

Dear Chair Haschak and Members of the Board,,

Expanding cannabis cultivation beyond the legacy growers is a recipe for further environmental degradation.

In the Willits area we've seen widespread illegal grading and water extraction, and a proliferation of white plastic greenhouses marring the beauty of our lands.

Very few of these illegal grows are handed over to code enforcement and the few that are see only a correction of the most egregious issues. The land is never returned to its previous condition. Knolls are flattened, creeks are roaded and the cumulative impacts of this on a watershed can be serious. We must put in place monitoring that does not put the burden on the neighbors to contact Code Enforcement.

Given that the once mighty Eel River has been reduced to a shallow, over heated river with toxic algae in the summer months now capable of killing our dogs and threatening the aquatic life, I think it is unwise to allow further expansion of this industry.

In theory, cannabis should not be discriminated against but the reality is the wine industry has already commandeered much of the available water resources and then we have the drought, which could prove to be a permanent problem with climate change, to contend with.

In my first hand experience, my neighborhood completely changed by the influx of absentee growers. In their quest to make money they have exhibited very little respect for the land or the neighborhood. Instead of the peace and quiet, we now listen to their generators going night and day for their indoor grows, and their forklifts, back hoes and truck deliveries. The knolls are flattened to create pads for their grow sites and greenhouses, which mar the views and rob us of the night sky. The small lake we once enjoyed has become an algae infested eye sore and the chemical run off is helping to grow the dead zones we have off of our coastline.

And if you aren't a serious grower, invested in the keep out signs, the locked gates, fencing, the pit bulls and security systems you are treated as an outsider and a threat, which is damaging to our sense of community.

Having complained to the authorities I have found that it took code enforcement a month to show up and all the while my neighbor continued wrecking havoc on an unstable hillside below our main entrance road. Animal control is hopeless with his barking dog problem. His crew of illegal immigrants would not evacuate when the rest of us did during the fires, probably fearing deportation, and they have started fires on the hillside to burn their garbage in late October, not realizing the great danger that we face with the drought. All of this has been inflicted upon us from a guy who lives in San Francisco and just enjoys his tidy revenue stream from afar.

My hope is that you will institute monitoring, tighten enforcement and keep this industry within the ecological limits that the land can actually support.

Enclosed are some photos of the neighborhood blight problem that I have not been able to get cleaned up in spite of my repeated complaints to code enforcement. They tell me they are too busy with more serious complaints to deal with this blight issue, most of which are former grow sites.

Keep in mind that Napa County maintains a robust tourist industry because they protect their aesthetic values with strict enforcement on all forms of blight including billboards. Our aesthetic values could be just as valuable if only we were to realize that fact and offer protection for them. I urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

Sheila Jenkins

Walker Lake

encl: eyesores on beautiful land, steep grading, ugly fencing





