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Mendocino County Supervisors
County of Mendocino

August 2, 2020

In re: Agenda Item 5b

Dear Chair Haschak and Members of the Board,

I am writing to ask you to preserve the Mendocino County Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance.

This ordinance was painstakingly crafted month after month by cannabis cultivators, environmentalists, residents of cannabis-affected neighborhoods, and other citizens, along with county staff, LACO, and the sitting supervisors. It represents the will of the people of Mendocino County and conforms to Mendocino County's general plan. To arbitrarily repeal it, let state regulations prevail, and downgrade to a use permit system would be an insult to those who contributed to its creation, a threat to the health and safety of our rangelands with their wild and human occupants, and a violation of the public trust.

If the MCCCCO is tossed out, the default state regulations would allow for unlimited permits per parcel, and after 2023, no limits on the size of grow sites. Environmental impacts, including groundwater and stream flow reductions, fire danger, light pollution, and ugly rural blight, would proliferate. The zoning table embedded in the ordinance that regulates where cannabis can be grown would be tossed out with it, potentially subjecting currently protected neighborhoods and rangelands to new and expanded insults.

A use-permit system would leave cannabis permitting decisions to the discretion of county planning staff. Except in the case of major use permits, most use permit decisions are made in-house, with no input or oversight from the public or even the county supervisors. Most use permits, moreover, are required by CEQA to provide an assessment of each project's contribution to cumulative impact—hugely time-consuming if done well, and a task that is, in reality, impossible. The over-arching protections embodied in our cannabis ordinance, by contrast, eliminate the need for cumulative impact to be assessed for each individual application.

In closing, I would like to state my support for the excellent points made in letters opposing the repeal of the cannabis ordinance from the California Native Plant Society (San Hedrin and Dorothy King Young chapters); Willits Environmental Center; from Helen Menasian,

from Sheila Jenkins, and from dozens of other contributors. These can be found on the county website (7-21-20, Agenda Item 5b, if they have not yet been forwarded to you by staff.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Kate Marianchild