

January 25, 2021

Dear Honorable Supervisors,

We appreciate the ongoing re-visioning of the cannabis policy locally as the County, as well as the country & the entire world, continue to evolve their opinions of this medicinal plant. We support the Covelo Cannabis Advocacy Group & the Round Valley MAC recommendations. We are in agreement that various options need to be in place for the commercial cannabis industry & specifically for the Annual cultivation licenses from the State to be attainable here in Mendocino. We have attended many meetings, participated in working groups, offered up public comments, written letters to the BOS... & we want to reiterate again, even if Phase 3 becomes the answer to the Phase 1 dilemma, please prioritize Phase 1 applicants & permit holders.

When we stepped forward in the cannabis program, we were told that obtaining a County permit would be the equivalent of the State license. While that may have been the intent, that is simply not true. As a farm who has had an actual County permit for cannabis cultivation since 2017 & a State provisional license since 2018, we are still waiting for the County & the State to work out the CEQA issues. It was clear from the start that the regulations did not line up yet it was expressed all along in BOS meetings & by various iterations of cannabis staff in both the Agriculture & Building & Planning Depts for cultivators not to worry about it, they were going to find a compromise... 3+ years in we are all still waiting! Only to learn recently at the time of our third County renewal, that we are among the group that were approved but do not have the SSHR or air quality, & now the County wants a site plan & other information far & beyond what the State requires, etc. To top it off, there is not enough staff to get even Phase 1 through this process. We are still jumping through all of those hoops with the hope of attaining an Annual license from the State, but truth is, it is a more than ever assumed risk at this point for our farm & most of the phase 1 farms, with no clear path to bridge the gaps from the County to State. Therefore, we are still unclear why the 10% expansion idea for a few seems fair or doable while leaving so many behind.

We acknowledge the difference between commercial ventures & personal gardens. We believe strongly that people should have the right to grow their organic herbal medicines next to their heirloom tomatoes. A commercial Hemp pilot program was approved by the BOS in this county late last year for any zone. That hemp will be grown for smokeable CBD flower, not textiles, since there is nowhere near enough room in this county to grow enough hemp for paper, fabric, rope. Hemp enjoys the favor of being decriminalized due to the 2018 farm bill. We wonder why it is OK to grow hemp in any backyard anywhere in the county, yet the main complaint we have seen online about backyard cannabis is related to the is the scent. Hemp is the same plant as cannabis & therefore it carries the same terpene profiles in other words, it smells the same!! As for crime, no thief will be able to tell the difference between hemp & cannabis. The discussion we have seen online over the weekend amounts to nothing more than reefer madness. Cannabis is legal for adult use in California. Hemp has a different commercial agricultural designation federally right now, that's it. There is much work being done to sort out the need for parity between these two varieties of the same plant species.

Did you all know that while Mendocino County is looking at adopting a land use permit system today instead of the ministerial permit in place now, Sonoma County is at the same time switching from a use permit to a ministerial permit system. So, which way is the way forward for the 1200+ family farms already in the process???!! We agree with the CCAG stance to allow everyone with a commercial permit (or county embossed receipt) to apply to expand to a half acre at this time. The Phase 3 10% plan as it stands right now only seems to engage well-funded corporate interests & that seems like the opposite of what our county has been working on all this time, which is a sustainable path saving the small farms.

Sincerely, Laura & Marty Clein