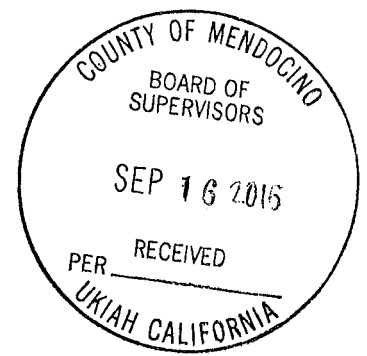


To: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
From: Mendocino Heritage Initiative of 2016
Date: September 16, 2016
Subject: Board Endorsement for Measure AF



Dear members of the Board:

For the last many months, stakeholders in the cannabis industry have said, “Yes” to working closely with the Board, County Staff and our Sheriff’s department. We have been committed to the democratic process through scoping sessions, educational tours, public comment, compromise, and ongoing discussion. We are sincerely appreciative of the County’s willingness to move forward with cannabis policy, and celebrate the many steps we’ve taken together.

The unregulated cannabis industry has divided our community for decades and has negatively impacted our natural resources and sense of safety. Measure AF is a chance to change direction, providing the most time-efficient and cost-effective path to regulation while making Mendocino County’s rules consistent with state law. It will enact immediate policy to regulate all aspects of the cannabis industry without further delay or costly lawsuits. This saves the taxpayers money and allows for a more swift transition from the black market to the regulated market, for the greater good of Mendocino’s people, economy, and environment.

Measure AF will provide regulatory certainty for the cannabis industry at a crucial time when Mendocino County faces the risk of being left behind. Opposition voices claim the Measure AF proponents are asking for special privileges or a free pass to dominate our county. Quite the opposite. The measure was spearheaded by members of the cannabis industry who are asking to be regulated to protect Mendocino County’s future. How will Measure AF benefit the people of Mendocino County?

Regulation protects the environment

- The biggest threat to the environment is an unregulated market. AF prohibits illegal diversion of water and permittees will be mandated by the State of CA to enroll in the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board’s program to obtain a water discharge waiver before they can apply for a County permit. This waiver must be renewed annually, and it will be enforced by a joint task force of NCRWQCB, Fish & Wildlife, and local law enforcement. It also subjects violators to significant fines.
- Contrary to fears about loose regulation, cannabis cultivators will be subject to more stringent environmental and water use standards than *any other* agricultural product.

Safer neighborhoods

- Measure AF only applies to unincorporated areas of the County, allowing cities to determine appropriate use and zoning within high-density urban areas.
- Today, reckless manufacturing takes place in our neighborhoods and in protected watersheds where unregulated operations create a fire & safety risk. Measure AF restricts these activities (such as solvent extraction) to industrial zones and introduces new, rigorous statewide safety standards with local controls.

- AF makes Mendocino County's setbacks consistent with state law which prohibits cultivation and dispensaries within 600 feet of a school.
- AF creates workplace safety standards & restricts employment to individuals over 21.

Taxes benefit the community

- We urge voters to support all ballot measures focused on regulating and taxing cannabis: Yes on AF, AI, & AJ.
- Comprehensive regulation of all parts of the industry will grow the tax base and provide crucial resources helping to fund enhanced mental health services, repair of county roads, and expand fire and emergency medical services.

Increased enforcement

- By drawing a clearer line between legal and illegal operations, AF strengthens enforcement, and provides the Sheriff with the resources to focus on hard drugs, illegal grows, and violent crime. Bringing the industry out of the shadows is the single most important factor in increasing public safety in Mendocino County - by getting cannabis off the streets and into secured settings.
- State enforcement agents protect against environmental impacts by mandating permits and compliance inspections.

Protects local business

- Measure AF only allows permits to be issued to Mendocino County residents that have lived here for at least two years and requires majority ownership by locals to keep out a "green rush" of large corporate interests. These permitted businesses will be required to follow all the same rules as every other business in Mendocino County.
- Measure AF will stimulate economic activity and provide good jobs in our community.
- Contrary to claims that the residency requirement is unconstitutional, such laws have not been challenged in other states and are commonly applied to cannabis policy.

Policy must change over time. Measure AF is amendable, and it empowers the Board of Supervisors to make changes to the permitting program to continue to meet the needs of all county residents.

We ask that you abstain from voting "No" on Measure AF, and let the voters decide at the November ballot. If this initiative passes, we will need to move forward together and continue the collaboration between our elected officials, industry stakeholders and the people of Mendocino County. We are strongest when we work together to find solutions.

Sincerely,

Mendocino Heritage Initiative of 2016

Sarah Bodnar Jude Thilman Casey O'Neill Tom Rodrigues Tim Blake Justin Calvino

www.yesonAF.com | mendocinoheritageinitiative@gmail.com | (707) 200-8239