

Dear Planning Commission:

Thank you, for the opportunity to comment on the ordinance you are considering today.

May 5, 2021

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Planning & Building Services

Dear Planning Commissioners:

I am a resident of Mendocino County and am writing to raise my concerns regarding the proposed Commercial Cannabis Cultivation Land Use and Cultivation Sites ordinance recently redlined and submitted to your agency by the Board of Supervisors. I join in the objections raised by Supervisor Haschak, our current and former sheriffs and other law enforcement agencies, Municipal Advisory Councils of Laytonville, Redwood Valley and Round Valley, Willits and Mendocino Environmental Center, Covelo Cannabis Advocacy Group, Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, along with a number of water agencies, environmental groups, and the majority of citizens of Mendocino County who have responded to the BOS and pleaded for them to stop this expansion until additional information and studies can be processed. I am requesting that the Commissioners reject the proposed ordinance and its subjective language, unsupported and arbitrary standards, and what appears to be affirmative ignorance to our county and state's current water shortage conditions and the potential for further contributing to climate change and global warming.

Although I have concerns around many, many aspects of this proposed expansion, I will list here just three as I am sure you have many, many letters to review.

**State of Emergency - Drought** We are currently in a county and state declared emergency due to water shortage. This is not the time to be expanding water use. We do not know the projected length of the current drought, what we will need to fight wildfires (that are projected to be severe this season) and water needed to serve the current agricultural (including current cannabis) and population needs. To introduce the potential for an even larger industry with its tremendous need for even more water use seems anti ethical to good governing, strategic planning, and to common sense. At the very least, this expansion should be delayed until we are through the State of Emergency.

**No Prepared Environmental Impact Study or Report [EIR]** I understand that beginning June 30th, state law would require an EIR before passing a cannabis cultivation land use ordinance. The need for the study is no less important now than 60 days from now and should be considered by the Commission. I do not understand how the Planning Commissioners can competently assess and advise on the impact of the proposed expansion without a complete and exhaustive EIR. Even without an EIR specific to the proposed ordinance, the BOS seems to be unaware or have ignored information already available (through university-based studies in Colorado) about the serious negative greenhouse gas release and carbon footprints of indoor cannabis growing, which they are apparently allowing. The unique and specific requirements to cannabis growing, the attendant greenhouses (and materials used to build the greenhouses), artificial lighting and other energy needs, the fertilizer needs and run-off, water requirements, impact to wildlife (and all they contribute to our eco-system), native soil, neighbors, community, etc. must be articulated and considered. Objective rules and standards should be set forth, not the subjective and vague language that is currently in the redlined draft. Once we have ruined our land and environment it will not be simple — if even possible — to repair our damage.

**Economy**

**Law Enforcement** The Sheriffs (former and current) have submitted excellent opinions that articulated well and completely their objections to the proposed expansion. As a former police officer, I completely understand and agree with their concerns. I do not believe that this County (or any other rural county) has the tax base and/or resources, even with potential proceeds of expanded cannabis cultivation, to effectively support and protect the community whilst attempting to enforce this ill-drafted ordinance.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration and for the opportunity to voice my deep concern and objections. Again, I urge you to reject this expansion out right or in the alternative, pending further study

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