



January 24th, 2021

Re: Board of Supervisor Meeting 1/26/2021 Agenda Item 4ad

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors,

We have provided comment below in regards to Agenda Item 4ad for your consideration.

#### **Agenda Item 4ad**

***Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer or Designee to Submit a Grant Application and Agreement to the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development for the Cannabis Equity Grants Program for Local Jurisdictions Fiscal Year 2020-2021 for an Amount up to \$5 Million Dollars for Purposes of Funding the Mendocino County Local Equity Program for an Additional Year, and Approving the Reallocation of \$5,000 from the Cannabis Program Budget as a Grant Match Investment to Mendocino County's Cannabis Local Equity Program***

The Covelo Cannabis Advocacy Group (CCAG) supports the recommended action to reallocate \$5,000 from the Cannabis Program Budget to be used as a grant match investment for the Mendocino County Cannabis Local Equity Program. We believe it's important to submit a grant application and agreement to secure funds for an additional year. We hope that the Board supports the resolution and will approve this item on the consent calendar.

We also feel this is an appropriate time to further highlight the need for the County to reexamine the qualification requirements for eligibility, as we have concerns that many people will not have access to this important funding. One area of concern is the income requirement. The income eligibility requirement is based on the 2020 State Income Limits produced by the California Department of Housing and Community Development. An applicant may not exceed an income of \$24,500 for a single household annually based on the very low income scale. We'd like to see the County engage further with Go-Biz to verify if this can be modified. CCAG believes the basis for qualification for this equity grant funding should be a demonstrative impact from the War on Drugs and not the income earned in 2020.

CCAG would also like to see equity funds be used by members applying as cannabis cooperatives or for communities coming together to petition for a cannabis appellation. The way the equity program is structured at this point, it's unclear if an individual can apply on behalf of an entity or not. We hope the Board will consider creating a future agenda item to discuss these concerns further so that the process and access to this program can be transparent and accessible to all who wish to apply.

Thank you for supporting an Equity program in Mendocino County and seeing the importance of this program. We hope those impacted by the war on drugs will have an opportunity to receive some of the funding and that the requirements to qualify are truly equitable and not another barrier to entry.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this important agenda item.

Sincerely,

Monique Ramirez  
*for the Covelo Cannabis Advocacy Group*