

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak publicly to our Board of Supervisors and to our community about the current Phase 3 cannabis proposal. This topic has become a heated debate in Mendocino County.

Many letters have been written to the Planning Commission and to the Supervisors exaggerating the environmental, social and financial impact of this proposal. Among the most blatant criticisms is the photograph in the Ukiah Daily Journal on March 30, of a toxic dump site with the caption: "These trashed properties damage the value of the surrounding properties and are demoralizing to the community." There was also a letter in that paper by Ellen Drell, who writes that "Mendocino County has been captured by the cannabis industry. What the supes are doing is irrational." The most exaggerated comments came from Supervisor John Haschak, who writes in The Willits News that "the proposed Phase 3 Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance endangers our environment, communities, and local economy."

None of those criticisms is fair.

My ranch above Lake Mendocino, with its licensed 10,000 square foot cannabis cultivation site safe and clean practices and drip well-water irrigation, is a beautiful example of the opposite of those fearsome descriptions. We take great pride in our very clean 160-acre ranch with its "million dollar view," our gardens and our koi pond, and we refuse to be included in the scandalous images those detractors paint.

Don't blame us for what the villains have done in the past! Cannabis has historically been an illegal and damaging burden on our wonderful Mendocino County, but curing that problem with state and county licenses, and enforcement efforts to save our environment and our water, will cure these problems and not add to them.

The recent letter by Supervisor John Haschak completely exaggerated the effects of cannabis in our county. If John had been a politician when grapes were first being considered as an agricultural crop many years ago here, we'd still be poor dirt farmers growing tomatoes and unable to pay taxes and feed our families.

Grapes aren't a long-term solution to poverty by small farmers, as my own 5-acre vineyard proves. Our grapes cannot be profitably sold, and for more than 20 years I have been unable to profit from our small vineyard and compete with the larger vineyards in other counties. I spent money each year merely to watch our beautiful cabernet rot on the vine.

But cannabis cultivation has made my 160-acre ranch profitable for the first time in 20 years. We can become the "Napa" of cannabis!

I want others to profit also from their cannabis crop, to pay county taxes, and to enjoy living comfortably in our beautiful environment. The statements by some of our neighbors of undeserved fears and ridiculous claims are a shame. Our grow – and most of the legal and

licensed cannabis grows in Mendocino County – are a blessing. Supervisor Haschak and other critics should praise them instead of criticizing them, and give us the freedom to grow more.

With care for our environment, with sound organic farming methods, and with economical water usage, Mendocino County can become a prized leader for healthy cannabis. But we need to stop some of our supervisors and neighbors from burdening us with lies and undeserved fears and with ridiculous ordinances.

We can cultivate cannabis safely and profitably if you let us do so.

/Larry Rosen

Lawrence Rosen