



COUNTY OF EL DORADO

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

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10/13/2021

Board of Supervisors

330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

SUBJECT: Letter of recommendation to support an Industrial Hemp Pilot Project

The El Dorado County Agricultural Commission is recommending that the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors implement an Industrial Hemp Pilot Program for the 2022 and 2023 growing seasons operating under the Key Points created by the joint CEDAC/Agricultural Commission working committee (Attachment A). The Pilot Program should serve the purpose of establishing a foundation and framework for the hemp industry to operate within immediately and to allow for research and data collection to inform a future permanent ordinance. The Agricultural Commission continues to support local research on hemp involving accredited Universities and Colleges.

This recommendation is informed by the guiding principles and goals outlined in the **Agricultural and Forestry Element** of the **El Dorado County General Plan** which states:

“In El Dorado County, these lands are regarded by residents as fundamental components of the County’s rural character and way of life. Prudent management of the County’s agriculture and forestry resources is needed to provide future generations with opportunities to experience both the economic benefits and rural lifestyle residents now enjoy.”

GOAL 8.2: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

A healthy, stable, and competitive environment necessary to sustain agricultural industry.

OBJECTIVE 8.2.2: AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS

Protection of the rights of agricultural operators to continue agricultural practices on all lands designated for agricultural land use and expand the agricultural-related uses allowed on such lands.”

The one constant that characterizes El Dorado agriculture is change- the evolution, growth, development, and in some cases extinction of various crops as opportunities arise and disappear over generations due to market forces and crop disease. The adoption of the 2018 Farm Bill has created an opportunity for the development of a new crop in El Dorado county- Industrial Hemp. Local visionaries who created the Apple Hill Growers in 1964 recognized the opportunity to develop a new marketing regime for local farm commodities focused on direct-to-consumer farm market sales with value added products playing a significant role. There appears to be similar opportunity for value added products derived from Hemp to be added to the mix of existing value-added products that are produced and sold in El Dorado County.

The Agricultural Commission's support of the development of Industrial Hemp is consistent with the Commission's mission to conserve and protect important agricultural crop lands and associated activities, maintain viable agricultural-based communities, and encourage the expansion of agricultural activities and production. A vibrant and robust agricultural economy provides employment and tax revenue while protecting our agricultural lands for future generations. Our six Agricultural Districts play a significant role in maintaining our rural lifestyle that is cherished by our county's residents. Given the benefits of crop diversification, value added product opportunities, and preservation of our agricultural lands, the Agricultural Commission supports the implement an Industrial Hemp Pilot Program for the 2022 and 2023 growing seasons.

AYES:
VERBAL AYE:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN: