

To the Board of Supervisors,

I am a small farmer who lives in rural Eastern Mendocino, North of Covelo in a beautiful place called Hulls Valley. My husband and I grow under 5000 sq foot canopy and it keeps us busy and despite the last several years being extremely difficult to stay afloat, we have kept our heads up and bought all in to the county and state program. I don't think it's a terrible idea to want to allow some farmers to scale up on ag land or maybe convert wine production to cannabis, but I really am disgusted that 10 percent is being offered up while saying that the small farmers are never gonna make it anyways and many of them will be denied. The idea that somehow these big farms with their lawyers, and engineers, and tons of workers is just a crock of bs anyways. They have just as much possibility to fail as we do, to clog the system with their own permit questions and difficulties. How can you guys see this as a solution on the heels of the worst year in history? How can you even consider smashing out the livelihoods of so many farmers. I have told my friends who have not really been proceeding with their permits over and over that a day will come where permits will be denied and letters will come in the mail saying cut down your plants or we will fine you to smithereens. Except the county ag department and planning and building have never provided clear messaging on exactly what puts you in compliance and what puts you in a position where they can deny you and throw you out with the dish water. When will this happen? How will this happen? If permits are denied in the middle of a growing season it can be nothing other than punitive, going back to archaic thinking that pot farmers are somehow doing something wrong and should be punished for it. When you make big decisions for the county that will impact your constituents and more importantly the environment, I urge you to use your heart and don't be the bad guy in the dr. seuss book. Do we want Mendocino to look like the central valley? Is it even possible? Is it moral to allow such huge expansion in the face of so many farmers in Mendocino on the verge of losing their livelihoods? Because whatever you may think of the outlaw growers personally, their disappearance will impact lives. Can you write it into law that there can only be so many big farms? Will their fees help lift the burden for the small farmer?

Eileen Russell

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