

## CHAPTER 9

### COMMERCIAL MARIJUANA CULTIVATION TAX

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#### **719-1. Title.**

This Chapter shall be known as the Humboldt County Commercial Marijuana Cultivation Tax Ordinance. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

#### **719-2. Purpose and Intent.**

This Chapter is enacted solely for the purpose of raising revenue for general County purposes, and is not intended to be regulatory. Nothing in this Chapter is intended, nor shall be construed, to exempt commercial marijuana cultivation from compliance with all applicable provisions of this Code, including, without limitation, the requirements set forth in Title III, and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

#### **719-3. Definitions.**

(a) “Commercial marijuana cultivation” shall mean any activity involving the planting, growing, harvesting, drying, curing, grading or trimming of marijuana or cannabis, including nurseries, that is intended to be transported,

processed, manufactured, distributed, dispensed, delivered or sold in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Code and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

(b) “Commercial marijuana cultivation permit” shall mean any zoning clearance certificate, special permit or conditional use permit issued by the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department pursuant to Title III of this Code, which authorizes commercial marijuana cultivation to take place on the particular property listed therein. (Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017)

(c) “Cultivation area” shall mean the cultivation area stated on the commercial marijuana cultivation permit issued by the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017)

(d) “Indoor” shall mean indoor cultivation of marijuana which involves the exclusive use of artificial lighting. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017)

(e) “Mixed-light” shall mean cultivation of marijuana which involves the use of a combination of natural and supplemental artificial lighting at a maximum threshold as set forth in Section [314-55.4.11](#), et seq. of this Code, or as to be determined by the Department of Food and Agriculture, whichever is less. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017)

(f) “Outdoor” shall mean outdoor cultivation of marijuana which does not involve the use of artificial lighting of any kind. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017)

(g) “Premises” shall mean a legal parcel compliant with the Subdivision Map Act, or a leasehold interest in agricultural land for agricultural purposes of outdoor, mixed-light, or indoor cultivation or processing of marijuana, or a leased or owned space in an industrial or commercial building for purposes of indoor cultivation, processing, manufacture or distribution of marijuana. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

(h) “Property owner” shall mean any individual, firm, partnership, joint venture, association, corporation, limited liability company, estate, trust, business trust, receiver, syndicate or any other group or combination acting as a unit who owns property within the unincorporated area of Humboldt County. (Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017)

#### **719-4. Imposition of Tax.**

In addition to any requirements imposed by Title [III](#), each person issued a commercial marijuana cultivation permit shall pay an annual tax of one dollar (\$1.00) per square foot of outdoor cultivation area, two dollars (\$2.00) per square foot of mixed-light cultivation area or three dollars (\$3.00) per square foot of indoor cultivation area regardless of whether or not marijuana is actually grown on such property. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017; Ord. 2657, § 2, 10/27/2020)

**719-5. Annual Adjustment.**

- (a) The tax imposed by this Chapter shall be adjusted on July 1, 2017, and July 1st of each succeeding year based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers in the as published by the United States Government Bureau of Labor Statistics; however, no adjustment shall decrease the tax imposed by this Chapter, unless approved by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017)
- (b) On or before July 1, 2017, and on or before July 1st of each succeeding year, the County Administrative Officer or designee thereof shall supply to the Humboldt County Planning and Building Director or designee thereof, in a formal communication, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers as published by the United States Government Bureau of Labor Statistics for computation of the tax imposed by this Chapter. (Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017)

**719-6. Collection and Remittance.**

- (a) The tax imposed by this chapter shall be collected by the Humboldt County Treasurer-Tax Collector in the same or similar manner as other taxes fixed and collected by the County of Humboldt to capture the calendar year taxes required by this chapter upon information provided by the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department. For purposes of this chapter, taxes shall be owed for each and every year in which a commercial marijuana cultivation permit is issued by the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department.
- (b) The Humboldt County Planning and Building Department shall submit to the Humboldt County Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office sufficient information so tax invoices (bills) can be sent to all persons liable for payments due under this chapter. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017; Ord. 2597, § 1, 4/3/2018; Ord. 2657, § 2, 10/27/2020)

**719-7. Penalties.**

- (a) Any person that fails to pay the tax required by this chapter within thirty (30) days after the due date shall pay, in addition to the tax, a penalty for nonpayment in a sum equal to ten percent (10%) of the total amount due. All taxes and penalties remaining unpaid through December 31st each year will accrue interest at the rate of one and one-half percent (1.5%) per month, for a total of eighteen percent (18%) per year, beginning January 1st and will continue to accrue until redeemed. A cost recovery fee will also be added each time a notice regarding overdue payments is mailed. Receipt of the tax payment by the Humboldt County Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office shall govern the determination of whether the tax is delinquent. Postmarks will not be accepted as adequate proof of a timely payment.
- (b) The Humboldt County Treasurer-Tax Collector is hereby authorized to waive or cancel any penalties, costs or other charges resulting from nonpayment of the tax required by this chapter where the failure to make a timely payment was due to circumstances beyond the taxpayer's control. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017; Ord. 2597, § 1, 4/3/2018; Ord. 2657, § 2, 10/27/2020)

**719-8. Additional Penalties.**

Any violation of this Chapter shall constitute a public nuisance and shall be subject to any and all administrative, civil, or criminal remedies available to the County, including those set forth in Title III, Division 5, Chapter 1 of this Code. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

**719-9. Modification, Repeal or Amendment.**

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors may repeal this Chapter, or amend it in a manner which does not result in an increase in the amount of the tax or broaden the scope of the tax imposed herein, without further voter approval. If the Board of Supervisors repeals any provision of this Chapter, it may subsequently reenact it without voter approval, as long as the reenacted provision does not result in an increase in the amount of the tax or broaden the scope of the tax imposed herein. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

**719-10. Administration.**

The Humboldt County Administrative Officer or designee thereof, upon the approval of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, may promulgate regulations to implement and administer the provisions of this Chapter. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

**719-11. Record Inspection.**

Whenever it is necessary to examine any books or records, including tax returns, of any entity subject to the provisions of this Chapter, to ascertain the amount of any tax due pursuant to this Chapter, the County shall have the power and authority to examine such necessary books and records at any reasonable time including, without limitation, during normal business hours. Such records shall be maintained for no less than seven (7) years. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

**719-12. Application of Provisions.**

(a) The provisions of this chapter shall apply to each person holding a permit authorizing the commercial cultivation of marijuana for such purposes in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Code and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

(b) No payment of any tax required under the provisions of this chapter shall be construed as authorizing the conduct or continuance of any illegal business or of a legal business in an illegal manner. Nothing in this chapter implies or authorizes that any activity connected with the cultivation, possession or provision of marijuana is legal unless otherwise authorized and allowed by the State of California and permitted by the County. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016; Ord. 2575, § 1, 6/6/2017; Ord. 2657, § 2, 10/27/2020)

**719-13. Severability.**

If any provision of this Chapter, or the application thereof, is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision or application of this Chapter that can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application and to this end, the provisions or application of this Chapter are severable. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

**719-14. Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.**

The purpose of this Chapter is to establish a government funding mechanism for general County purposes and the County is not committing to a specific course of action with respect to the tax revenue generated hereunder, and therefore, this Chapter is not a "project" subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") as defined in Section 15378, subdivision (b), of the CEQA Guidelines. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

**719-15. Operative Date.**

This Chapter shall become operative on January 1, 2017. (Ord. 2567, § 1, 12/13/2016)

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**The Humboldt County Code is current through Ordinance 2698, passed July 19, 2022.**

Disclaimer: The Office of the County Counsel has the official version of the Humboldt County Code. Users should contact the Clerk of the Board's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

[County Website: humboldt.gov](http://humboldt.gov)

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