

11/17/2020

COUNTY OF MENDOCINO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dear Board of Supervisors

I am a resident of Covelo since 2012 and have been a resident of Mendocino County since 1982. I am writing to share my concerns about cannabis cultivation in Covelo and in Mendocino County as a whole. I have been attempting to follow the very complicated application process for cannabis cultivation. I did welcome the legalization of cannabis and recognize the benefit this product offers as a means for people to make a living in Mendocino County. It helps our County by being a source of revenue via taxes. The benefits of cannabis are still being realized. There are many responsible growers who care about the land and the community and are trying to be legal. But over the past 8 years I have become increasingly frustrated, as from my perspective, poor decisions resulting in the destruction of our land and water resources, as well as our farming community in Covelo, have been made by the County.

Most recently you directed staff, on a 4-1 vote, to create an ordinance that will allow lands designated ag, rangeland, or upland residential to cultivate 10% of their property as cannabis. This was done despite opposition by staff, Sheriff Kendall, ranchers, environmentalists, community members and the Farm Bureau. There was agreement by these groups that there be no expansion into resource lands and no new grows in rangeland.

We cannot consider further expansion until we have a well running program that enforces regulations and culls the non compliant grows that we currently have. There must be something done about the illegal water trucks and there must be more robust monitoring of our water. In Covelo very few wells are actually checked. Gun shots, speeding vehicles and violence continue despite our Sheriff's best efforts.

John Hashack had a zoom town hall meeting on the 15th for our 3rd district. About 26 people attended and the majority of the input had to do with concerns of out of control cannabis cultivation. Despite all the issues of fires and Covid, cannabis was the number one topic. And it was interesting to me that others share my concerns re Covelo in the rest of the 3rd district.

What is disappointing is an apparent lack of response to community concerns that are repeatedly raised by taxpayers while cannabis cultivators are allowed to continue with unregulated grows. The laminated pre-permit card gives them

permission to do anything they want because no one is really watching. Information about the cause of the current permit gridlock is difficult to understand, but from my perspective, it appears the needs of the cultivators are out weighing those of non-growers and the precious land and water resources of our County.

When will this change? Are we going into another drought with our water being used indiscriminately to water grows of individuals who have no intention of ever being legal? Are we going to continue to see more hoop houses going up with no plan for how we are going to support all these cultivators?

It is time to protect the goose or she will stop providing our eggs.

Thank you,

Marilyn Magoffin
Covelo