

Greetings Honorable Commisioners,

I am writing to communicate our position regarding the cannabis ordinance. I am a legacy farmer who has not had an opportunity to enter the legal market due to financial limitations. Once phase 1 was developed, we converted our 25 plant proposition 215 grow to an organic produce farm. We were unable to afford to enter the legal market, so we stepped out. We are still unable to afford to participate in any legal programs. We have been here on our property since 1998, but we will be leaving this county if our opportunity to enter the legal cannabis space gets squandered.

We attempted to get into the LEEP program, but we do not meet the qualification of being raided by CAMP. We definitely suffered hardship from being in the legacy market, but our hardship was not from CAMP interactions. I understand that the county drafted and defined the conditions for LEEP with individuals from Humboldt State, and that the parameters were supposed to be changeable. I also understand that the people who drafted the LEEP program were told that changes could be made, but it was too much hassle to make changes. I have issues with this stance, because there are people like ourselves that suffered hardship and it had nothing to do with CAMP. In fact, COMET was the force in Mendocino County that harassed people in this county, and COMET is never even mentioned in the LEEP program... probably because Humboldt County individuals wrote our LEEP program. I know this LEEP program can be modified, but that whoever is in charge does not want to bother with the hassle. This program was drafted by a neighboring county, and it is not specific to Mendocino. We need to take the time to have a proper program that serves our county and our people who can not afford the cost. We need to provide a way for people like us who suffered hardship, yet followed the laws as they were created and still participated positively in the community.

Point is, we suffered hardships related to the legacy market, but not directly related to CAMP. Our cannabis opened two dispensaries during the proposition 215 days that never compensated us for our product because they could. At the time, dispensaries couldn't grow, and cultivators couldn't make money for their product. The dispensaries took advantage of us as cultivators by taking our product and leaving us high and dry for our product. Why? Because they could. We were also robbed during this time period. When we went to harvest our cannabis, the entire crop was gone. We did not call the authorities, because it was a time of uncertainty and there was not much they could do.

Now, we are hopeful for the opportunity to jump into phase 3. Again, we are limited by our finances. We are legacy growers that have been growing on our property since 1998. We are low income, we own 160 acres zoned ag, we have 1/4 mile of hwy 20 frontage, we have not been attacked by CAMP.

We want desperately to enter the legal market and to create an amazing space for tourism and education. We could have a nursery, a small cannabis cultivation site, a tasting facility with pop-up dining, and a bud and breakfast. We want Mendocino to be the Napa of wine, or Champagne of France. I am a retired school teacher. My husband is a licensed contractor. We are CCOF certified produce farm. There has to be a way for people who have made steps to follow the laws and regulations that have been imposed. So far, we have been sitting on the sidelines due to financial limitations.

Truthfully, we have a golden opportunity slipping from our fingers right now. My fantasy is that we embrace the legacy growers, the ones who built our internationally recognized "Emerald Triangle" and Mendocino Brand. If embraced, cultivators will be proud to step above board and flourish. We need opportunities for small businesses to vertically integrate and provide farm to customer sales ... like wine sales and tastings at vineyards. This could be a huge WIN-WIN for everybody. (Just look at Doc Ray Genetics, Good Mo Fo Farms... He was a long time Mendocino County resident with a huge family name who left the county to cultivate in a county that made space for him. He is internationally recognized, the VA is working with him and his strains, the EU is working with him, he's opening a research center, he's opening a bud and breakfast.... and he was a Mendo local. Our county lost this gem... Now Humboldt is benefitting from his vertically integrated cannabis farm, because Mendocino policy drove him off) .... and what is happening in Mendo? We are catering to outsiders.

As far as the phase 1 & 2 growers, you must make it right for them. They should be able to transition easily. The easier you make it, the more you appreciate the people, the more likely the people you worry are abusing the program will step above board to proudly participate. If there is a path, we will take it. If there is regulation and costs, we will join the exodus from the county.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,  
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