

Sunday, April 18th, 2021

Dear Board of Supervisors,

Please do not approve or promote the “Cannabis Land Use Ordinance” (Agenda Item 3b).

We do not need to turn over our extensive land and water resources to unregulated cannabis production, which could seriously degrade our social, environmental, climatic and living environment, more than it already has been by illegal grows, all for short term and probably largely exported monetary gain.

As an organic/biodynamic food producing farmer in Covelo for the past 48 years, I have seen the extractive timber industry come and go leaving weakened and damaged watersheds and fire prone environments behind. More recently we experience our community inundated with trash filled cannabis grows which have driven land prices far beyond what can be viably paid for from sustainable food or livestock agriculture thus excluding development of beginning or expanding food farmers and agricultural and nature related tourism. Considering we are in an extended drought, we also have grave concern about the excessive use of water by this industry and its future on our watershed and agricultural viability.

Our farm has been growing high quality food for 100 families (200-300 people) in this county for decades and we need to continue to do so. Without water we cannot provide this food. Many of these families, as members of our farm, have depended on our farm since the beginning, over 30 years ago. In November 2020, for the first time in those 48 years, our 4 artesian wells were not flowing artesian. Passing Agenda Item 3b threatens the viability of our farm and livelihood.

Without water, we cannot protect ourselves from arson and wildfires that come increasingly too close for comfort. Last fall water tankers were going past our farm 20-40 times a day to fight the August Complex Fire. As was noted clearly at the Board of Supervisors meeting April 12th, Mendocino County is in a SEVERE DROUGHT. Undoubtedly there will be more fires, where will the water come from to fight those fires?

Obviously, a county-wide Environmental Impact Report must be done before any changes can be done in cannabis cultivation.

Please stop expansion and control cannabis grows throughout our county and assess and take action to mitigate the wide spread illegal grows in Round Valley.

Our ag 40 property is now surrounded on two sides by cannabis grows, with practically a steady stream of speeding trucks and trailers going up and down the road taking soil, bagged amendments, water pipe, etc., and dispersing it all over our ag and hill land, as well as water tank trucks depleting the water table hauling water out of the valley and into the hills. Hoop houses are everywhere, taking up what used to be valuable agricultural land. At night, throughout the valley and the surrounding hills, greenhouse lights negatively impact the night sky. This is polluting, unsustainable, and destroying our quality of life. Do you want your property surrounded by unregulated cannabis for short term profit? Please stop Agenda Item 3b, retain the current ordinance which has grow size limits and recourse for mitigation and establish and fix the regulatory and compliance process so that permitted legal growers can be established and eliminate illegal grows.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Stephen Decater

Gloria Decater

Live Power Community Farm