

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

RE: Agenda Item 4F - Local Jurisdiction Assistance Grant Program Application

Chair Gjerde and Honorable Members of the Board,

I respectfully request that you pull Item 4F (Local Assistance Grant Program Application) from the Consent Calendar for the purpose of Board discussion and direction. I believe it is critical that the Board take this opportunity to direct that the grant application include a request for funding for an Environmental Impact Report for a discretionary land use permit system in alignment with that provided for in Chapter 22.18.

Unless something has changed, I believe Cannabis Program Staff is still of the opinion that up to 90% or more of current applicants will not obtain State Annual Licenses through the current Chapter 10A.17 Phase 1 & Phase 2 pathway. Therefore, many existing applicants will need a local discretionary land use permit system in order to satisfy the requirements of site specific CEQA and secure a State Annual License. The concern has been expressed that there is not enough time to complete an EIR, accept completed applications and notice them for hearing prior to 6/30/23. I believe the timelines can be met for a significant but unknown number of current applicants provided the County prioritizes doing so. For instance, today the Board could direct issuance of an RFP for a qualified consultant to prepare the EIR instead of waiting for approval of the grant.

The purpose of the grant is to assist current applicants in moving from a Provisional to a State Annual License. Without a discretionary land use permit system most current applicants will not be able to obtain a State Annual License. For this reason it is entirely appropriate to include funding for an EIR in the grant application.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

John McCowen

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