

April 18, 2021

TO: The Members of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

RE: Proposed Commercial Cannabis Activity Land Use Ordinance

Please do not adopt the proposed Cannabis Land Use Ordinance. Any expansion of cannabis in Mendocino County must be preceded by an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

I oppose the proposed commercial cannabis activity land-use ordinance that is currently under consideration in our county. I am dumbfounded that it is being seriously considered for adoption. Perhaps it should be re-labeled "land MIS-use Ordinance".

I own 150 acres of combined ranchland, ag land, and oak woodlands on the west side of the Ukiah Valley. Currently, there are large commercial cannabis grows on the east and west of my property. I am concerned about my safety, the viability of my well, and the continued environmental destruction that I've observed.

I am especially concerned by the provisions of the proposed ordinance that would open all of our rangelands to development and allow up to 10% of a 10-acre parcel or more in the ag, upland residential, and rangeland zones to be converted to cannabis. Is this the best use of those lands? No. Is this vision what will make a sustainable future for our county? No.

This new ordinance would allow cannabis cultivation ordinance without an environmental review (CEQA). The water in the Ukiah Valley water has already been over-allocated, and as we well know, cannabis requires gallons of water per day. Now, most of the water needed for grow has been illegally taken from our rivers and streams. To what end? Do we have a deficit of cannabis on our county, and need to quickly circumvent those laws that were designed to protect our soil, water, and rural terrain? Have we not agreed previously to protect our oak woodlands? Finally, this under-the-wire ordinance would allow cutting even more trees, which to me is unconscionable.

The proposed ordinance would encourage massive expansion of cannabis cultivation throughout the county. What would prevent large-scale commercial growers from outside the county, or state from buying up large parcels and destroying what we most value about living here? What else will occur, we can't even imagine. Unintended consequences? For sure.

The proposed provisions would also undermine the goals of the Biden administration that are calling for 30% of our lands to be preserved to stave off the collapse of wildlife from climate change. If we have the will to continue to preserve our rangelands, we would be able to meet that 30% goal.

This proposed ordinance is short sighted and irresponsible. It will likely further existing environmental abuses and invite unprecedented negative impacts. Please deny this proposal from moving.

Please do not adopt the proposed Cannabis Land Use Ordinance.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ray, owner Benson Ranch
Ukiah, CA 95482