

## **WMAC Comments**

Delivered to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

August 29, 2017

I am Thad Van Bueren, Chair of the Westport MAC. Our community is concerned about implementation of the Medical Marijuana Ordinance. I'd like to stress some issues conveyed in letters you've received. Based on these concerns, we urge you to remove the ordinance revision from the Consent Calendar and reschedule it for public input on September 12, 2017.

Our community supports regulation of the cannabis industry and feels the ordinance is generally sound. However, concerns exist about apparent deviations from the scope certified in the environmental document, as well as the lack of transparency in the permit process.

A key concern is that small grows are being inappropriately expanded under Phase 1. For example, Application 111 near Westport proposes expanding a tiny grow into a huge industrial greenhouse operation. This new industrial use is incompatible with the UR zoning definitions and CC&Rs. It also reflects a huge departure from the historic cultivation footprint. Building permits for 5 greenhouses exceeding 10,000 SF are in construction. Yet no residence, water supply, septic system is in progress as required.

The lack of transparency is also a concern. The safety of neighbors is put at risk, yet we are given no voice in the permit approval process other than to submit complaints that go unanswered. How do we verify the outcomes of zoning reviews and the adequacy of mitigation conditions when they are secret? Why is a vast expansion in use in Phase 1 not denied because it is effectively a new project? Must we wait until the impacts accumulate or armed thugs terrorize our community before these concerns are addressed?

We urge you to instruct County staff that Phase 1 permits should only cover existing operations, not radical expansions. We also recommend requiring use permits for new projects that expand cultivation footprints during Phases 2 and 3 in residential districts. Neighbors deserve some avenue to express legitimate concerns and weigh in on proposed mitigation measures before that development ensues. We also feel CC&Rs should be considered in the permit approval process. Thank you for considering our input.