

June 8, 2020

Re: Board of Supervisor Meeting June 10th 2020
Agenda Items 5b, 6a, 6b

Dear Mendocino County Board of Supervisors,

Thank you for your tireless efforts, especially recently during this global pandemic, on the behalf of the people of your local community. Last week we had a combination county/ state inspection of our 10,000 sq foot cannabis farm in Covelo performed by Mendocino County Agriculture Department. We have received our 3rd county permit & 2nd state Provisional license. We have been permitted & licensed since this program began, our farm, in fact, was also permitted under the 9.31 program. We are phase 1 / legacy cultivators. We have all our ducks in a row, except the CEQA issues that preclude our entire pool of Mendocino cannabis cultivators from being allowed to move from a Provisional to an Annual California state license status.

We acknowledge & appreciate, in fact, we think we can all agree, that there are many changes needed to the existing county ordinance that would be beneficial in the long run. But due to the CEQA issues, which are by far the single-most obstacle to growing commercial cannabis legally in Mendocino County right now, we are respectfully requesting you to pull items 6a & 6b, making no changes to the cannabis ordinance at this time is the best option.

The MCA letter & the CCAG letter share very important information based on the state & county not yet coming into CEQA agreement, or even into a clearly communicated pathway forward for 1200+ phase1 farms already in the queue. With any tweaks before CEQA is clarified, it could potentially put all the mom & pops out of business due to the state's timeline running out on Provisional licenses. The county still does not have enough information to make changes to the ordinance today, the CEQA piece is too important to move forward without it so pulling these agenda items seems prudent. And with Covid19, fire season & many other pressing issues, this is not the time, nor do we have enough information to address such complexities.

We know Senator Mike McGuire & Assemblyman Jim Woods offices both had a major hand in getting CDFA to even allow any Mendocino County farms to be granted our Provisionals by the state due to this very same issue last year. We were part of the group that contacted them & saw results. The county reaching out to them again now to for assistance in getting the state agencies to communicate with each other & with the county in a timely manner may be very useful. In the meantime, we ask you to make your decisions today with the lives & livelihoods of the families already in the cannabis program in mind. Once upon a time, Mendocino was the leader in the United States with regards to cannabis cultivation under the 9.31 program. Well ahead of the times, it was the only one. We were the 1st county in the USA to have any sort of cannabis cultivation program since 1937. As much as we are a valuable legacy in the county, we are legacy to the cannabis community in the entire country & the world, we deserve a chance.

And last but not least, the equity grant money is amazing, the application was filled with incredible historical information & the program itself can be, by design, a part of the pathway forward. The equity grant is all about social justice for those treated unfairly by the war on drugs. That is practically every one of your phase 1 operators. Equity should not be used for enforcement, that seems to negate its purpose. It should be used to help the legacy operators come into compliance. Can be used for our environmental pickle... to pay for amending the MND or do an EIR or some other kind of countywide CEQA?! Or maybe it can be distributed to the phase 1 permittees to help them complete their individual CEQA, if that becomes what needs to happen?! The thing is, we just don't know yet! It's exciting that we are in the initial phase of developing the uses of the equity money, meant to be for purposes of equalizing the playing field.

To be continued, but please, given the lack of available information & great potential for unintended consequences, let's postpone this discussion.

Thank you!

Laura & Marty Clein