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DATE 3/14/16

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March 15, 2016

To the Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors for El Dorado County:

We are homeowners living in a very nice neighborhood in El Dorado Hills. But we are more than that: We are parents, raising children in what we long believed was a safe environment. We are working adults, hoping to improve our lives through our hard work and investment in our homes. We are retirees, hoping to downsize in several years to what will probably be our last homes. And we are all living steps away from a marijuana grow house.

When we invested in our homes, the purchase prices were more than most of us had previously paid for a home. But the investment seemed solid: The homes were large and in a community with excellent schools and great amenities, including nearby parks and nature trails and shopping. El Dorado Hills seemed like the perfect place to raise a family...enjoy life...retire. We took pride in our homes, installing backyard landscaping and building pools. We upgraded features within our homes, spending thousands.

Most of us purchased our homes just before the market peaked, which of course meant that a few years later, moneys invested and equity that had accrued disappeared in a heartbeat when the housing market crashed. The neighborhood seemed fractured as we watched friends lose their homes to foreclosure and learned about the insecurities that go with being "upside down" in a weak housing market. Recovery was slow, but it seemed worth it to stay put and build up our equity once again, so we did. Then we started noticing the home in our neighborhood that someone visited but didn't really live in.

We won't recount here all the things that seemed to point to some kind of drug operation, not the least of which was the odor of marijuana that sometimes hovered nearby, but research on the Internet seemed to support our suspicions. Still, we couldn't be sure. So we contacted the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office and, after some investigation, our suspicions were confirmed. And once again, forces seemingly outside our control rattled our sense of security and threatened property values, this time in a way none of us could have imagined even five years ago.

Our concerns go far beyond the very real possibility that a grow house in our midst will cause our property values to once again plummet. The presence of a grow house in our neighborhood diminishes our quality of life. It means we cannot enjoy evening walks

through the neighborhood or visits on neighbors' front porches when the scent of marijuana is very strong for weeks at a time, presumably as the crop matures. At its worst, the smell is there when we leave for work, and there when we get home. It intrudes into backyard gatherings and open bedroom windows for the neighbors living next to the grow house, as does the sound of an air conditioner, running 24 hours a day, year round.

But the concerns don't end there. We worry about our safety and that of our children in ways that HOA security patrols and locked community gates can't begin to address. We worry about retribution if our "neighbor" figures out we're on to him and are feeding information to law enforcement. We worry about the risk of fire, especially given that it would likely spread to adjacent properties. And we worry about the possibility of explosion if, as seems to be the case with at least some grow operations, honey oil is being produced.

We know there is a very real possibility of home invasion with a neighborhood grow house. This is why we have not identified ourselves or our exact neighborhood in this letter. The risk of discovery by the wrong element is just too great. What if there is gun play? What if the perpetrators pick the wrong house? The presence of a grow house has altered vacation plans, inspired additional security measures and changed how some of us live.

We know there are legal uncertainties frustrating law enforcement in their efforts to go after growers, along with an astonishing proliferation of grow operations throughout the county. We hope supervisors will move thoughtfully but quickly to adopt meaningful local restrictions on indoor grow operations, so that grow houses will be barred from residential neighborhoods. Only strong local restrictions will stem the tide of such cultivation operations in our county. We want our neighborhood back, and beg you to help us get there.

Respectfully,

Concerned EDH Residents