

April 17, 2021

Dear Board of Supervisors of Mendocino County,

I am not a cannabis cultivator, however, I am a bookkeeper, METRC administrator for legal cannabis farms. I have witnessed their struggles firsthand. I have watched the program progress from its inception. The constant changes. The never ending fees. The frustration in understanding which ordinance or regulation to apply, and if it changed recently. The hoops jumped through that no other agricultural crop has ever needed to maintain a business. The constant paperwork losses after submitted to the County. The unreturned phone calls and emails. The snail pace of Building and Planning due to small staffing. The Sheriff's focus on lumping legal growing with illegal outlaws. The promise of the County that they will obtain a State License if they follow all as originally outlined. The incredible ignorance of County staff about the regulations of the cannabis program, the farmers too often have to spell it out for them. There is more I could add, but I'll stop here.

While the county's program has collapsed due to not being in alignment with the State guidelines, that does not equal not honoring the goal post of a promised State Licensure if they followed the County's program. Expansion is not a necessary goal to fix this broken promise. It appears that was added to assist the County in continuing to acquire huge monies from the taxes cannabis cultivators pay, not because current cultivators want to expand. It follows then that it was added to allow and attract big businesses to Mendocino. Corporations that will bring in outside workers and take their earnings to other counties, states, and countries instead of putting the earnings back into our communities. It is simply not prudent to allow any of this to happen in our county, now and possibly never. There is not enough housing for our current community workers/residents. There is not enough staffers to fulfill completion of applications already sitting in Building and Planning. The County decries the amount of time it takes and will take to complete these, how will it address an increase? Water. We are currently in a drought that is more severe than 1977; with our abundance of grape acreage, livestock, and rural residents, we have no extra. Please give serious critical thought to holding off on any expansion until, we are not in a drought and more importantly, until the current Phase 1 and 2 applicants are given clear, mailed and emailed, 60-90 day period to show that they are sincerely attempting to comply with the guidelines as outlined, with updated regulations clearly spelled out and adequate staff to assist them.

Lucinda Walker
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