



Lost Coast Ranch® PO Box 157, Petrolia, CA 95558

**RE: PLN-2021-17384**

November 10, 2022

To the Planning Commission:

The application reference above lies a few miles from my ranch, but I am very familiar with the property and its ecological and community values. I have known Karl Cisco Benemann since he was a boy and have always found him to be a good and thrifty steward of the land and his resources. I don't doubt his word as he has never gone back on it in any dealings we have had over the past decades.

The problem before the Planning Commission does not allow the Commission or the Planning Staff to promote community values in regard to land use. You are hamstrung by misguided ordinances and regulations that have been adopted since legalization. You can strictly follow or interpret existing rules and regulations and feel you have done your duty to the citizens of Humboldt County. That would continue the poor practice that has negatively impacted the county. Adhering to what is widely considered a disruptive framework of rules will not produce the kind of planning that ensures community well-being. That horse has left the barn and you need to forcefully petition the Board of Supervisors to re-craft the playing field for cannabis.

This 5 acre project is located on a ranch of roughly 1000 acres. It's putting some agricultural land to an agricultural use. I am not against landowners doing what they want with their property as long as the impacts do not leave the property and as long as the public trust values are not negatively impacted. I do believe that neighbors should be considered if a project is within their view- or earshot. Neighbors should not hold veto power over development. This project should reach accommodation with the neighbors in regard to those two aspects. I believe the Planning Commission has a role to play in mediating any conflicts.

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Mr. Benemann has told me that he will screen his flat from the neighbors to meet their visual concerns. In regard to the concern about increased traffic, we need to consider all the possible uses of the ranch and realize that some uses need labor to run the operations. It may not be on a daily basis, but there are times and seasons when hired help is needed. That's going to increase traffic. If the land were subdivided into residences, it would increase the traffic more. If the land were used for intensive vegetable production, it would increase traffic. Any activity above simple residential use by the owner is going to increase traffic.

In addressing traffic, the county has an obligation to upgrade Chambers Road. It's in terrible shape from the school on out. The bridge over East Mill Creek is temporary. The approach to the bridge is temporary. The county is responsible for impacts of road use, not individual landowners. It is not a private road. By approving any development on Chambers Road, the county needs to up its maintenance as its part in economic development and promotion of public safety.

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My opinion is that plastic greenhouses are an abomination. They use precious resources with a short useful life and toxic consequences as waste when that life is over. The Planning Commission is not looking long-term enough when it approves their use. And allowing for exhaust fans is likewise a terrible idea. Ventilation can be accomplished through venting the crown. It might be more expensive, but it is quiet, passive and needs no electrical inputs.

Similarly, no light should escape the facilities such that it causes light pollution. Period.

I applaud Mr. Benemann for planning to grow cannabis outdoors. I also am heartened that there will rain-catchment or winter diversion storage ponds in his operation and no water draws from either above or below ground sources during the growing season. That scarce water is needed for fish and wildlife. This is as it should be.

The County of Humboldt has made many mistakes in crafting ordinances and applying them to Cannabis permitting. The Planning Commission must stop permitting pumping water during the dry months county wide and insist on rain catchment systems. It must not permit operations to run on fossil fuel generators –both now or at some future date. It should ban the use of fans and plastic temporary (less than 25 year lifespan) greenhouses. Following these guidelines, I believe we can have a stable cannabis agriculture with far fewer impacts than what the county has permitted in the past.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Evenson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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