

## Don't Toss the Cannabis Ordinance. Just Enforce It!

At a time when we are seeing record high temperatures, record low rainfall, worsening dead zones off our coastline and killer toxic algae in our rivers, a proposal is afoot to expand cannabis cultivation into our rangelands. This will demand a lot of water that we can't spare, and it will deposit a lot more fertilizer into our rivers and streams that we don't need. This is exactly the wrong proposal at this time of worsening droughts. It will likely sabotage decades of restoration efforts which we've already invested in to save our struggling salmon fisheries from being pushed into extinction. We must not let our rich heritage of salmon fisheries be jeopardized by the lure of short term profits.

Some Supervisors are proposing abandoning our cannabis ordinance, which has strict requirements and limitations, replacing it with the Use Permits process which will give the Planning and Building staff a lot more "flexibility." Replacing our ordinance with Use Permits, which are at the "discretion" of the planning staff, will also provide few, if any, remedies for complaints from the public. This is a bad deal.

You may have noticed recently the proliferation of large clusters of 14 or more white plastic hoop houses. This has occurred because the 10,000 sq. ft. of cannabis canopy allowed in the ordinance was then changed to 10,000 sq. ft. of white plastic eyesore at the "discretion" of the Planning and Building Dept. Surprises like this that destroy our views and devalue our properties are exactly what we *don't* want. We should, instead, abide by the promises made in the ordinance and work to make it even better.

Instead of the proposal to expand cannabis into our last remaining open space, our rangelands, we could, instead, expand into our industrial and commercial zones where infrastructure and water resources are already developed. Cannabis growers truck in much of their soil and even at times their water, so having these activities in an industrial setting would be a much better fit than in our neighborhoods, or in our open spaces, and it would help reduce their carbon footprint. Electricity instead of generators would also greatly reduce the risk of fire.

Lured by the promise of big money, Ted Williams and John McCowen are working hand in hand with the cannabis industry to promote this expansion plan into our rangeland, largely for the benefit of the corporate grower. The small grower is not likely to afford these bigger parcels and all the permits and infrastructure that will be needed, so this will likely benefit the better capitalized crew that is flooding in from out of the area.

We've already seen so much plundering and pillaging and now this proposal for bigger grows on steep, highly erodible land, will deliver just more of the same – a lot more fish choking sediment in our rivers, water diversions, garbage, code enforcement complaints, crime and threat of fire.

Code Enforcement complaints are up by 31%, with only 2 officers on the cannabis beat. Policing is stretched thin, too, and the Covelo cartel problem is spreading. Why expand cannabis to our rangelands where enforcement is much more difficult?

Measure AF went down to defeat by a large margin in every district in 2016 because it proposed cannabis for every zone. We've already voted this idea down, but they are determined to ignore the wishes of the public.

If we hope to have a future on this fragile earth, protecting our fisheries, our wild life and wild lands, enforcing the laws already on the books should matter to all of us.

If you don't wish to see our cannabis ordinance abandoned, or are sick of non-enforcement, then let your Supervisors know by mail or by phone. The ordinance will be discussed this Tuesday, July 21, under item 5b on the Their upcoming meeting is the 4th of August. Urge them to take a cautionary approach by staying with our existing cannabis ordinance and our existing cannabis zones. I urge you to write or call to make sure that your voice is heard.

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