

4/18/2021

To: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors  
Re: Commercial Cannabis Activity Land Use Development Ordinance  
Special meeting April 19, 2021, item 3b

Dear Board of Supervisors

I do not support passage of the Commercial Cannabis Activity Land Use Development Ordinance. We have no significant code or legal enforcement in place that can address the current pandemic of illegal/non-compliant Cannabis grows that exist in our County. Without enforcement, we can only expect more of the same, even if we can create a pathway, via a new ordinance, that will allow cultivators to be compliant with California state requirements. Supervisor Williams suggests that we can just push aside the illegal/non-compliant grows and deal with them later, but move ahead with setting the framework for advancing and expanding the legal/compliant grows, via the new ordinance. This is magical thinking.

We are in our current situation of having thousands of illegal/non-compliant cannabis grows in Mendocino County because we opened Pandora's Box. By allowing permission to grow Cannabis with only a promise of intending to be legal, we now have a plethora of Cannabis grows that are eating up and destroying water and land resources and criminal activity that is destroying local communities. Where there were once honest farmers, who cared about their land and the community, are now people who are only interested in making a buck and getting what they can from this industry before moving on. Sadly, the honest farmers, still trying to move forward with their commitment to being legal, are mixed in with the illegal, non-compliant growers.

The County set this in motion with the current permitting process that did not have adequate code and legal enforcement resources in place. While this was an unintended consequence, the old adage "when you know better you do better" applies now. Attempts to separate out the problems associated with the illegal grows from the legal grows may look good on paper, but will not work in our real world.

Evidence of this failed thinking is obvious in my community of Covelo. Down my road I have watched an expanding grow from last year to this year. It has gone from 10 hoop houses to more than I can count. The grow; located on Mill Creek, where we used to walk and we now don't dare for fear of guns and pit bulls, is driving away the neighbors. Questions to the County about the legality of this grow reveal that it is maybe illegal or legal but, because the owners have the laminated permission card, they may proceed until the County can get around to processing them.

Before considering expansion into rangeland and increasing the allowable amount of land used to grow cannabis to 10%, there must be the means to enforce the regulations. The public will not support growth of this important industry until the County shows good faith and restores public trust by cleaning up the current mess we are all now dealing with. Enforcement must be in place and conducted before any expansion.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Magoffin  
Covelo