

Planning & Building Services Staff

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>>> "D. Roble" <dobleroble@ringnebulanet.net> 5/5/2021 4:58 PM >>>

To: Mendocino County Department of Planning and Building Services

CC: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

I have a growing list of unanswered questions for the Planning Commission and the Board, which are crucial to the passing of the latest revised ordinance.

1.) How will you address and enforce any of the restrictions of the ordinance, either the current one that is "on the books" or your revised version, for large-scale cannabis cultivation sites already operating without any permits on large and multiple parcels of range and forest land, and that are expanding even further, cutting new roads, removing trees, and constructing hoop houses on graveled pads? Many of these cultivation sites are invisible from public roads and are not "above an existing ridgeline." They are hidden from view by anyone but their surrounding neighbors, who instinctively know, despite the Planning Department's assurances that their complaints will remain confidential, that in reality it will be obvious who filed the complaint, and therefore fear retribution from these perpetrators. Will the few existing planning commissioners and cannabis enforcement officers visit these sites and confront the perpetrators face to face? What if they aren't allowed on the property? What if it is too dangerous for them to try? These are real concerns that face you and anyone involved in the permit process trying to inspect and enforce its regulations. Who would willingly go onto illegal cannabis sites and shut them down, even though the ordinance says it will do so? How many businesses, land development or building projects has the County Planning Department ever shut down that had already been completed, despite whatever regulations they violated?

2.) How will the Planning Department or other enforcement agencies enforce a road grading ordinance that doesn't exist?

3.) How will it enforce an oak woodland ordinance that also doesn't exist?

4.) How can the Planning Department or the "permit administrator" determine the specific species and their population numbers that will be impacted by any single cannabis

activity? Who will conduct the study, and over how long a period of time, accounting for migration patterns, changes in food and climate, drought conditions, etc.?

5.) What is the definition of a "public nuisance," as mentioned in Section 22.18.010 of the revised ordinance?

6.) What is the existing and potential negative impact on our remaining forests whose rich organic soil and nutrients are being extracted daily from the forest floors for the purpose of amending artificial ag sites, including cannabis cultivation, which apparently can now potentially reach 1,000s of acres?

7.) How can anyone, including the Planning Department, know how much water currently exists in Mendocino County's natural water sources, both above and underground, without an extensive, all-season study that tracks climate and usage trends over many years?

8.) If an applicant actually admits that he or she anticipates using at least 1,500 gallons of water per day for their cannabis cultivation development and has to drill a test well, is it true that it is up to his or her neighbors living within only a 300-foot radius to notify the County's Environmental Health Department if they detect a drop in their own wells' output, and only at the time of the test? What about the long-term effects over time and under different conditions? What about the effects on the surrounding natural environment and wildlife habitats? There are no regulations or policy in place to determine how surrounding water sources are affected by wells in this county. And it is not only human "neighbors" that are impacted by the developments you will be permitting. Please remember that water is essential for all living things, and as they disappear "from the bottom up," eventually we humans will suffer the consequences as well.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my concerns.

Sincerely,

D. Roble  
5th District