



October 4th, 2020

Re: Board of Supervisor Meeting 10/6/2020 Agenda Item 5g & 6a

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors,

We are grateful to see that our previous memo submitted in March has been attached to Agenda Item 5g for your review and consideration. We feel that we have addressed many of our concerns as it relates to the proposed Hemp Pilot Program in that memo. Rather than restate those things, we'd like to add some additional feedback.

Covid-19 has not gone away and now we face more disaster with the Oak Fire and August Complex Fire that have devastated many of our rural communities. We do not feel it is the right time to allow for a Hemp Pilot Program to begin, especially since the County is already very short staffed to tackle the many issues we face currently with our cannabis program. Each Supervisor should be very well aware of the severe crisis we are in and it is likely that the County will have to reach out to outside consultants to help tackle the mountain of applications that need to be processed for applicants to be able to receive an annual State Cultivation License. As much as we support a thriving hemp economy, our rural landscape does not support this type of cultivation especially when it stands to jeopardize our cannabis community. We would like the Board to take a bold step in banning hemp cultivation in our County. We can look to other states, such as Oregon, and it is clear that cross contamination of the 2 types of crops is a reality and many farms face seeded product as a result. We can't take that chance with our legacy-producing region.

In regards to Agenda Item 6a, especially as it pertains to Covelo and the unfortunate uptick in violent crime associated with **ILLEGAL** cultivation, we stand firmly behind the Sheriff and trust in his judgment to bring crime in our community to a halt. The illegal activity has become so out of control in Covelo. These large illegal cultivation sites are on the rise and when you enter our valley in the evening you can see glowing greenhouses throughout the entire community. We urge the Board to support the Sheriff in allocating funds to support the efforts to bring this issue to an end. We recognize that the problems we face in Covelo are different from other parts of Mendocino County and we encourage the Sheriff Department to focus on

egregious activities and in areas like Covelo where the problem is the most severe. Without this effort, we fear the continued devastation to our health, safety, wellbeing and our environment. We must draw a line between what is acceptable in our communities and what is not. However, CCAG is concerned about where the funds will come from, especially when the County needs to find funding to properly staff our current cannabis program. There must be a pathway to legalization that is obtainable; otherwise we will never see a reduction in illegal activity. There must be equal funding for both.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on these agenda items.

Sincerely,

Monique Ramirez  
*for the Covelo Cannabis Advocacy Group*