

My name is Sue Leskiw. I live in Fieldbrook.

I have read through the Draft EIR and proposed changes to the CMMLUO. I support the proposed strengthened requirements for roads, residential setbacks, water supply, generator use, lighting, and renewable energy, as well as requiring Special Permits near residential areas, neighbor notification, reserving the right to restrict water use, and banning TPZ conversion.

Not everything is perfect with the proposed ordinance. I will be submitting written comments detailing elements that need strengthening or inclusion.

In my opinion, the fact that many of the more than two thousand pending permit applications could be approved BEFORE the Board of Supervisors adopts a revised ordinance -- and thus not be subject to all these good requirements -- is a HUGE problem. While my preference is to put a temporary moratorium on further permit approvals until the new ordinance is in place, I understand why that might not happen.

Therefore, I have two suggestions about how to proceed. First, concentrate on processing permit applications from EXISTING grows rather than from new ones. This would for the most part be improving what is already happening on the ground to at least meet current standards. Second, move applications for any NEW permits that would not be able to meet the proposed new regulations to the bottom of the work agenda.

It's time to change the emphasis from chasing new tax revenues to instead focus on protecting neighborhoods, the environment, water supplies, and the quality of life that makes rural Humboldt such a special place. The County needs to recognize and value the contributions made to Humboldt's tax base by its long-time residents, through good times and numerous economic downturns.

Stop putting the cart before the horse. First, approve regulations that most County residents want, THEN evaluate proposed projects based on those criteria. Why would you want to approve a bunch of projects that wouldn't be able to pass heightened environmental muster? That strategy will lead to problems and conflicts down the road.

Illegal cannabis grows have caused a lot of negative impacts on Humboldt and it would be a shame to continue that damage by approving plans before the new regulations are enacted. If growers want to be good agriculturalists, they should not have a problem with taking steps to be good neighbors.

I will be submitting extensive comments on the Draft EIR, but wanted to come here tonight to urgently request that the Planning Commission direct staff to change the priority for reviewing permits and focus on existing grows first.

Thank you.