeatedly pointed to their research that licensed cannabis uses way less water than many in Government and the public realize.

The presentation from CRC clearly indicates the benefit of irrigation ponds for licensed cannabis cultivators. Supervisor McGourty has credited his pond for providing the water necessary for his agricultural operations. The importance of water storage for cannabis and other types of agriculture has been discussed at length in these chambers, as have the challenges that exist in developing these solutions locally.

The County recently passed an urgency ordinance enabling the installation of temporary water tanks for those folks who are impacted by the drought. MCA strongly recommends that the Board direct Staff to create an urgency ordinance to streamline the process for approving the installation of irrigation ponds and other water storage methods in response to the current drought emergency to enable cannabis and other agricultural operators to prepare for the new realities of climate change.

As this Board is aware, many emergency relief programs for small businesses are not accessible to cannabis operators. In this time of historic drought, we urge you ensure that funds coming into the County in response to the State of Emergency not be withheld from licensed cannabis operators who contribute significantly to the socioeconomic stability of the County. We understand that Staff are working with the Farm Bureau to determine how available resources can be directed towards their members, and have requested the opportunity to discuss similar scenarios with regards to the hundreds of locally licensed cannabis operators. We remain available to have that conversation, and request again that a meeting be set up to discuss at the County's earliest opportunity.

¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CWJ3lbQcDNhgDaJNJeir3_GWm-MHQZld/view?usp=sharing

We further recommend that the Board adopt the presentation by the CRC today, and make a clear public facing statement from the County with the facts about local, small batch cannabis water use presented here. This action will get us one step closer as a community to abolishing prohibition-based stereotypes and the vilification of small local cultivators as being somehow responsible for the historic drought we are all currently facing. It is essential to fill the public conversation around this controversial topic with empirical data as opposed to misinformed preconceptions, and we thank the Board for bringing in CRC to reinforce our past statements citing the realities on the ground with their work. We sincerely appreciate the efforts here today to inform fact based considerations of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Mendocino Cannabis Alliance
e: info@mendocannabis.com