

To: Board of Supervisors, Mendocino County

It has been brought to my attention that there is an agenda item 6A that proposes to limit the Planning Commission to 5 seats (one for each Supervisorial District) and remove the two at large seats for appointees “with a knowledge of either agriculture or forestry”. As an over 30 year resident of Mendocino Co who grew up ranching cattle, who married a 3rd generation Mendocino Co rancher, I ask the Board to keep the current makeup for the Planning Commission with the two at-large seats and oppose the recommended action for agenda item 6A. It is difficult enough to maintain a viable agricultural business that will NEVER participate in cannabis activities, use, production, etc. in this County without further restricting the voice of agriculture in county planning. Mendocino County relied on timber and agriculture for many years and I do not feel tourism and cannabis are the answers to successful County planning, growth, and prosperity for its citizens.

Tourists spend their dollars and move on. Tourists will not flock to Mendocino county if the environment is degraded and the views spoiled or the area is perceived to be unsafe. Consider the headlines in local papers-assault, battery, home invasion, vehicle theft, car-jacking, missing persons, arson, and over-dose.

Think about who will be the coaches, 4H leaders, fair animal buyers, Lion’s Club or Rotary members, volunteers for Seniors or disadvantaged, tradespeople, family business owners, stream restorers, trash removers, contributors to music, art, and local fundraising efforts. The people with livestock and forests/vineyards to protect have equipment to fight fires and rescue animals and residents. They rebuild their properties. They raise their families here and support local schools.

Come drive through Covelo and see what current Mendocino County policies are doing to a once beautiful area that already had enough issues to work on without adding cannabis to the mix. Squatters’ shacks, plastic hoop houses, 8 ft tall black plastic fences, marauding guard dogs, substance abuse, garbage dumping, reckless driving, illegal weapons, home invasion, theft, vandalism, abandoned vehicles and travel trailers, graffiti, unsolved missing persons cases, murder, rape. Several arson fires that have leveled most of down-town Commercial street. There are 8 residences on the road we live on. There used to be 1 cannabis/drug/meth residence in the bunch. Now 5 of 8 are cannabis properties and who knows what illegal chemicals are leaching into our watershed.

Supervisors and Planning Commission, this is not the way to fix Mendocino County after big timber pulled out. Keep the land in agriculture (cannabis is not a State or Federally recognized agricultural commodity), sustainably manage the forests, maintain the dams that support Ukiah, Redwood Valley and the upper Russian River watershed for drinking and agricultural water, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat. How has legalization of cannabis helped Mendocino county? There is a tremendous proliferation of illegal grows hiding behind the ‘legal’ grows.

Agriculture-cattle, sheep, goats, vineyards, orchards, healthy forests, and a clean coastline is the view scape that the tourists want to see when they visit Mendocino Co., not abandoned vineyards, overgrown/burnt out forests, dried up lakes, garbage, abandoned vehicles, hoop houses, trashy shacks and fences hiding cannabis, and transients pandering about Ukiah with their trash-strewn homeless encampments. Take a look at the big picture and do what is right in Mendocino county before it is too late to fix and the long-time agriculturalists get the heck out of here on the high property market and leave the County to the takers, grifters, and legal and illegal cannabis grows.

Sincerely,

Tina Wilson

Covelo