

March 17, 2021

Mendocino Planning Commission  
860 Bush Street  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Dear Commissioners,

We are members of the Redwood Valley MAC, speaking here as private citizens. Our views are not necessarily those of any other body including the Board of Supervisors, nor do we speak here for anyone else.

We strongly oppose the expansion of cannabis cultivation up to 10% of acreage in AG, UR, and RL zoning districts, as specified in the Commercial Cannabis Activity Land Use Ordinance. We want to underline our shared position with the Laytonville MAC and the Round Valley MAC in their opposition to this impending decision/vote. Allowing 10% of total acreage for commercial cannabis farming exacerbates existing, non-mitigated stressors that will quicken environmental collapse in our county.

Redwood Valley residents care deeply about the quality of their natural environment and have long worked to be good stewards of its resources. In our Community Action Plan of 2020, residents diligently and specifically expressed concern about the negative impacts of large scale indoor and outdoor cannabis cultivation on residents—especially lights, fences, hoop houses, smells, violent crime, traffic, property values and the environment. We are already struggling with these and while Phase III could eventually reduce crime, we have reason to believe the other negative impacts will get worse.

Most importantly, Redwood Valley's current water crisis has made almost certain that agricultural water provided by Redwood Valley County Water District will soon be shut off completely. Delivery of domestic water will likely depend on reallocation of water from other districts or agencies. We agree with Supervisor Glenn McGourty that we must protect every drop of water in the Upper Russian River Basin. We owe it to our county's existing farms and families to protect them first before inviting in large-scale cultivation off a crop known for its excessive water demands.

We lack confidence that Mendocino County has the budget, staffing or track record to responsibly allow new cannabis operations while also protecting residents and existing businesses. Already Redwood Valley is experiencing rapid proliferation of hoop houses without any signs of oversight or enforcement. We have noted a lack of transparency and public process in the County's fast-tracked development of Phase III of the Cannabis Ordinance. Without inviting and heeding the voices of citizens and giving ample time and forums for public discussion, the democratic process has failed. Though the majority of Californians voted to legalize cannabis, we have heard from so many in our county that this proposal is not what they voted for. They wanted legalization of small, sustainable farms.

We therefore oppose the development of large-scale cannabis cultivation in our district. We respectfully request that you reject the Board of Supervisor's proposal for Phase III expansion of cannabis cultivation in Mendocino County. While this type of expansion might be appropriate in other counties with more robust resources, it is not appropriate here.

Thank you very much for your consideration and your time and attention to this urgent issue.

Very Sincerely,

Sattie Clark, Patricia Yarbrough, Jini Reynolds, Marybeth Kelly, Chris Boyd, Katrina Frey  
Residents of Redwood Valley