

To all members of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors,

Vote NO on Phase 3 Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance,

The proposed Phase 3 Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance endangers our environment, communities, and local economy. The expansion proposed by the BOS in both acreage and zoning has the potential to dramatically change what our county will be. I strongly oppose this proposal.

We can already see environmental damage from supposedly small grows. In this time of drought, local residents fear that massive use of water for growing cannabis will dry up wells and springs, leaving people short of water for the essentials of life. Wildlife will suffer as animals become more desperate as riverbeds and waterholes dry up. The cumulative impacts of this expansion need to be studied yet the Board frantically tries to pass this new ordinance before July 1 without doing an environmental impact report. This is our environment where we live.

Communities will change giving us hoop houses instead of pastoral vistas. Food and regular agriculture will not be able to compete as land prices skyrocket. Food production will be converted to cannabis production. Prime ag lands and vulnerable range lands will be rocked over, plastics will cover the land, and hoop houses will multiply. Guard dogs and higher security will dominate our country roads, valleys and hillsides. Code enforcement and law enforcement have already lost control of the situation. These changes will greatly accelerate if the Board passes this ordinance without addressing the dangers. When the boom bursts, which it will, whoever and whatever is left will have a lot of cleaning up to do.

We shape our economy and communities with our policy decisions. That is why you don't see McDonalds in Mendocino. Phase 3 could devastate mom and pop growers while huge cannabis grows proliferate. Wall Street investors, buying up land for profit are instigating a race to the bottom, damaging our local economy by bringing cheap labor and extracting profits to benefit far-away private equity funds.

Mendocino County has failed to properly implement Phase I and II of the ordinance. Permits were wrongly granted. Out of the 1,100 in the county permit system, only a handful have received state annual licenses which is what is needed to grow legally after January 1, 2022. Code enforcement can't keep up. Law enforcement has been overwhelmed by illegal grows. Yet somehow some Board members believe that this new ordinance, opening up range land and expanding grow sites will make everything right. Wishful thinking. A much bigger mess is ahead of us if we go down this path.

In a democracy, the elected representatives need to listen to the people. The Planning Commission received over 400 letters. 99% were against this expansion. The Sheriff, Farm Bureau, Municipal Advisory Councils of Laytonville, Redwood Valley and Round Valley, Willits and Mendocino Environmental Centers, Covelo Cannabis Advocacy Group, and many other groups are against this proposal. Big cannabis businesses are for it.

Please make your voices heard by writing to or calling the Board before the April 19 meeting.

If the BOS decides not to listen, then the people need to be able to vote on this issue.

Looking ahead, Mendocino County needs to perform an Environmental Impact Report, fund code and law enforcement to enforce the rules we have, and let the people vote about this issue. The future of Mendocino County is at stake.

Sincerely,

Marcia Snyder

Fort Bragg, CA