

County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors  
501 Low Gap Rd.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
**BOS@mendocinocounty.org**

April 19, 2021

RE: Cannabis Expansion Proposal

Dear Supervisors:

Thank you very much for moving toward a proactive cannabis enforcement program! To use a fire analogy, this County thought it was creating a controlled burn when it jumped before the State to create a legal Cannabis market. As we all know, we now have an out-of control fire, dominated by illegal black market grows. According to the Sheriff and Code Enforcement, we have no means to control this raging fire at this time. Staffing up to an effective level will take at least two to three years, even with 100% funding. So we have a skeleton crew that is only able to sometimes, put out new fires created by the embers from this raging fire. To add the gasoline of Cannabis expansion to our existing out-of control fire at this time, is unconscionable.

Once we have the current cannabis situation under control, then yes, let's analyze the situation and identify appropriate places and conditions where expansion could occur. Leaping forward unprepared, as the County did last time with Phase 1 and 2, will create a blighted landscape with more hoop houses, lights and generators than we have now. We don't even have policies in place to protect irreplaceable prime agricultural soils from hoop house abuse. Let's create a system whereby Cannabis agriculture means plants in native soil, rather than our current imported soil, imported water, and imported plastic hoop house system.

The issue of fencing needs review. Although intended to reduce visual blight, it has resulted in areas of 100% fencing on both sides of a road, from the ground to six or eight feet high for nearly a mile.. This has tremendous impact in restricting animal movement, from amphibians to ungulates. Absolutely no consideration was given to the consequences of requiring fencing, nor of appropriate fencing design. This highlights the critical need for a complete EIR, before we create more blight and destruction in the environment. The timing is advantageous, since by the time we conduct an EIR and revise our code, we will just be getting the appropriate staffing in place to enforce the code.

Please suspend any Cannabis expansion until we are in control of our destiny and have a clear understanding of the environmental consequences of our decisions. Keep in mind the Humboldt Cannabis Enforcement program generates revenue. Moreover, several actual wildfires have already been caused by Cannabis activity in this County, with more to come. It seems entirely appropriate to use some of the PG&E fire mitigation money to fund enforcement actions targeted at eliminating illegal, hazardous Cannabis operations.

Thank you all for your hard work!

Sincerely,  
Dennis Slota

CC: PBS, Code Enforcement, Sheriff's Department