



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

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CLERK OF THE BOARD

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Mendocino County, working with the California Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) has done a stellar job in processing cannabis cultivation licenses so that they can get their state annual permit. This process is working. Yet, in Mendocino County, the number of unpermitted cannabis sites continues with associated environmental damage and crime.

Cannabis farmers in Mendocino County have benefited from the Local Equity Entrepreneurial Program (LEEP) funding and the Local Jurisdiction Assistance Grant Program (LJAGP) funding. These have helped the County and cultivators get their State annual licenses, become compliant, and foster their businesses. Yet there are many who find that the permitting costs and the tax structure are harming the viability of their businesses. The Department of Cannabis Control should look at ways of further streamlining the process and reducing costs so that unpermitted grows can enter the regulated market and thrive.

Cannabis growers feel frustrated that they are being held accountable by the County and the State to rigorous standards in the regulatory process, while watching as unregulated actors continue to thrive in an industry that has seen most of the legal operators throw in the towel and abandon the occupation that once paid all their bills and allowed them to support the County and State economies through healthy spending and a stable local economy.

Major tension stems from the accountability placed on legal cannabis growers by County and State regulations, while unregulated bad actors continue to thrive. Many legal operators have thrown in the towel and abandoned the occupation that once paid their bills and allowed them to support the local economy. The scale at which unregulated cannabis is currently operating in Mendocino County significantly contributes to the collapse of the industry and a central reason for the continued proliferation of unregulated grows.

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors in conjunction with the Mendocino County Sheriff respectfully requests the DCC along with other State regulatory agencies support our County in cleaning up Mendocino County's unregulated cannabis industry, which we feel has impacted the local environment and quality of life. Negative impacts including environmental, social, and economic destruction all stem from a lack of enforcement.

Environmental degradation continues to occur due to illegal cannabis. Illegal dumping connected to these unregulated activities leaves tons of trash across our beautiful rural countryside. Often, dumping occurs in our waterways and sensitive aquifer recharge areas. The Sheriff has documented many cases of illegal pesticide and herbicide use in these grows which probably represents a fraction of overall usage. This is a direct threat against the environment and the water quality of Mendocino County, which we respectfully ask the State Water Resources Control Board as well as the Regional Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Fish and Game to allocate resources and increase enforcement to protect.

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The unregulated cannabis industry has brought along with it increased lawlessness in our communities. The criminal activity adjacent to illegal cannabis far exceeds the danger of the cannabis itself – it is the additional illicit drug sales, violence, human trafficking, and murder that creates strain on local law enforcement and real concerns of safety in our communities.

Amongst the over 600 permitted cannabis growers in Mendocino County, many struggle to maintain their businesses when competing with farms that have no regulatory expectations, who can get away with environmental infractions, and continue to sell in the unregulated, untaxed illegal market.

The Board of Supervisors and Sheriff Kendall believe that the State has the ability and obligation to address the issue of unregulated cultivations in our County. With appropriate enforcement, our communities can be free of water diversions, unregulated pesticides and herbicides, hundreds of tons of plastic waste, the many social crimes, and unfair competition to the regulated cannabis industry.

It is time to support local, legal cannabis farmers and residents alike by standing up to the illegal activities that harm our communities.

Sincerely,



John Haschak
Chair, Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Matthew Kendall
Sheriff, Mendocino County

CC:

Senate Pro Tem President Mike McGuire
Assemblymember Chris Rogers
Governor Gavin Newsom
Nicole Elliott, Department of Cannabis Control
Ca. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
State Water Resources Control Board