

Dear Mendocino County Supervisors McGourty, Mulheren, Haschak, Gjerde and Williams,

First, thank you so much for the work you do on behalf of your fellow citizens of Mendocino County. I appreciate that you do this work with no paid assistants or clerical support (which should be remedied). I am a resident of Redwood Valley, and though I am an appointed member of the Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Council, I am speaking only for myself today.

As a member of the Redwood Valley MAC's Cannabis Committee, I have lately had the opportunity to observe and discuss with residents the impacts of legalized cannabis on Redwood Valley. It is obvious we are seeing a swell of large-scale cultivation that perhaps our cannabis ordinance didn't foresee and wasn't designed to support. The unintended consequences are very concerning to many Redwood Valley residents, and we have reason to believe the worst is yet to come.

It is my understanding that none of you live in Redwood Valley or Potter Valley. You may not be aware of what is happening in our communities. Here in Redwood Valley, we have been issued warnings that there is so little water in Lake Mendocino, our agricultural water is likely to be turned off this year, and possibly our residential water too. Meanwhile, we have seen an influx of large grows that annoy residents with their hoop houses, grow lights that wipe out the stars in our night skies, water trucks that make uncountable trips per day, employees speeding up and down our narrow rural roads, litter proliferation, historic vineyards being ripped out, properties fenced with six-foot-high opaque fencing where we used to have open views.

And the water. Not only are we facing drought and an extremely limited supply in Lake Mendocino, but residents' wells are drying up. Some of them have cannabis grows with multiple new wells next door. Their water supply was okay before the grows came in. It has come to our attention that truckload after truckload of water are pumped from Redwood Valley wells and the Redwood Valley County Water District's agricultural lines (and sometimes the fire hydrants) to service cannabis grows in Redwood Valley and Potter Valley. Cannabis plants require on average 1.5 gallons of water per day EACH! Meanwhile, some of us face losing vineyards we only just replanted after the 2017 wildfire—vines that will eventually tolerate dry farming but won't survive their first few years without water. It seems there was no thought to how many straws could be inserted into our very limited water table when provisional permits were issued. It seems to have given growers with the resources the ability to expand their operations and aggravate their neighbors in ways they never would have done before legalization.

And many people don't recognize their neighbors anymore. The owners of properties live in other counties. Sometimes the operators live in other counties, leaving employees to live onsite or not. Residents tell stories of hearing that cannabis compliance company representatives have told employees of such absentee landlords and operators not to talk to the neighbors, that it might impede their ability to get permanent legal status.

Initially, when cannabis became legal, we believed these grows would be visited by compliance officers, that there would be some standards and those standards would be enforced. Later, we believed that the end to this insanity would come with the end of provisional permits in spring of

2022. Hearing now that provisional permits will be extended seven years—to 2028—we are beyond hoping that anyone knows or cares what is happening in our community and others.

I think many if not most residents of Redwood Valley support a path to legalization for small family cannabis farmers—especially when they are using regenerative farming practices with low impact to neighbors and the community, and are focused on the sort of appellation-driven craft product that will bring tourism and benevolent growth to our county, while avoiding the unpleasant shocks we are experiencing today. I recently had the opportunity to tour a small family cannabis farm that utilizes regenerative practices and gets top dollar for their fine craft product. Their farm consisting of less than 10,000 square feet of canopy provides an ample income for their family and employees, and allows them to contribute a generous amount of tax and fee revenue to the county. This is the sort of cannabis farming that is a good fit for our exceptional county—a place of rare beauty and history.

I sincerely ask you to oppose the extension of provisional permits, at least in Redwood Valley, and to cap growing area to the current 10,000 square feet until we can talk about the unintended negative consequences, make plans for compliance and figure out how Mendocino can reap the very best of legalization while avoiding the pitfalls. I think it would be wise and fair to ask communities what they want and what they can bear. It may make sense for certain communities with limited resources to become exclusion zones or small sustainable craft cannabis zones. Hopefully everyone can understand that it is environmentally irresponsible to consider expanding cannabis cultivation in Redwood Valley when we lack sufficient water supply for basic household needs, not to mention our farming of exceptional wine grapes (for which we proudly possess our own appellation).

I respectfully beseech the Board to consider the following:

- Allow rural communities to protect themselves by limiting cannabis farming in their areas as fits their needs and limitations
- Direct staff to terminate those applications which do not have and apparently cannot obtain a State provisional license
- Require that all remaining applications show proof that any water usage is from legal, sustainable sources
- In fairness to all, including legally permitted cultivators and those applying to be legal, enforce the prohibitions on illegal cannabis cultivation

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent issue.

Very Sincerely,

Sattie Clark