

Good afternoon. I am writing on the subject item, which I just learned is on the Board Agenda this week. While I do not follow the details of cannabis regulations in Mendocino County, I have serious concerns about the "combining district," what it could mean for our local community of Redwood Valley, and what precedent this approval would send for our County.

As a founding member and former Chair of the Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Council (RVMAC), I have listened to dozens of community members, at years of public meetings, who opine about the challenges of keeping Redwood Valley rural. Throughout the over 3 year process to draft an update to the Redwood Valley Community Plan, local residents continually supported maintaining a rural community character. The RVMAC formed as a strong response to outsiders' plans to build a box "formula store" here, and that antipathy to outside developers spoiling the community continues unabated.

While many local residents have few difficulties with cannabis cultivation, and indeed many derive their livelihood from it, they have in good faith participated in public hearings and meetings on the subject. Public sentiment against being forced to live adjacent to large "grows," with many attendant problems, has been strongly expressed. As the state and local regulations are still experiencing "growing pains," it seems misguided to grant variances and exceptions to regulations that went through a controversial public process. While this Agenda issue was discussed briefly at recent RVMAC meetings, the broad implications of this combining district were not clarified, nor did many public community members have access to our "Zoom" meetings during this pandemic. In short, the issue has not yet been adequately addressed. Problems can be foreseen, such as: noise, traffic, light (disruption of dark skies), outside owner/operators, security, crime, and odors. Pesticides, herbicides, and numerous other environmental issues indicate that CEQA needs to be considered and not simply by a Negative Declaration.

Just as significantly, what will the growers use for water? Do they plan on adding to the pressures on agriculture water (currently unavailable through the Redwood Valley Water District due to drought; and potentially unavailable in the future due PGE's abandonment of the Potter Valley Project)? Do they plan to rely on ground water, thereby potentially affecting the many local residents who must rely solely on well water due to the moratorium on RV Water hookups? To my knowledge, the extent of local ground water is still being researched under a State and County program enacted under Governor Brown's administration.

I am advised by those better informed about the cannabis regulations that details of this combining district would require amending items in the approved regulations. Why? There are no significant reasons in this agenda item that, in my mind, support exceptions or variances to existing rules.

Pushing this item through at a time when we are overwhelmed by political and economic challenges, as well as a deadly pandemic, seems untimely and opportunistic. I strongly urge the Board to deny this item. Thank you.

Sincerely, Christine Boyd