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County of Mendocino

Office Of The Sheriff-Coroner

October 9, 2020

John Haschak, BOS Chairman
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Re: Cannabis Grows & Water Truck Issues

Chair Haschak and members of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors:

I am sending this correspondence in regards the use of water trucks in permitted grow sites within Mendocino County. Currently, the practice is causing issues and concern for many residents within Mendocino County.

During the August Complex we have witnessed many unforeseen consequences of decisions which had been previously made regarding cannabis cultivations and permitting. One of the most glaring issues for me has been the water trucks. I routinely receive complaints and concerns regarding illegal water trucks working in Northern Mendocino County.

I realize much of this is due to the drought we are currently experiencing; however much is due to decisions which have been made on the part of Mendocino County. I realize the board has been working in good faith with many people who are moving into the emerging cannabis market. Often we don't see the underlying issues until we are in the midst of emergency. I fear we must seize every opportunity to address issues as they arise or we will never get in front of them and will continue experience the same issues for decades to come.

During the August Complex fire, many roads were closed due to fears the fire would move at threatening speeds which could be devastating to life. Northern California has not had to deal with this caliber fire danger until recent years which was graphically illustrated during the recent fires we have experienced. As a result, this elevated our need and enhanced approach to Mendocino County Alert system, evacuations, and mandatory closures of areas has changed. We learned much from our previous fires and this education came at the cost of life. The 2017 fires which devastated much of Western California were only the beginning.

During the August Complex decisions were made based on terrain, roads, fire behaviors and weather conditions. These decisions were made in unison with CALFIRE as well as other experts in various fields of knowledge, including the Highway Patrol and United States Forest Service personnel. The decision to allow people back into their homes and properties on a case

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by case basis were also made in unison with our partners. The decision made to not allow water trucks into these areas were based on the safety of our residents as well as fire personnel who were battling the largest fire in the history of California. Any compromised vehicle could cause a road block at a time we simply don't have time. A compromised water truck could be devastating as it could take heavy equipment such as a bulldozer to move.

Upon opening up the daily entry for residents, one of the first people to arrive for a permit was a person in a water truck. This vehicle was rapidly cited for violations by the Highway Patrol who were staffing the checkpoint. Violations on these vehicles are often based in the safe operations and performance of each vehicle.

I recently received a call at the office from a cannabis farmer who stated he needed over 10,000 gallons of water per day to be delivered to his permitted grow sites. The grower advised his properties had no water for cultivation at the time he had the sites permitted. I found this extremely concerning we would be permitting grow sites which were unsustainable on their own assets.

I am asking the Board of Supervisors to take into account all of the issues we are facing with the cultivation of cannabis. I am also asking the board to consider the impacts to the environment including the carbon footprint we are allowing when we make future decisions. Multiple trips per day in water truck which may or may not be legal and licensed will soon cause greater issues for us to deal with. When we allow business to begin in places which weren't suited to sustain the business, we will see environmental impacts. Impacts to life safety, the safety of personnel as well as impacts to our environment and carbon footprint must be looked at in their entirety.

I understand many people have invested large amounts of capital into this endeavor and this could cause financial impacts. Therefore we should be looking at what is sustainable, this may help us to ensure the longevity of the cannabis industry in Mendocino County, while we take into full consideration the safety of life and the environment. Without sustainability I believe we are allowing people set themselves up for failure.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sheriff Matt Kendall