

Hello- my name is Chiah Rodriques. My husband and I are permit holders and provisional license holders of a 10k cultivation and Nursery in Mendocino County.

I urge you to read this Op-Ed link below by Casey O'Neil. He sums up my feelings on the CEQA issue quite well. All of us permit holders in Mendocino County were told for years that the county and BOS would take care of the issue and we don't need to worry. So we did not pursue getting our own site specific CEQA report, nor can we afford it from what we hear it will cost. My farm was in the 9.31 program while it was in effect. We were the 12th permit in Mendocino County. We do not want the CEQA issue to be the death of our farm after how hard we have worked and how much time, money and energy we have invested!

My husband and I founded Mendocino Generations a farm alliance of 50 farms. Many of the farms in the group have been talking about the upcoming potential disaster with CEQA. We have been tirelessly doing everything we can to stay in compliance. We are active in our community. We attend meetings and voice our concerns when they arise. We pay our taxes. Cannabis cultivation tax is a huge line item on the county's budget. The ordinance is flawed and it is time to take our opinions to heart, we are feeling unheard.

As the deadline approaches the issue is coming to a head, fears are running high and confusion is overwhelming. Not fully understanding the CEQA intricacies makes it even worse. I am thankful for groups like MCA that work tirelessly on these issues and inform their membership and the public as time goes on. We are worried now, and hope there is a good resolution to this giant problem. Maybe that is by working with the state to urge them to extend our provisional licenses until the issue is resolved. If not we fear we may be operating illegally mid season when the chips fall.

I also feel the need to touch on another issue, and that is about the 2.5% tax to the county, due quarterly. It is calculated on gross receipts which includes the tax we are required to pay to the state. We are being double taxed. The tax collectors office seem to be fielding questions every quarter when taxes are due since 2018 over this double taxation. They seem confused and frustrated as well. They feel the lack of information and direction from the state is part of that problem. I was told it is written in the ordinance and that's something we need to bring up with the BOS. This double taxation is unfair and breaking the bank for many small farmers. We need to review this problem as the ordinance in question is being reviewed. Rewriting the ordinance seems daunting, I do not believe a total revamp is necessary but key issues we have been hammering for years with the BOS are time to fully address and stop sweeping them under the rug to deal with later.

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Chiah Rodriques