

April 18th 2021

Dear honorable supervisors

I am writing you to share my experience as a phase one cultivator. I am one of the lucky ones. It just so happens I can meet my setbacks and have a well. Fortunately I have a strong background in good environmental practices and had never cut down a tree or did destructive grading. In 2016 I dove into the state draft ordinance and became involved in the process. In 2017 I was the 24th county permit issued. I have had a state provisional for 2 years.

In 2017 I sent registered letters notifying my neighbors of my intent to apply for licensing. I reached out to my forester for copies of sensitive species reports. County staff stopped me there and said they have been instructed that they cannot accept any of my CEQA documentation and were not allowed to add it to my file. I was confused but trusted them as the lead authority.

All county employees through the process have been supportive and helpful. All the while they were apologetic about the ever changing system and worked hard to find solutions. During this process I was asked to supply documentation I had submitted many times. Once submitted I was told not to contact them because they were working on a new system. I was told I was in good standing even though my permit had expired, I was uncomfortable and reached out without receiving any response. Even though it has been stated that the paperwork system is not functioning and we were supposed to wait for an online portal I chose to go against the recommendations from my last contact and submit my renewal in paper format. It took Kristin Nevedals office 24 hours to approve my permit renewal.

Building a new industry and a functional system takes time. We are asked to submit business plans based on an unknown ever changing landscape. I have submitted plans to be told they would never happen. I appealed the findings to the heads of Planning and Building only to be denied. Then a year later I was instructed by the same department to submit a plan. I submitted the same plan and was patted on the back and was thanked profusely for submitting such a good plan. "They wished all plans were so easy". Mind you during this process they would not release my approved grading permit until they had confidence in their system. Once released it was too late in the season to grade, which also means too late to farm. Then the next season was spent on grading. So while waiting I have 2 years without production. I still stand behind my decision to not hire employees under the table and go for the quick buck and divert. I have taken my time to do it right. The key word is time. We need time. The simple process of paying fees on a building permit has always been a walk in service and 30 minutes, even for big jobs like building a house. Last week I dropped off funds for small projects and was told it would be 2 months to process them, we are talking about approved permits that just need to be paid for. It is hard to work with time restraints in a non functional system where new regulations are added which will alter your plans and send you back to all the other agencies to be approved again. Business and especially farming is dynamic and must be flexible. We need time to complete our projects. To over build in a system with so many changes leads to a waste of funds and materials. Please take into consideration that we will need time. Even once we get state licenses and a functional phase 3, we are still looking at 10 years of transition to bring our business up to full capacity.

Kind regards

David King