

Dear Supervisors,

As a 46 year resident of Mendocino County here in Covelo and as an educator, I have watched the growth of this Cannabis culture for many years and not without some real hesitations. However, I have been comforted by the fact that the local community and the county have spent so much time and effort to design a local Cannabis ordinance. This one, as I understand it, protects our rangeland, timber land, and forest land. These are precious to me and to many of us living here.

For this, I am deeply grateful as the unique and beautiful mountain land that makes up the majority of this county, is land worth protecting. You have been supported by legislation now that legalizes Cannabis cultivation, and the way that you have created a local ordinance to do that is commendable. It is not easy to take a black market product, like alcohol in prohibition, and legalize it. Now, we just might need to use our resources to enforce this ordinance. That means that we might need to spend some of monies generated by permit costs to oversee these local regulations which will help maintain the health and livability of our communities.

I fully support our process in creating the local Cannabis ordinance, as cumbersome as it has been, it is a powerful tool to insure that the environment which brings and keeps us all here, is protected. The function of democratic government is to involve and support the constituency which it serves. The BOS of Mendocino County have been tasked with this social contract, to act in the best interest and with the input of the residents of this county and its businesses, agricultural interests, and environmental advocates.

I have been distressed and saddened at the proliferation of illegal marijuana grows throughout our community, as the black plastic fencing which litters so many streets prevails here, along with weapons and guard dogs and frightened neighbors. Sheriff Kendall has begun to remove a few of those grows and for this we applaud him and his department. We support the local ordinance and believe that it needs enforcement. To abandon it and the work and protections it includes, the processes followed in the last four years to create successful parameters, would be a grave error. Look at Sonoma County and how they now are turning to create local ordinance just as we have already done.

I know that some of you and your staff think that the organizations required to approve a permit cause unacceptable delays in processing, but good government is not simple and without challenge. I urge you to support our local ordinance and give more enforcement capability to help make this county a safe, livable, place where our resources, our land, rivers, streams, ground water, air, wild life, soils and forests are protected and honored.

Thank you for your time and for all your service as you attempt to be in harmony with your constituents.

Paula Fugman