



# COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

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**Memo to:** Chairman Dan Gjerde

**From:** Glenn McGourty

**RE: Cannabis Ordinance**

I believe the following guidelines will help us in deliberations concerning crafting the cannabis ordinance and its implementation:

1. Our first step is an enhanced active code enforcement similar to Humboldt County's to stop illegal grows. There are too many of them, particularly in rural residential areas and they need to be abated. We need to be sure that both our Code Enforcement Program and the Sheriff's Office are adequately staffed and funded to make a measurable difference in this coming year.
2. Given drought conditions, there should be no expansion of actual growing during the 2021 season. According to Dr. Sam Sandoval, UC Extension Hydrologist, the biggest negative impacts on surface water and fisheries occur when water is diverted in the upper reaches of a watershed. We definitely do not want expanding growing in those regions this year.
3. This is a good time to "get our house in order" with the Phase 1 program. A thorough review of applications should be made to find a pathway to compliance that will enable applicants to obtain a use permit and a state issued cannabis license. We need to complete the electronic application submission portal. I support additional staffing to review the applications and make final decisions. Applications that have no path forward due to inadequacies of the site to meet regulations or other disqualifying issues should be rejected.
4. Phase 3 should be opened as a pathway for some of the Phase 1 applicants to complete mitigated CEQA compliant permits. Under a CEQA compliant process, they may have the ability to mitigate issues that would otherwise disqualify their projects.
5. Additionally, I recommend a pilot program of new applicants on parcels more suited to conventional agriculture. I see a selected cohort of 30 existing resident Mendocino

County farmers who are presently locally in business producing crops other than cannabis who wish to enter the cannabis business. Required classes should be held to ensure that their applications are properly assembled and complete upon submission. We need to be sure that the Cannabis Program has adequate staffing to review new applicants. An orderly roll out of the new expanded program is the goal of this effort.

6. In this expansion, the permits will be for sun grown cannabis only. No greenhouses, hoop houses or other growing structures would be permitted. A small (maximum 1000 square foot) structure would be allowed to propagate or harden off seedlings and starts.

7. No expansion of cannabis into Rangeland, TPZ or other areas unless there already exists non cannabis crop land that has been cleared and has a legal reliable water source.

8. No operations should be considered for permitting that require internal combustion generators or pumps, water to be trucked in (except in emergency situations,) extensive grading or tree removal.

9. No fencing that block views are allowed in any newly permitted plantings. We want to maintain our pastoral vistas and an open feel of the region.

10. In order to allow direct sales for very small producers, a microbusiness option should be implemented similar to regulations allowed under state licenses. The one presently allowed in our ordinance is too small in square footage to be practical.

If we are going to have a cannabis business in Mendocino County, let's have a well-run one that makes a contribution to economy, community and farm based rural culture. There has to be a value proposition that makes its presence a net positive for Mendocino County. I won't support anything less.