

I am writing today in support of the 10% expansion, without the proposed 2 acre cap suggested by the planning commission. Limiting businesses to 10,000 sq ft will drive small businesses out of the county to the surrounding counties that allow larger grows. Large corporations will be able to afford multiple properties with 10,000 sq ft while small businesses cannot. This is already occurring.

If we allow larger size grows on a single property, small farmers can combine forces and funds. We can work collaboratively. We can form an actual cooperative model on a single property that will be sustainable. That does not work with a 10,000 sq ft limitation.

A 10,000 sq ft limitation, even an acre limitation, puts our county vastly behind other counties both in our area and beyond. This puts small farmers at a disadvantage over other areas.

There is fear about water usage, but as new reports come out, we see that cannabis uses far less water than many agricultural crops in our state.

The community has an interest in bringing tourism to our county, but we will not be able to do so unless the businesses here have the cash flow to afford bringing their properties into compliance for tourism. That creates additional expenses on top of the cannabis regulatory expenses for an industry that's already heavily regulated and taxed, and not able to deduct many expenses for income taxes as other businesses would be able to under 280E.

Tourism requires ancillary businesses, who will need to be able to attract a workforce. That workforce will need to be able to find housing. This means that the county will need increased infrastructure. Not having the increased acreage will limit the funds coming in.

If the long term goal of our county is to become a destination spot for cannabis tourism, the businesses (both direct and indirect) need the support and infrastructure to allow for this. Cultivation being driven to other counties makes ours less likely to be successful in attracting the tourism, ancillary business, and revenue needed to support the infrastructure.

For these reasons we are strongly in support of the 10% cultivation area per property. The use permit model will weed out those properties which may not be appropriate for such a project.

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Joseph Aslan