

Re File 19-1152 Commercial Cannabis Ordinance Revision

Supervisors:

We appreciate the tremendous amount of work done by the Cannabis Ad Hoc Committee and County staff. The ordinances before you today reflect all that hard work. Cannabis industry folks have commented that El Dorado County's ordinances are some of the most comprehensive regulations developed by local governments.

Please vote to move forward with commercial cannabis licensing. The legal cannabis industry in El Dorado County could provide a substantial boost for the county economy and community services.

As the implementation of these ordinances moves forward, we do have a concern that the balance between regulation and providing opportunities for licensing in the county are weighted too heavily on the regulation. There are three areas that could provide significant barriers to the County utilizing the County's unique situation for participating in California's market and in future national markets for cannabis.

1. The ordinances have property setbacks that are unprecedented and pointless. Cannabis is not radioactive waste. An 800-foot setback is irrational when cannabis cultivators have rules for preventing off-site impacts of their cultivation that they are required to follow or risk substantial penalties. The ordinances allocate 75 of the 150 cultivation operations for small parcels, such as 10-acre parcels. The 800-foot setbacks in the ordinances are larger than the parcel itself. An 800-foot setback is over 14 acres of property. Yes, there are waivers to the setbacks, however, almost every cannabis cultivation or commercial operation in a commercial zone will have to get setback waivers.
2. The tax levels established under agenda file Re: File 19-1250 place our County businesses at a competitive disadvantage. We have commented through a separate letter on that file item.
3. The ordinances declare that cannabis is not agriculture in El Dorado County. While the section may have been well intended to protect the agricultural industry in El Dorado County it actually penalizes them. The section potentially makes it extremely difficult for existing agricultural crop growers within Williamson Act preserve contracts to get commercial cannabis licenses. Supervisors can fix this problem for existing properties who are grape and apple growers who want to add commercial cannabis licenses to their businesses. The Board of Supervisors can simply declare that commercial cannabis cultivation is a compatible activity for a Williamson Preserve contract. Yolo County did this.

El Dorado County is positioned to have a vibrant futuristic agricultural economy. The County just needs to allow the legal market to out-compete the illicit market. It is often true that taxes and over-regulation can kill or severely damage nascent Industries. Our County should not miss out on the commercial cannabis opportunity.

Cannabis is the new wine industry.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Rod Miller

--

El Dorado County Growers Alliance

eldoradogrowersalliance.org

530-503-9078 Office

530-748-9822 cell