

7/11/2017

To, Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

I am writing concerning the cannabis cultivation compliance process. I was a member of the sheriff's 9.31 program, I support legal cannabis gardens and want to thank you for taking on the challenging task of building new businesses. Today I would like to address some of the elements in the program that have become either stumbling blocks or are preventing people from registering.

First: I would like to address Zoning limitations RR1 parcels in the more rural neighborhoods of Mendocino such as Laytonville. I ask the supervisors to consider an exception for these parcels from the 2 acre minimum requirement. Perhaps an overlay ordinance or other form of exception that would allow small parcels to grow 25 plants or 2500 sq feet of canopy. This reduction in garden size could also reduce registration fees, they would be limited to a small cottage industry so no commercial buildings should be required or ADA bathroom. With this small size the water board would not inspect. These gardens would also require set back lenience since most garden placement and parcel boundaries. Farmers, neighbors would be able to agree to place their plants next to shared fences at their discretion. Again buffering cost and creating a safer environment by moving the gardens farther from the road and out of site by passersby.

Second: requiring noncommercial gardens to supply ADA bathroom just "in case" an alterable person or inspector stops by seems a bit extreme. As does requiring commercial buildings. Making those requirements on noncommercial properties for people that are cottage industry regardless of parcel size feels unbalanced. How about an exchange an incentive for those RR or other noncommercial properties that develop commercial standard buildings and bathroom. Let them be considered for zoning change. These parcels could be rezoned to a limited commercial used status allowing for more employees and other non-cannabis business development if desired.

Third: Greenhouses as commercial buildings, while there are commercial greenhouses most in Mendocino are AG buildings used by family farmers. The cost of requiring them to be commercial with ADA bathrooms is a burden and again force the family farmer into an uncomfortable corner, one they cannot afford.

Forth: the more small farmers that register for the program the stronger the program will be. Large corporations such as tobacco companies while providing some low wage jobs will take the bulk of the revenue out of Mendocino. I want to help bring money into my county to this end I support the Farmers market platform for all local farmers be they large or small. These markets would put all gardens on an equal opportunity sales basis allowing the whole sale buying agent to choose by direct comparison and keep the market competitive as well as informative.

This is an amazing opportunity we are facing. I live in a small community that once was supported by a Mill and distribution business we even had college extension courses for adults that is all gone now. The opportunity I see is mutually beneficial for citizens and county alike. Citizens learn to run small business, bring their homes to a safer standard, and develop open communications with county officials. The current system does not seem to promote growth of business but it could. As more farmers become business people and the cannabis market shifts other ideas may develop and Mendocino could become a thriving entrepreneur based rural community that once had a mill providing 500 jobs now has 500 small businesses providing 1 + jobs each. A stronger diverse long term portfolio generating revenue for the county and opportunities for the community.

Thank you,

Anira G'Acha