

Dear Board of Supervisors,

The implementation of the “Big Grows” just doesn’t pass the HO-HO test when it comes to OUR environment and the future of our community. This year and many years in the past we will be or have been asked to drastically reduce water usage. While the general public is struggling to maintain basic water needs, the BOS are considering the expansion of Cannabis which is a water demanding industry. Water is very precious, and there is no way the “Big Grows” won’t have a negative impact on this valuable resource. With the problem of global warming our water shortages are not going away anytime soon, if at all. It is naive and irresponsible to say there are checks in place that will prevent the “Big Grows” from impacting our watersheds and all that is downstream like our communities, salmon, steelhead etc. Per “The Journal of Professional Cannabis Growers and Retailers” cannabis cultivators’ report on water usage states a small garden 50 feet by 100 feet having 50 plants will use 24,000 gallons to bring this crop to maturity. I would assume the “Big Grows” are going to have 1000’s of plants. Additionally, it is my belief that the “Big Grows” are not going to eliminate or offset illegal grows. With that being said it is most likely our environment will be impacted in an additive manner (not neutral or negative) if the BOS votes to approve phase III.

Currently your proposal seems to take the easy way out when I see “Pro-Big-Grow” supporters making comments like “it’s our heritage” based on the fact we have been growing marijuana illegally for 50 plus years. If my understanding is correct, the proposed solution allows the “Big Grows” to take place legally via the big landowners (those who already have everything) and give them the fiscal opportunity while only adding employment opportunity to a handful of farm workers at minimum wage.

We can’t make the same mistakes we did with the logging industry. We need to stop this short-term thinking of “it’s easy, so take it while we can”. Our forests have been over-logged to near extinction of our entire lumber industry because of this kind of thinking.

Our community needs to abandon this philosophy and come up with a solution that will benefit and meet our needs of today and those of our future generations. Our solution can’t be “all about money”. It needs to have balance without compromise. We need a solution that will make this a better place to live and the envy of all.

As a bare minimum, please “Pause” and re-think your implementation of the “Big Grow”. The Drought conditions alone are reason enough.

Leroy and Debbie Leland