



M E N D O C I N O C O

To: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Re: Agenda Item 5f

April 12, 2021

Dear Chair Gjerde and members of the Board;

In the last few months, there has been an outpouring of public concern over myriad negative impacts associated with the Phase 1 cannabis program and persistent illicit market activity. Many of these concerns are well-founded; water is being pulled from rivers, crime and violence have been constant, and unpermitted construction has altered rural landscapes. The truth is that Mendocino County has never experienced a truly legal cannabis industry.

Prop 64 was the beginning of a new chapter; legalization ushered in regulatory oversight, taxation, and robust environmental regulation. Unfortunately, this chapter didn't begin well in Mendocino. The Phase 1 program didn't deliver a clear path to compliance and licensure, and it was impossible to enforce.

Phase 3 is about compliance. The discretionary use permit process will provide what Phase 1 couldn't: a CEQA compliant permitting process with case-by-case discretionary review of each application, opportunities for neighborhood input, and Planning Commission hearings. Phase 3 will require a Use Permit, state license, and full environmental compliance *before* applicants can begin operations, or even dig a hole or a well. Enforcement works under a good ordinance.

We finally have a solution before us. Phase 3 will dramatically change the rules of engagement, and solve many of the current problems. The Cannabis Business Association of Mendocino County supports the Board of Supervisors in its work to develop a workable and enforceable cannabis program for the benefit of the entire community.

Thank you,

Sarah Bodnar
Policy Director, CBAMC