

Esteemed County Supervisors,

I am a member of the Redwood Valley Municipal Council but want to respond individually, as a resident who has recently witnessed the disruptive and secretive nature of the creation of an outdoor cannabis farm next door.

This experience has demonstrated that the rules and regulations for AG zoned cannabis farming are badly and hastily written and have not had time to be reviewed and tested by the community. With that knowledge, how can we move forward without addressing them first?

Information about the wishes and general guidelines for a community action plan are contained in the Redwood Valley Community Action Plan. Unfortunately this CAP has not yet been finalized, but its final draft contains dutifully collected wishes of the community. Let me quote some of them here:

Action Goals and Objectives from the updated draft of 6/10/2020:

"Legal cannabis cultivation and associated industries was also noted in this session as a potential economic development opportunity, but one that is not without risk. Potential issues surrounding that industry included associated crime, challenge of regulating effectively, Potential impacts dealing with odor, and deciding how many if any dispensaries would be permitted within RV. Additional concerns that residents identified included seasonal employees drifting into the community, absentee property owners, and the use of non-local, transient employees."

"Concerns related to agriculture mentioned were the availability of water both from the Redwood Valley Water district and private wells, the impact of pesticide and herbicide use in the valley, waste from agricultural production, and the need to protect native habitat.

"Defining the niche of Redwood Valley agriculture as an example of organic and non-GMO production and preserving the sustainability of agriculture in the valley were top priorities

"Wildfire preparedness was a top concern, and a prescient topic given subsequent events. Concerns were raised over home in the wildland urban interface (WUI), the low number of volunteers at the local fire department, AND the presence of locked gates making access difficult for fire fighters."

"Key concerns included the availability of water, or lack thereof, for humans and non-humans due to draws (both legal and illegal) from local creeks and the river, as well as the impacts of the reliance on ground water. The preservation of wildlife habitat in the form of oak woodlands and riparian corridors was also highlighted."

Taking community concerns into account it seems unwise to move ahead with this rezoning plan and strip the adjacent homeowners of their rights and the community at large the opportunity to participate. I believe the distinction between RR and AG zoned properties was written to protect community residents. Why would we want to take those away now? At risk is water, valley wildlife and habitat, sustainable farming, open landscape, personal safety and property values, to name a few. Quality of life issues are as important as economic opportunity. Therefor I politely request that you do deny this rezoning application.

Please forgive the lateness of this email.

Sincerely,

Patricia Ris-Yarbrough

Redwood Valley