

Re: Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance

Dear Board of Supervisors:

There is no doubt that the present Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance is not working. The growers who have attempted to comply with it and get their state licenses have been unable to do so, and time is running out for them despite their significant investments of time and energy. The ordinance needs to be fixed, no question.

Nonetheless, I think it would be a mistake to give up on local control of cannabis cultivation and leave the oversight of environmental impacts up to the state through the use permit process proposed by Supervisor McCowen. Real environmental protection requires hands-on, up-close enforcement. We need a workable ordinance and an efficient staff at the local level large enough and capable enough to enforce it.

How do we pay for that? From the little I see of the county, it appears that cannabis cultivation is a rapidly expanding business: new money, new jobs, new taxes that need to be earmarked for enforcement and administration.

What a revised ordinance must not do is erode our general plan by allowing cannabis cultivation to invade our rangeland. The size of the grows must be limited to the current 10,000 sq. ft. Demands on our ever-shrinking water resources must be carefully restricted and controlled. Preventing agricultural chemicals to leach into our water system—streams, rivers, and

groundwater—is essential, and protecting our tinder-dry fields and woods from fire is paramount.

I understand that Humboldt County uses a locally administered ordinance that works much better than ours while Sonoma County is considering abandoning the use permit process it now uses in favor of a local ordinance. Our county staff and/or citizen members of a new Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance task force need to devote whatever time and effort it takes to do the research and work out the kinks, but we need to get to work. And we need to do it all in full view of the very interested public.

Sincerely,

Josef Knight