

Transparency and Accountability

County residents decisively defeated Measure AF. Now the County proposes a similar major Cannabis expansion that will transform neighborhoods. This issue will be discussed and perhaps acted upon during the April 19 Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting. This meeting may be your last time to decide the fate of the County.

If you are concerned about a significant Cannabis expansion in your neighborhood, please contact the BOS now (bos@co.mendocino.ca.us) to speak or send a letter at this BOS meeting by registering before 7 a.m., the day of the hearing, under “public engagement” on the bottom left panel. Following are facts regarding the proposed expansion.

- The County's management of the existing Cannabis program has been dismal.
- A large number of permits were issued illegally by the Agriculture Department, in their haste to issue permits and collect fees.
- The Planning Department says site specific CEQA will protect the neighbors and environment. **Yet they admit they do not inspect whether Land Use Conditions are implemented.**
- Code Enforcement is chronically, severely under-staffed along with excessive staff turnover in most Cannabis related departments.
- The Sheriff reports he is over-whelmed and out-gunned by the current Cannabis community.
- This expansion exceeds current State standards of 1-acre maximum.
- Rather than hire more Enforcement, personnel the County hired a Cannabis lobbyist to head the Cannabis Program.
- No Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared.
- The County is rushing to enact the changes before July 1, when a County-wide CEQA analysis requiring cumulative effects analysis will be required.

Considering these facts, **the public has no confidence in these departments**, as currently configured, to protect the public interest and environment. Rather, we are concerned the Planning Department will roll out the red carpet for any grower, with cash in hand, to pay for their permit with a wink and nod, knowing in advance that the Planning Department does not enforce Use Permit conditions, nor conduct follow-up site inspections, unless forced to do so by a neighbor. We need transparency and accountability in the Cannabis Program so the public can monitor these functions. Following are changes the public require:

- Fully staffed **Active Enforcement**, requiring a dedicated Sheriff's unit, integrated with the Code Enforcement Department.
- Cap on the total number of permits by zoning, and a cap on the total number of permits county-wide.
- Water availability determined by a professional Hydrological Study to pertinent standards within the County Coastal Groundwater Study and not by staff.
- Remaining springs reserved for wildlife.
- Code Enforcement and Planning Cannabis environmental analysis independent of the Cannabis Manager.
- All Permits, especially AP and Minor Use, be legally noticed public hearings, not necessarily involving the Planning Commission.
- All permits require an annual inspection, paid for by the grower, with inspection results posted on-line, naming the agencies and inspector(s) involved.
- CEQA analysis, Permits, and Use Permit Conditions posted on-line, in real time.
- All Code Enforcement complaints and resolutions posted on-line, in real time.
- All Cannabis related staff qualifications and years of experience posted on-line, in real time.