
From: ebeltz@ebeltz.net
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 11:56 AM
To: Hayes, Kathy
Cc: COB
Subject: "Cisco" Agenda Item: 22-1652 for hearing on January 24, 2023

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khayes@co.humboldt.ca.us
cob@co.humboldt.ca.us

Regarding Supervisors Hearing 01/24/23 Cisco Farms cannabis cultivation facilities (PLN-2021-17384)

<https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2022070433>

Agenda Item: 22-1652 for hearing on January 24, 2023

Dear Ms. Hayes:

Please make my comments part of the permanent record

Ellin Beltz
ESCI, North Eastern Illinois University (retired professor)

University of Chicago (retired assistant lecturer)

Ferndale, California 95536

ebeltz@ebeltz.net

=====

rbohn@co.humboldt.ca.us

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Regarding Re: Cisco Farms cannabis cultivation facilities (PLN-2021-17384)

<https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2022070433>

Hearing 01/24/23 Cisco Farms cannabis cultivation facilities (PLN-2021-17384)

Dear Supervisor:

Thank you for taking the time to review this prior to your hearing on the topic. I support legal cannabis but I can't support this project.

I commented on the EIR as directed on the State CEQA webpage (<https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2022070433>), but my comments were not included in either the dEIR or the EIR reports to the Planning Commission. I do not know why, but I was prevented from commenting before, so I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the appeal. My original comment is attached to this email.

(A) I think Cisco's dream of being a "regional processing center" 30+ miles from US101 is silly. Every thing would have a 66 mile round trip just to 101 - let alone where all the bottles and packages would

come from in the first place or where they would be shipped to after "processing." None of this was considered in the EIR.

(B) I think the project document is flawed because

- * it is too large for the immediate area,
- * it is too far from reasonable services (gas, electric, sewer, food, medical) and new electrical hookups are delayed until 2025 in the area by PG&E
- * there is no reason to create long commutes to a remote rural area over the temperamental Mattole road,
- * there is no reason to build substandard housing for farmworkers,
- * there is no reason to create homelessness or transience in Petrolia where people are already struggling by at half the state average income,

(C) I think they should use one of the many other approved and permitted mega grow parcels all over Humboldt County which are for sale because their owners cannot make a living at current prices. Some examples include:

* https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/160-Acres-Fort-Stewart-Rd_Blocksburg_CA_95514_M91469-19291

* https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/40-Sunset-Ridge-Rd_Blocksburg_CA_95514_M99075-94096

* https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/Reed-Mountain-Rd_Benbow_CA_95542_M93393-02532

The closest to Chambers Road is *<https://www.homes.com/property/46145-mattole-rd-honeydew-ca/r227yp9f6v2vg/>

Described as "4540 sf Specialty MIXED LIGHT Tier 1 Cannabis Cultivation permit on 8.37 acres of PRIME AG soil. Expand to 10,000 sf or transfer with RRR program. This farm is ready to plant with infrastructure in place. Fully permitted 750 sf 2 bed one bath cabin with septic and PG&E on sight. Property borders the county road and has Mattole River frontage plus open pasture land. Private with no close neighbors however, general store is right across the bridge. Get your season started, call NOW! \$459,000

(D) I think the county should spend time collecting grow taxes from the four or five largest growers we have now before adding any more giant grows to the tax rolls.

(E) I think we should let the voters have their say on the ballot initiative before approving more off-grid mega-grows with flawed environmental documents, piecemealed CEQA as well as significant neighbor and local opposition.

(F) And finally, even though Humboldt County is synonymous with growing Cannabis, I think approving another mega-grow makes the market worse for the rest of your constituents who are growers - and the general economy worse for all of us.

I truly hope you will consider the overall situation instead of just accepting another cannabis mega-grow.

Most sincerely yours,

Ellin Beltz
ESCI, North Eastern Illinois University (retired professor)

University of Chicago (retired assistant lecturer)

POB 1125
Ferndale, California 95536

ebeltz@ebeltz.net

===== attached comment to Planning which was omitted from the Planning Packet despite being submitted as stated and on time

Michael Holterman

Humboldt County Planning Dept.

mholterman@co.humboldt.ca.us

Re: Cisco Farms cannabis cultivation facilities (PLN-2021-17384)

Dear Mr. Holterman:

At the outset, let me state my support for Cannabis growing activities and that I voted for the proposition which legalized it in California. I am a retired Earth Science University Lecturer who taught 300 level courses as well as "rocks for jocks" and "dinos for winos" at North Eastern Illinois University. I retired to Humboldt County in 2001 and came out of retirement to teach Geology for College of the Redwoods at Hoopa for one year.

Since 2001 I have spent significant time in the Petrolia, Honeydew and Ferndale areas and am aware of local environmental issues.

Scope:

This is my written comment on the proposed Cisco Farms cannabis cultivation facilities (PLN-2021-17384), in particular the "CEQA Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration" (Initial Study) and related documents located at <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2022070433> which is for a conditional use permit for 5 acres of new cannabis cultivation, 67,760 square feet of nursery, 3,000 sf "commercial processing, 19,200 sf drying & storage on 517 acre parcel. The project will be irrigated via rain catchment and tank storage. A groundwater well will be used for non-irrigation. Farmworker housing will be provided in four modular units. 12 employees year-round and an additional 22 at peak season. Power to be provided by PG&E and on-site solar. The Proposed Project site is located approximately 1 mile east of the community of Petrolia off of Chambers Road, a county-maintained, Category 4 road to the property gate.

Comments:

While CEQA says that Aesthetics will be considered, none were addressed in the document.

The addition of large areas with reflective "gutter to gutter" plastic hoop houses would seem to affect Aesthetics, as will night "security" lighting, potential generator lighting for cultivation, addition of four

"pod" homes (no pictures provided) and a giant set of buildings for drying, processing and packaging. No images were provided of the potential appearance of these structures.

While the document says this is grassland, there is no mention of Coastal Terrace Prairie habitat - if their consultants looked for it, it's not mentioned.

I saw no analysis of Greenhouse Gas Emissions associated with the transformation of ranch land to Commercial production, packaging, processing and/or residential use. Without analysis there can be no mitigation, therefore one cannot say there is no impact.

The population estimate of 1,000 residents used in the document is from the Humboldt County Website which is incorrect (<https://humboldt.gov/739/Petrolia>). There is no source given on the Humboldt website for this vastly inflated population figure.

U.S. Census (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/humboldtcountycalifornia>) says that "The population in Petrolia (zip 95558) is 435." Since 2020, it has had a population growth of 2.6%, approximately five people a year. The median income is \$36,000 with a 6.7% unemployment rate (<https://www.bestplaces.net/people/zip-code/california/petrolia>). Without explanation or source, the Humboldt County website claims a population of 1,000 for the same area (<https://humboldt.gov/739/Petrolia>). The same pattern continues for Honeydew: The Census says 112 (<https://www.bestplaces.net/people/zip-code/california/honeydew/95545>), the County says 400 (<https://humboldt.gov/727/Honeydew>) a four to one increase. Therefore the 1000 listed by the county is not "Petrolia plus Honeydew" which would be 635, but some other completely unsourced number.

Using only the U.S. official Census Petrolia numbers, the addition of 34 employees would exceed the average population growth in the area by six times if they all arrive at the same time. If only 8 stay full time, that's still almost twice the usual population growth in the area - for only one parcel. This is a significant increase when they will be housed in sub-standard conditions. The actual percentage would be 1.83% not 0.4 % as stated on page 80 (https://files.ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/280363-1/attachment/aJG5RCIysIDFPHPi2lunRSxB4uyt8DbQAAYr0PxMkQrS8T_dXf7S1lrx1syH6YnsrRL0XiR23ha6EMb0)

On the same page, the document claims that no replacement housing will be needed but simply does not address where the up to 34 employees are supposed to live, if the project site will only accommodate eight and the "site caretaker." This project has the potential to displace twenty-six bed-units in Petrolia, I don't think it's correct to say there is no impact in this regard and to propose no mitigation measures.

Note that on page 83 the labor is considered to be "contract labor" not employees and they claim that 22 more will not significantly increase the population, and most would live in the Petrolia area. However there are no empty units of housing available in Petrolia - so displacement or doubling up would have to occur for this part of the document to be accurate. And they said there is no impact on page 82.

Page 83 also calls for Security Lighting but fails to address the "Dark Skies Initiative." The increase in ambient light may cause problems for species not even mentioned in this document such as purple-crowned night herons and marbled murrelets, hoary bats, Townsend's long-eared bats and other species which are not accustomed to light at night. However the document fails to analyze this.

Page 84 says "Would not substantially increase the population..." which seems to be inaccurate due to their use of 1,000 residents which is 60% over estimated, therefore this section is incorrectly analyzed.

Page 86 claims the driving distance to Ferndale is "approximately 30 miles" when every sign says 33 from Ferndale to Petrolia, and 1.5 miles more to Cisco. Therefore 34 miles. These kinds of "small errors" add up in this document when "fact" after "fact" turns out to be "slightly wrong," "partially incorrect," or just not true - leading to the reasonable assumption that other "facts" are also alternative.

Page 87 suggests a set of figures for transportation but neglects to say that the traffic is sharing the road with grade school children and families on essentially a one-lane road. Long-term 54 trips a day on a road currently with 25 residents seems to be at least a doubling of traffic and it would seem to be needful of changes to the road to safely drive past the grade school 54 times a day.

Page 88 references something not mentioned at all elsewhere "Additionally, the Proposed Project would also serve as a Community Support Facility for the surrounding Petrolia and Honeydew areas, supporting nearby farms who could now utilize the processing and nursery services proposed in this project rather than traveling to a larger metropolis area (e.g., Eureka or Garberville), subsequently reducing vehicle trips"

Does this project see itself as a central processing location? If so, what truck trips would be added to the 54 maximum per day if this happened? This was not addressed in this document. If this is the intent, but no analysis was performed. This results in piece-mealing, where scope creep advances

the project from "just a grow" to "a grow with processing" to a "regional processing center" without analyzing the impacts of the slowly enlarging project footprint.

Page 88 "Therefore, it is not expected for the Proposed Project to have a potentially significant level of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and impacts related to CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 subdivision (b) would be less than significant." The document fails to analyze the 69 miles round trip minimum per car per day per employee which while not incredibly longer than average California commute in mileage, is nearly double that of the average in time.

California has an average of 29.3 minutes of one-way travel to work - approximately one hour a day driving. The nearest town of any size to Petrolia, is Ferndale which is about 1 hour away by road which would result in a minimum two hours per day commuting time which is double the average California time of commute (<https://getjerry.com/insights/which-states-have-longest-commutes>).

Causing up to 30 people to commute two hours a day is not in line with our Greenhouse Gas goals for Humboldt County and there is no mitigation proposed in the document to offset the new car trips for the workers.

There is no mitigation of the truck trips required in or out of the project - either for construction or operation. Chambers Road is a small road. The intersection of Chambers & Mattole has the school and community center - neither of which is referenced in the CISCO document. Big trucks and small children on 1 lane roads don't mix. This is not addressed in the document.

One of my greatest concerns is the inhumane standards proposed for worker housing and the potential to increase Homelessness in Petrolia and Humboldt County.

Quoting "CALIFORNIA STATE HOUSING LAW CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE DIVISION 13, PART 1.5. REGULATION OF BUILDINGS USED FOR HUMAN HABITATION Complete"

Official version at www.hcd.ca.gov/codes/shl/SHLStatutes.htm

"§ 17920.3. Substandard Building Any building or portion thereof including any dwelling unit, guest room or suite of rooms, or the premises on which the same is located, in which there exists any of the following listed conditions to an extent that endangers the life, limb, health, property, safety, or

welfare of the public or the occupants thereof shall be deemed and hereby is declared to be a substandard building: (a) Inadequate sanitation shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) Lack of, or improper water closet, lavatory, or bathtub or shower in a dwelling unit... (5) Lack of hot and cold running water to plumbing fixtures in a dwelling unit. (6) Lack of adequate heating. (7) Lack of, or improper operation of required ventilating equipment. (8) Lack of minimum amounts of natural light and ventilation required by this code. (9) Room and space dimensions less than required by this code. (10) Lack of required electrical lighting. (11) Dampness of habitable rooms."

[https://nchh.org/resource-library/HH_Codes_CA_9-9-](https://nchh.org/resource-library/HH_Codes_CA_9-9-07.pdf)

[07.pdf](https://nchh.org/resource-library/HH_Codes_CA_9-9-07.pdf)

None of these are addressed in this document where four pods are to be sufficient for up to 34 workers. The project doesn't include sanitary sewer, septic, potable water or electrical light until after the buildings are built when solar might be put on the roofs. The only septic existing onsite is associated with existing 1,900 square foot residence. Supposedly there will be an "associated onsite wastewater treatment system installed" at some point in the future. Farmworkers and contractors will be expected to use Porta-Potties, but those truck trips do not seem to be included in the trip estimates. Farm-workers using Porta-Potties is not the goal of the Housing Laws of the State of California. Human housing requires actual amenities, none of which are extant on this property and some of which will not be complete prior to the initiation of cannabis growing activities according to this document. Nowhere is the architecture of the "pod" specified to contain bathrooms, showers, or other required facilities.

PG&E is stated to do 600-amp hookup to the project in 2026, but the project expects to be running in 2022-2023 without electrical hookup. Since the solar is proposed to go on top of the buildings it is unclear how they will obtain power.

If Generators are expected to fulfill electrical requirements for the builders & workers, it is not stated clearly how this will be mitigated as there are currently no generators running on the property at all, any generator use would be automatic 100% increase.

The nearest supply of diesel fuel is 40 miles away at Fernbridge.

If workers are to be kept in substandard housing, it would seem to be against the law to approve the project as the housing standards are not met for adequate maintenance of human beings. Rainwater is not enough to provide 40 gallons per day per person (stated that will be provided) when usually 50 gallons per day per person is considered a hardship. In the US, the average is 80 to 100 gallons per person per day of water (<https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science-school/science/water-qa-how-much-water-do-i-use-home-each-day> & <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/statistics-and-facts>). The Cisco document says their workers will be offered 40 to 50% of the average daily water used by every other American but does not say why this would be acceptable to their workers, the

county or the state. The document does not say that their drinking water well will be drilled prior to construction, nor that they will be shipping potable water to the site.

Other things the onsite workers will not have are

1. Electricity - earliest electric from PG&E is 2026, earliest from project is "after buildings are built" as solar goes on roofs after the buildout
2. Hot water - no power (see a)
3. Access to grocery store/restaurant. Nearest is Ferndale 33 miles (one hour) north. There is a bodega at the Petrolia Post Office, but not an actual grocery store.
4. Access to medical. Nearest is Fortuna, 38 miles (1.25 hours) north.
5. Access to gasoline. Nearest is Ferndale, next nearest is Fernbridge, 40 miles to the north.
6. Access to public transport. Nearest is Fortuna.

This does not seem humane to create these conditions for human occupancy by government permit.

Page 93 says "The project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water..... electric power... which could cause significant environmental effects." However on same page it says that eventually a drinking water well would be drilled and some form of septic field constructed - but without any additional data on either one brushes off any environmental effect from either one. Their commercial center apparently is planned to have a bathroom with shower and hot and cold water. Perhaps the farmworkers are supposed to shower in the break room instead of in their housing?

Mandatory findings of Significance

This document fails at Item b in 3.2.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance, page 100 because there is no statement that the Cisco proposed project would produce more cannabis than all the prior permitted operations shown on their page 24 map - combined. I think it's not a good representation to color in all the neighbors as "cannabis grows" when they're 10,000 foot "ma and pa" grows instead of a mega-grow as proposed by Cisco.

The document fails to mention what is the extent and scope of what they call "packaging." Is that drying weed in a barn, butane extraction, fractionating towers or giant freezers? Is that dry weed being put in thousands of glass bottles all shipped to and from Petrolia? What exactly is "processing" and what kind of facility will it require? This also creates more truck traffic as all packaging materials would have to be shipped up the Wildcat or down Mattole road, minimum 30 miles from the freeway. Once a goal of being the commercial processing center for "the area" is mentioned (page

88), but the document doesn't include any impacts that would be created by that dream - which would seem to be substantial and significant were they to occur but they are not mentioned.

Mandatory Finding of Significance should include the effect on the State-wide Cannabis Market due to mega-grows. Glass House Brands (5.5 million square feet) is at present the largest permitted single grow in California (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ajherrington/2022/03/22/glass-house-brands-opens-massive-new-cannabis-cultivation-facility/?sh=333d6d298cc8>). The facility formerly grew tomatoes but has been converted to Cannabis cultivation (<https://www.pacbiztimes.com/2021/08/04/houwelings-tomatoes-will-become-states-biggest-cannabis-greenhouse/>). Even with 5.5 million square feet, Glass House is not the largest. That honor belongs to Lowell Farms which grows, packages and distributes the largest amount of packaged flower per unit volume in the state for 2021 (<https://www.newcannabisventures.com/lowell-farms-takes-the-lead-as-californias-largest-seller-of-packaged-cannabis-flower-per-headset>).

During the time that Glass House and Lowell and thousand of others have been increasing market share, the price of a pound of cannabis has dropped from \$1,500 to about \$300 dollars, clearly showing the impact of market saturation. Glass House is growing indoor weed at price very close to outdoor sun-grown weed. Their facility is right on major transportation and they have no labor shortage. There seems no reason to build out 5.5 acres in the middle of nowhere when the competition is growing on 5.5 million square feet within spitting distance of the freeway.

The Economist wrote: "In California, the world's largest legal weed market is going up in smoke. The state's pot industry hopes federal legalization will help. It may instead be its death knell." (<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2022/05/14/in-california-the-worlds-largest-legal-weed-market-is-going-up-in-smoke>)

And finally, citizens are working to get a ballot initiative in Humboldt which would limit grows to the original 10,000 square feet "ma and pa" concept (<https://cannabisinitiative.org/> & <https://www.yournec.org/citizens-seek-more-voice-through-cannabis-reform-initiative/>)

In conclusion:

I think this document is flawed in analysis as stated previously and specifically in being too large for the area, too far from reasonable services (gas, electric, sewer, food, medical) and there being no particular reason to develop a mega-grow in this particular area there being no shortage of land closer to transportation and services which could be utilized for this project.

I am very concerned about building substandard housing for farmworkers and creating long commutes and/or potential homelessness in Petrolia where people are already struggling by at half the state average income.

I think Cisco's dream of being a "regional processing center" 30-plus miles from the freeway is silly since every processing item, package, box, tape, sticker, vape cart or rosin bottle would have to be shipped 33 miles out and 33 miles back just to 101 - let alone where all the bottles and packages would come from in the first place nor where they would be shipped to after "processing."

I think the county should spend time collecting grow taxes from the four or five largest growers we have now before adding any more giant grows to the tax rolls.

I also think we should let the voters have their say on the ballot initiative before approving more off-grid mega-grows with flawed environmental documents, piece-mealed CEQA as well as significant neighbor and local opposition.

Most sincerely yours,

Ellin Beltz

ESCI, North Eastern Illinois University (retired)

Ferndale, California

To: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
825 5th street
Eureka, CA 95501
From: Bonnie Blackberry
Date: January 23, 2023

Re: January 24, 2023 Appeal for the Permits granted November 17, 2022 to Cisco Farms Inc., on Chambers Road in Petrolia, Record # PLN-2021-17384.

Dear Supervisors,

Please support the Appeal of PLN 2021-17384. Please consider the concerns and impacts expressed in the appeal and the fact that 53 people signed it. The following are some of my concerns regarding this project.

Traffic: It appears that Staff is only considering traffic on Chambers Road.. How about all the other traffic from the area, including Honeydew that use the main access roads north to Ferndale and south towards the Ettersburg area, and the quality of those roads? The access through the redwoods is closed for an indefinite time due to a large slide. Having large grows in remote areas, with workers and supplies coming from long distances is adding to the problem with climate change.

Enforcement Conditions:

All approved permits were inspected in 2022 of which 400 were remote inspections, which isn't really a site inspection. I have been dealing with a permit in my watershed that both the Planning Department and the Building Department wrongly approved and only became aware of the situation after concerns brought forward by me. See attached Notice of Violation for PLN-2020-1667. Monitoring has been the burden of the neighbors and community. Because of this and other problems, I do not share the confidence that permit conditions are adequately monitored by the county.

Issues and Public Input: I attended the November 17th Planning Commission meeting remotely. I do not believe all the commissioners were aware and read the 14 letters of opposition. I did not hear the Planning staff mention the 14 letters. And during the meeting there were problems with the remote access, where at times, such as when it was time for public input on this item, the sound was so garbled that it was impossible to hear what was being said to be able to call in at the proper time. I have watched the meeting a few days later and the audio problems aren't evident on the recording. Also there was no notice of the November 17th meeting sent to the people who had sent in opposition letters, letting them know about the meeting. Lack of notice to interested parties is a real problem.

Light and Noise: Generator and noise from fans can be heard from a long distance depending on where the grow is located. I believe the community member who talked about it on a recent radio program

"Anybody who has lived near a grow with large greenhouses can tell you that their life is totally up-ended by the sound of the fans. They run day and night, months on end, and the sound of machinery going in the background of your life, when you're on your own property, is abuse! You can't be allowed to abuse your neighbors with your business model, and the possibility exists that your fans could be muffled, but the growers never do it. And even if you make rules, the county can't enforce them. So anybody who has experienced it in the past, and I'm a half mile from a small series of greenhouses--It sounds like I live near an airport. : "The sound does not travel along the ground. If you happen to be above the floor of the valley, the sound is unobstructed for at least half a mile."

As far as the light pollution, this has been a problem for years. Last year staff has made an effort to locate the glowing greenhouses where previously it has been left up to the neighbors and general public to locate and report the violations. Hopefully the county will do the monitoring.

Wildlife Impacts: The plastic hoop houses produce a bright glare when the sun is shining. Apparently it is not considered a problem, but it is for humans, so I'd expect it does effect the wildlife. The constant noise from the generators and fans effects humans so I can't believe it does effect wildlife as well, even at the levels permitted. Nature has ambient sounds, but it is not a continuous hum that you get from generators and fans.

I hope you can locate and read the opposition letters that are in Attachment 6 of the staff report, and support their appeal.

Thank you,
Bonnie Blackberry

From: Sara March <smarch13@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 9:22 AM
To: COB
Subject: Fwd: Cisco Farms Inc, proposed development

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I was told my letter would not be counted because I had not referred to : Agenda # 22-1652.

Is this correct?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sara March <smarch13@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 16, 2023, 8:21 PM
Subject: Cisco Farms Inc, proposed development
To: <cob@co.humboldt.ca.us>, <rbohn@co.humboldt.ca.us>, <smadrone@co.humboldt.ca.us>, <narroyo@co.humboldt.ca.us>, <mbushnell@co.humboldt.ca.us>, <mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us>

I am writing in reference to PLN-2021-17384

Dear Supervisors,

I am writing regarding the Planning Commission's November 17, 2022 approval of the Conditional Use Permit for new cannabis cultivation, drying, processing, and propagation facilities by Cisco Farms Inc, on Chambers Road in Petrolia, Record # PLN-2021-17384.

I am a resident of Petrolia and my child attends Mattole Elementary School located on Chambers Road. I have serious concerns about pedestrian impacts on both Chambers and Mattole Roads due to the proposed cannabis development by Cisco Farms, Inc. As I am sure many of my neighbors have expressed, we already deal with constant safety concerns for ourselves as pedestrians -- and especially our children and pets -- in Petrolia in regards to traffic. There are no sidewalks in Petrolia, and Chambers Rd is one of the only roads I am able to allow my son to ride his bike on or walk down in our community. I cannot imagine being able to allow him to bike or walk down this road with his friends with the increased amount of large truck traffic that this development would create. Additionally, there is a one lane bridge on Chambers Rd which is already incredibly dangerous and was supposed to be a temporary bridge only. It is already a safety hazard and certainly couldn't handle the additional traffic and large trucks that would be necessitated by this operation.

In addition to the immediate safety concerns for my family about this project, I am also highly concerned about continued degradation of the Mattole River watershed in general.

As climate change continues to increase droughts in California, more industrial scale farming operations are completely unsustainable and unconscionable, especially along the remote, sensitive Mattole River. Also, the pond created by the proposed development would also create habitat for invasive bullfrogs which would endanger local native amphibian and fish populations. Light pollution from lighting from cannabis grows and their infrastructure is also a constant source of damage to wildlife and irritation to neighbors.

I support legal cannabis, but I do not support this project due to its unreasonable size and specifics of its location. Please do not allow Cisco Farms Inc, to endanger the safety of our remote rural community's residents, degrade the Mattole River, and damage our quality of life with such a large industrial operation so close to downtown Petrolia.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sara March
Petrolia, CA



via electronic mail to: cob@co.humboldt.ca.us

January 23, 2023

Hon. Steve Madrone, Chair
And County Supervisors
County of Humboldt
825 Fifth Street, Room 111
Eureka, CA 95501

**Re: *Appeal of Planning Commission Approval of Cisco Farms, Inc. Conditional Use Permit
PLN-2021-17384***

Dear Chair Madrone and Humboldt County Supervisors:

On behalf of Cisco Farms, Inc. (Applicant), we respectfully request that the Board of Supervisors deny the appeal of the County Planning Commission's November 17, 2022 approval of the Cisco Farms Project (PLN-2021-17384) (Project). We further request that the Board adopt a resolution approving the Project as recommended by Planning Staff in their Staff Report dated January 20, 2023.

The Appellants in this matter oppose the Project on several grounds. This letter addresses the Appellant's allegations relating specifically to compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As shown below, the Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) complies in all respects with CEQA.

We understand that the Appellants articulated their arguments on appeal in email correspondence dated December 5, 2022 (the Appeal), which is part of the administrative record. The Appeal references and summarizes prior comments by multiple parties. For ease of review, this letter maintains the order of arguments raised in the Appeal, summarizes them, and responds to them in kind.

The crux of the Appeal is that Appellants and others presented "substantial evidence" supporting a "fair argument" that the Project may result in "significant environmental impacts". These terms are defined in CEQA and interpreting caselaw. In order to contextualize Appellant's arguments and explain the deficiencies in the Appeal, we begin with a brief legal background prior to addressing the Appeal's substantive arguments.

CEQA Background

CEQA mandates that a lead agency "shall" prepare an MND where – as here – there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record that the Project, as mitigated, may have a significant effect on the environment. (*Friends of "B" Street v. City of Hayward* (1980) 106 Cal.App.3d 988, 1000–1003; Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21064.5, 21080(a), (c)(1); CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15063(b)(2), 15064(f)(2), 15070.) "Substantial evidence" includes facts, reasonable assumptions predicated on facts, and expert opinions supported by facts. (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21080(e), 21082.2(c); CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15064(f)(5), 15384.) Argument, speculation, unsubstantiated opinion or narrative, clearly inaccurate or erroneous evidence, and evidence that is not credible do not constitute substantial evidence. (*Ibid.*) Evidence of social or economic impacts which do not contribute to or are not caused by physical impacts on the environment" also does not constitute substantial evidence. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15384(a).)

Lead agencies have discretion to determine whether particular evidence is or is not substantial evidence, and a court "must give the agency 'the benefit of a doubt on any legitimate, disputed issues of credibility.'" (*Gentry v. City of Murrieta* (1995) 36 Cal.App.4th 1359, 1400, citation omitted (*Gentry*).)



Under the foregoing legal standards, the Appellants bear the burden of proving that, based on the whole of the administrative record, substantial evidence exists and supports a fair argument that the Project may have a significant adverse impact on the physical environment. (*Porterville Citizens for Responsible Hillside Development* (2007) 157 Cal.App.4th 885, 899–900 (*Porterville*); *Gentry, supra*, 36 Cal.App.4th at p. 1379.) Unless the record “contains this evidence, and [Appellants] cite to it, no fair argument that an EIR is necessary can be made.” (*S. Orange Cty. Wastewater Auth. v. City of Dana Point* (2011) 196 Cal.App.4th 1604, 1612–1613.)

As we show below, the Appellants have failed to meet their legal burden – they have failed to point to any substantial evidence in the administrative record that supports a fair argument that the Project may have significant impacts on the environment.

Appeal Argument 1: Cumulative Impacts

The Appellants first assert that the Project IS/MND failed to adequately analyze the Project’s cumulative impacts, alleging that the IS/MND only analyzed impacts within a certain “arbitrary” geographic region. The area analyzed includes both the one-mile area around the Project, as well as the Cape Mendocino Planning Watershed as a whole. The Appellants seem to argue that the IS/MND cumulative impacts analysis is at once “narrow” because it only analyzes impacts within one mile around the Project, but also overbroad because it includes region-wide projects. Appellants further argue that a qualified but not yet balloted initiative titled “the Humboldt County Cannabis Reform Initiative” evidences Humboldt County residents’ aversion to cannabis cultivation, and that this aversion is somehow evidence of cumulative impacts.

Planning Staff correctly point out in the Staff Report that the “environmental analysis of this project is layered”. As Staff explain, the Board certified a programmatic EIR when it adopted the CCLUO, which is the County ordinance that governs this Project. The CCLUO EIR, among other things, addresses the cumulative impacts associated with cannabis cultivation. Mitigations identified in the EIR are incorporated into the CCLUO, so that, as Staff state, a cannabis project that complies with the CCLUO, as does the Project, is already mitigated to eliminate cumulative impacts. Appellants seem to overlook this fact.

CEQA requires a somewhat different cumulative impacts analysis for a mitigated negative declaration than for an EIR. As stated in *San Joaquin Raptor/Wildlife Rescue Ctr. v. Cnty. of Stanislaus* (1996) 42 Cal.App.4th 608, “[t]he question is not whether there is a ‘significant cumulative impact’ but whether the effects of the ‘individual project are considerable.’” (See CEQA Guidelines § 15065(c); *Leonoff v Monterey County Bd. of Supervisors* (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337 [impacts of project are not cumulatively considerable when there is no substantial evidence that any of incremental impacts of project are potentially significant].)

As discussed in the IS/MND, consistent with CEQA, the County here determined that the Project impacts would not be cumulatively considerable where there is no evidence of any *individual* potentially significant effects. (IS/MND at p. 101 [citing CEQA Guidelines §15064(h)(2); see *Sierra Club v. West Side Irrigation District* (2005) 128 Cal.App.4th 690, 701-702.] The IS/MND adequately explains, based on substantial evidence, why the Project’s individual impacts would not result in cumulative impacts. (See IS/MND pp. 102-104.) The Appellants fail to identify any substantial evidence supporting a fair argument to the contrary.

The Appellants, as noted, also argue that a ballot initiative is indicative of a fair argument of potential cumulative effect due to a public controversy relating to cannabis cultivation. CEQA makes clear, however, that “public controversy” is not substantial evidence supporting a fair argument that a project may have significant impacts. As stated in the CEQA Guidelines: “[t]he existence of public controversy over the environmental effects of a project will not require preparation of an EIR if there is no substantial evidence before the agency that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.” (CEQA Guidelines § 15064(f)(4).) As should be obvious, the circulation of a ballot initiative offers no specific substantial evidence that this Project will result in a significant impact, cumulatively or otherwise.

Appeal Argument 2: Project Traffic and Chambers Road

The Appellants next offer a variety of allegations that the Project will result in traffic impacts on Chambers Road. Specifically, the Appellants allege (1) that the Cisco Farms Inc. Road Systems Analysis ("Road Analysis") underestimates Project traffic by failing to accurately capture Project employee trips, by accounting for lunch trips and social trips; (2) that the Project would impair Chambers Road's utility as an evacuation route in the event of a wildfire; and (3) that because Chambers Road is not a category 4 road per County standards, the Project is disqualified from its proposed location.

We have nothing more to add to the detailed response provided by Staff in the Staff Report. As Staff demonstrate, the facts show that the Project will contribute a less than significant volume of traffic to Chambers Road. Importantly, the Appellants have offered no substantial evidence supporting a fair argument that the Project may, despite its insignificant traffic volumes, still result in significant traffic impacts.

With respect to whether the Project may impact Chambers Road as an evacuation route, the Appellants' arguments fall into the category of plain speculation. The Staff Report outlines the data supporting the IS/MND's determination that the Project would not result in public safety impacts. Appellants here again offer no data at all to the contrary, much less data constituting substantial evidence. We also note that none of the cases referenced by the Appellants, *League to Save Lake Tahoe Mountain etc. v. Cnty. of Placer* (2022) 75 Cal.App.5th 63 (*League to Save Lake Tahoe*), *Bakersfield Citizens for Local Control v. City of Bakersfield* (2004) 124 Cal.App.4th 1184, and *Ebbets Pass Forest Watch v. Cal. Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection* (2008) 43 Cal.4th 936, support the Appellants' arguments. In fact, one of the Appellants' cited cases, *League to Save Lake Tahoe*, directly contradicts their arguments:

Courts have made clear that CEQA does not require evaluation of speculative impacts. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15145.) Agencies are not required to engage in 'sheer speculation' as to future environmental consequences of the project.

...

These points apply when we consider an EIR's review of a project's potential to disrupt implementation of an evacuation plan. It is difficult to predict how an actual evacuation will unfold and determine how a project may impact it.

(*League to Save Lake Tahoe Mountain etc. v. Cnty. of Placer* (2022) 75 Cal.App.5th 63, 140 [citations omitted].) The reality is that all of the Appellants' arguments regarding the Project's potential traffic impacts are speculative and do not constitute substantial evidence supporting a fair argument that the Project may result in significant traffic impacts.

Appeal Argument 3: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Appellants argue that Project employees' commutes would emit greenhouse gases ("GHGs") in violation of the County's Climate Action Plan. Appellants point to no specific provision of the Climate Action Plan that would be violated, nor any other substantive law, regulation, or policy that may be violated or exceeded by Project employee commute-related GHG emissions.

The IS/MND describes the Project's potential to produce GHG emissions, including traffic-related emissions, and concludes that Project-related GHG emissions would not exceed the applicable threshold of significance. (IS/MND Table 9 at p. 55.) The IS/MND's determination in this regard is well-reasoned and supported by substantial evidence.



The Appellants, by contrast, offer no substantial evidence, or any evidence at all, showing that the Project may result in a significant impact related to GHG emissions. The Appellants here again fail to show that the IS/MND is inadequate.

Appeal Argument 4: Fire Department Impacts

The Appellants next argue that the Petrolia Volunteer Fire Department is overextended and would be incapable of timely responding to any emergency at the Project Site.

The IS/MND addressed the Project's potential impacts to public services, including impacts to fire services, and determined that the Project's impacts would be less than significant impacts. The IS/MND's determination is validated by the Petrolia Volunteer Fire Department's issuance of a "will-serve" letter for the Project (in other words, the Fire Department confirmed that it will be able to adequately serve the Project). The Appellants here again fail to show that the IS/MND is inadequate.

Appeal Argument 5: Housing and Seasonal Workers

The Appellants argue that inadequate housing exists for Project employees and that seasonal workers may occupy "scarce" housing.

Staff again provide a detailed response on this issue. As Staff's response illustrates, the Appellants' housing concerns are not based in fact and are speculative. Speculation is not substantial evidence. (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21080(e), 21082.2(c); CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15064(f)(5), 15384.)

Appeal Argument 6: Energy Use

The Appellants offer two energy-related arguments: (1) the Project will require more power than PG&E can provide; and (2) the IS/MND fails to analyze all Project activities that would require electrical power, including dehydration and refrigeration of harvested cannabis.

With respect to the Appellant's claims regarding PG&E's capacity to provide power to the Project, the Staff Report provides a complete and detailed response. The IS/MND addressed this issue in detail and concluded on the basis of substantial evidence that adequate power exists to serve the Project. The IS/MND also includes a detailed analysis of the Project's potential energy use. The analysis states, in relevant part:

Power for the Proposed Project would be needed for cultivation (fans and lights), nursery, drying, processing activities, security, and farmworker housing. At full build-out, the Proposed Project would require approximately 639,962 kWh of energy annually (Table 6). The majority of the power would be for the mixed light cultivation, which is estimated to use approximately 456,889 kWh annually. The proposed commercial nursery would use approximately 126,043 kWh and the processing activities would use approximately 31,581 kWh annually. Farmworker housing, drying and security/general site utility would use the least amount of energy, at 12,892 kWh, 9,921 kWh, and 2,637 kWh annually, respectively (Appendix 1 - Cultivation and Operations Plan). Energy usage would fluctuate throughout the year, with peak energy usage during the months of May, July, and August, each estimated at approximately 98,000 kWh per month (Appendix 1 - Cultivation and Operations Plan).

(IS/MND at p. 44.) Table 6, referenced above, provides a comprehensive evaluation of each Project component that would require electrical power. The Appellants offer no expert report and no facts (in other words, substantial evidence) showing, to the contrary, that the Project may have significant impacts related to energy

January 23, 2023

use. The Appellants again offer only speculation, and thus fail to show that the IS/MND is inadequate in this regard.

Appeal Argument 7: Water Use and Hydrological Connectivity

The Appellants offer a number of water use-related arguments, including (1) the rainwater catchment system's efficiency is overestimated and underestimates evaporation; (2) water use by Project employees is underestimated; and (3) and the alleged lack of analysis of a well's hydrological connectivity a "deferral of analysis".

The Staff Report provides a thorough rebuttal to the Appellant's concerns regarding the rainwater catchment systems' efficiency. We add only that the Appellants appear to base their concerns on a study performed in Malaysia, where climate and other conditions are factored that are unlikely or impossible to occur in Humboldt County. We also note that this same study cites to yet other studies that estimated catchment efficiencies as high as 85 and 90 percent.

With regard to residential water use by Project employees, the Appellants fail to consider the fact that water conservation measures are proposed. For instance, the Cultivation and Operations Plan, included as Attachment 5, states that low flow toilets and showers would be installed in employee bathrooms and showers. (Cultivation and Operations Plan at p. 15.) Additionally, prior to the construction of the processing building (in year 3), portable toilets and handwashing facilities would be present on the Project site. (IS/MND p. 65.) These water conservation measures explain the reduced daily water use of employees that this comment letter found to be unusually low.

Lastly, Appellants misunderstand CEQA's rules regarding deferred analysis with respect to their allegations concerning the proposed groundwater well. "Deferred mitigation" is permissible under CEQA where the lead agency adopts conditions or mitigations that establish specific performance criteria. (See, e.g., *Gray v. County of Madera* (2008) 167 Cal.App.4th 1099; *Defend the Bay v. City of Irvine* (2004) 119 Cal.App.4th 1261.) Here, the Project conditions of approval (see Condition 4) expressly prohibit use of a groundwater well unless a groundwater evaluation prepared by a qualified geologist or hydrogeologist can "demonstrate no negative impacts on groundwater resources and surface water disconnection." Thus, rather than defer mitigation, this condition extends beyond CEQA's requirements and expressly prohibits any impacts whatsoever.

The Appellants have failed to identify any substantial evidence in the record supporting a fair argument that the Project may have significant water use or groundwater impacts, and their argument concerning deferred mitigation is without merit.

For the reasons set forth above, on behalf of the Applicant, we respectfully request that the Board deny the appeal, and adopt the resolution as recommended by Staff in the Staff Report.

Sincerely,



Bradley B. Johnson, Esq.
Everview Ltd.

cc: Annje Dodd, PhD, P.E., NorthPoint Consulting Group Inc.
Praj White, P.E., NorthPoint Consulting Group Inc.



January 17, 2023

RE: PLN-2021-17384

Dear County Representatives:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input regarding PLN-2021-17384, appeal of Cisco Farms in Petrolia. I was born and raised in Humboldt County, fourth generation in this county. I've been legitimately self-employed for over two decades (horse shoer and then contractor, all non-cannabis). I've been a permanent resident of the Mattole Valley for almost fourteen years; I own some land here. I'm taking the time to comment today because I am seriously concerned about the future of my community.

I've known Cisco Benemann since I was six years old; we served together in FFA in high school. He's been a lifetime resident of the Petrolia area and never caused conflict or violence against anyone. He's a quiet neighbor and a good friend.

Through the years, more and more people have immigrated to Petrolia. Sadly, today, the community is broken. People and groups constantly seem to complain about what others are doing. The last three sizeable cannabis farms here have been harassed and subject to public criticism. In each case, these are local people trying to make a legitimate living, following all the laws, tirelessly complying with every new regulation, striving to support their families and provide jobs for their communities in one of the most economically challenging situations in decades. Not long ago, there were two restaurants, a vineyard, a coffee company. Now, there's just the general store and it's not busy. Enrollment in the school continues to plunge. We need to generate tax revenue for our basic needs and infrastructure like the volunteer fire department, roads, school. As I said, the community is broken.

Last time I checked, this was still a free country. No person or group should be able to stop another from lawfully farming their own land. Cisco is following the laws. He's complying with every requirement. He's abiding by the rules set by his representative government. It is egregiously offensive and tyrannical for private individuals to stop him from doing what their own government permits him to do on his own property. He's following the rules their own democratically-elected government made. They have no right to stop him.

If you allow special interest groups and individuals with private agendas to stop your constituents from making a living while following your laws, you will set a toxic precedent that will poison the whole area, at a time when the valley needs economic development more than ever. Please know that I am by no means alone in this opinion; many of us feel this way.

In my opinion, these newer residents who like to complain need to learn to embrace tolerance and work with their neighbors rather than running to their soapboxes. These people are suffering from first world problems and the hypocrisy

is beyond belief. Cisco's property qualified for the permit he was issued. Those parameters were set by the county of Humboldt. He has done nothing wrong. He's tried his best to work with the community at every level and address their concerns (social media, individual contacts, in person meetings etc.). The truth is, he's battling arrogance, intolerance, and some people with emotional issues. They're more of a problem for the community than any cannabis farm.

The County government already voted unanimously 5:5 to grant this permit. The facts have not changed since then. If the permit is revoked or altered now in response to this last-minute, groundless appeal, an insidious, dangerous precedent will be set. The best course in this situation is to show true leadership: Stand behind your original decision and do not let yourselves be bullied.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Patrick Queen

January 20, 2023

To: Michael Holtermann, Humboldt County Planning Department
CC. Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
From: Hugh McGee, Petrolia Resident
Re: PLN-2021-17384

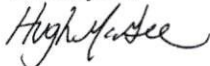
Dear Michael,

I am writing in support of Cisco Benemenn's commercial cannabis project, PLN-2021-17384, that is proposed at 1414 Chamber Road in Petrolia, CA.

My family and I have lived in the town of Petrolia for 16 years. I have spent the past 20 years working on ecological restoration projects in the Mattole Watershed, Humboldt County, and throughout the Western United States. During my time in Petrolia, I have been a full time employee of a local non-profit watershed restoration group, where I am currently employed as an ecologist and program director. Conservation and protection of the Mattole Watershed is incredibly important to me, as is sustaining rural economies in Humboldt County. I have known Cisco for over a decade and he has always been a trusted neighbor and community member. He is currently collaborating with local non-profits and state agencies on a large scale forest and grassland restoration on his property.

I have reviewed the application and permit documents and visited the proposed project site. This project has been reviewed and approved by multiple state and local agencies, and the applicant has completed all necessary actions required by the CCLUO. I don't see any reason why this project would not be approved, and I support the project. Humboldt County is facing an economic collapse in our rural communities. Supporting agricultural projects like this gets us one step closer to sustaining those communities.

Thank you,



Hugh McGee
Petrolia Resident of 16 years
Restoration Ecologist
Owner - Native Ecosystems Inc.
hugh@nat-eco.net

From: Marcia <mne145@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 21, 2023 11:30 AM
To: COB
Subject: Fw: Petrolia Chambers Road and Landowners Appeal of Cisco Farms Inc., Petrolia Area

Caution: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Resubmission of a public comment upon the Cisco Farms, Inc proposal: Agenda item 22-1652
By Marcia Ehrlich

From: Marcia <mne145@yahoo.com>
To: cob@co.humboldt.ca.us <cob@co.humboldt.ca.us>
Sent: Thursday, January 12, 2023 at 12:56:11 PM PST
Subject: Petrolia Chambers Road and Landowners Appeal of Cisco Farms Inc., Petrolia Area

Record Number PLN2021-17384 Appeal Record Number PLN-2021Appeal [filed 12/5/2022]

Submitted by Marcia Ehrlich, 1134 Chambers Road, Petrolia, CA [707-733-4222]

The purpose, location, size and scope of the Cisco Farms, Inc. proposal approved on November 17, 2022 is inappropriate for a densely populated rural location.

>Small scale 5 acre marijuana cultivation is a dying industry. This proposed 5 acre scale cannot compete with far larger cultivation in the Central Valley and Southern California. To build this out and then have to abandon it

down the road causes unnecessary dislocation for the existing community and landowners and the elementary school which is one mile away on a dead end road.

Locating additional marijuana cultivation totally strains the limited public facilities in Petrolia and the social services available. It becomes the straw that breaks the camel's back of country rural roads between Ferndale and Petrolia.

The main inter city road is narrow and crumbling dangerously, not wide enough to permit painted lines to be applied for public safety. Little repair and upkeep is possible due to minimal funding.

Chambers Road itself is poorly maintained, also too narrow for a painted center line, merely 1.5 lanes wide with

a one lane bridge, and no place to walk other than on the "pavement" itself. No sidewalks for school children.

>The Mattole Elementary School is at the juncture of the main Mattole Road thoroughfare and Chambers Road.

The children enter and exit the school grounds approximately 15 feet from a dangerous blind corner. There is no off road parking available for school drop off and pick up. Congestion is at its peak in the afternoons when all school traffic arrives at once. The danger to parents and children is constant at this time of day as people mill around and conversations among all extend this in road confusion. Placing a cultivation and manufacturing business at the end of this road is an accident waiting to happen without the addition of stop signs and traffic personnel the site.

>Approving a manufacturing facility in an area of Chambers Road in what is designated as agricultural land is contrary to this designation. The expectation that the manufacturing business, a 3000 square foot processing facility, will "process cannabis produced on site, as well as cannabis produced off site by other cultivators", ensures heavy traffic would continue on this narrow, crumbling country road past the school and will continue beyond the build out phase.

>It would prevent the continuation of school children safely using Chambers road during the school day - a road without center lines and safe sidewalks for their Physical Education runs. Currently older grades run a mile to the end and walk back to the campus. Children enjoy riding bikes on this little used road; also learning how to push strollers and walk dogs themselves. Visiting soccer and basketball teams come for intra school games and many cars park by the entrance to Chambers Road before and during these games. The area is a nexus of school activities during holidays and school planned events. Again there is no off site parking available. Parking in places must be one side of the road only so that fire engines and rescue vehicles can get through. The end of this road is truly the wrong location for a manufacturing facility with its only access past an elementary and high school..

>It has been suggested the Cisco Farms, Inc. proposal would create jobs. However by requesting to build housing for the one dozen permanent employees [and families?] these jobs are not meant for current residents of the Mattole Valley. Due to very little open housing there is currently a derth of workers to fill the jobs that already are crying for labor: jobs like skilled home maintenance work, defensible space vs fire danger, weed whacking along roads, property maintenance and even road maintenance, plumbing work or roofing jobs, health care for seniors. These jobs have long wait times. Creating jobs for people not skilled in these areas brings an additional burden to the current community.

>Natural events like high winds and torrential rains are common for the Eastern end of Chambers Road. Land that was used to grow seed for vetch crops and used for grazing horses and cows was not developed for other purposes due to nature. Nature has only intensified due to Climate Change. The topography funnels wind across Cisco Farms, Inc acres and across my acres next door to the south. For example my family planted tree wind breaks that took 10 years to get to effective full size. These worked very well for 25 years and now in the last few weeks high winds have blown over the last of these dying helpful windbreak trees. Climate change made replacing old and dying trees impossible to start.

So should wildfire come to this end of Chambers Road, the Cisco Farms, Inc property is ground zero for fire accelerating across this open plain. It is unwise to do major building in such a location. Cal Fire is responsible for this area. Eastern Chambers Road is a Cal Fire State Responsible Area. Cal Fire deems increasing the population on Chambers Road east of the one lane bridge over East Mill Creek too dangerous. **A dead end road could indeed be a dead end for all residents living too densely east of the one lane bridge.**

>Finally the addition of still another marijuana cultivation project with manufacturing and housing, will negatively impact the quality of life of many close neighbors - currently 35 adults and children between the bridge and the entrance to Cisco Farms, Inc. This does not include the four land owners beyond the end of the paved road. Noisy commercial traffic and congestion will also negatively affect property values of both close neighbors and all the residential properties, many with greenhouses, along the one mile road. I cannot think of a single resident living on Chambers Road who feels this project would enhance living and working in rural Petrolia.

Definitely we should not pave over rural spaces on this scale in Humboldt County. It is home to wildlife from frogs to deer, mountain lions to bears, solo herons and flocks of birds, spawning streams of fish, including supplying food to the main stem of the Mattole River for the endangered salmon runs. Also home to the magnificent Milky Way overhead and all the other celestial events now visible on Chambers Road.

Humboldt County needs to create jobs closer to urban centers where goods and services are easily accessible. Also where markets for manufactured goods are closer to distribution routes. The Mattole Road to Ferndale is simply inadequate to sustain more traffic of the commercial sort. Having lived here for 40 years I have seen the coastal road slowly degrade to its current state and know it is far more dangerous to drive it today than even 20 years ago.

Please, please reconsider the size, purpose and scope of this project in this unique location. To build it out and then abandon such a major construction would put the current residents through major dislocation, both the set up and the take down if indeed parts of the state with better maintained roads become the major distributors of marijuana products shipped across the country and overseas. This seems to be the trend.

From: Kristopher Schuster <kristopher.schuster@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 21, 2023 1:45 PM
To: Holtermann, Michael; COB
Subject: 17384, PLN-2021-17384 - Letter of Support

Caution: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Humboldt County Planning Commission/ Michael Holtermann

Hello,

I'm writing in support of the proposed project at 1414 Chambers Rd. PLN-2021-17384. As a long time Petrolia resident and a neighbor of Mr. Benemann, I can attest to his character, as he always acts in the interest of the community and his family. Mr Benemann is a life long resident of Petrolia proper. His family's home was originally purchased by his father, who was also a highly respected community member of Petrolia and Ferndale. He was raised in Petrolia, just as he raises his children there.

Mr. Benemann has always acted in the best interest of the community and has helped to build many homes of community residents. The land upon which he seeks his lawful permit is secluded and pre-designed for agricultural use. From speaking to him in open dialogue with the community, I know he chose a site that will be largely shielded from community view, and will be phasing the project to fit the scope of the marketplace and also in the interests of his neighborhood and community at large.

Our county needs commerce to ensure it's a safe and thriving place to live, now and in the future. Petrolia is a traditionally agricultural community and a perfect place for this lawful agricultural use. Mr. Benemann's past actions and place as an upstanding member of this rural and secluded community make him a perfect candidate to manage a project of this size and scale in the best interests of the area and county at large. This project will add many much needed legal jobs in an area desperate for new avenues of work. I see this as a success for both Petrolia and the county as we usher in a new era of agricultural prosperity and the agri-tourism that comes with it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kristopher Schuster

Petrolia, CA
95558

From: Jessica Rockenbach <jessi44@me.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 21, 2023 1:49 PM
To: COB
Subject: Fwd: 17384, PLN-2021-17384 - Letter of Support

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From: Jessica Rockenbach <jessi44@me.com>
Date: January 21, 2023 at 1:45:49 PM PST
To: mholtermann@co.humboldt.ca.us
Subject: 17384, PLN-2021-17384 - Letter of Support

PLN-2021-17384
17384
Humboldt County Planning Commission/ Michael Holtermann

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Mr. Benemann has always acted in the best interest of the community and has helped to build many homes of community residents. The land upon which he seeks his lawful permit is secluded and pre-designed for agricultural use. From speaking to him in open dialogue with the community, I know he chose a site that will be largely shielded from community view, and will be phasing the project to fit the scope of the marketplace and also in the interests of his neighborhood and community at large.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jessica B Rockenbach

Petrolia, CA
95558

From: Flora Brain <florabrain@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 21, 2023 2:10 PM
To: COB; Bohn, Rex; Madrone, Steve; Arroyo, Natalie; Bushnell, Michelle; Wilson, Mike
Subject: Re: public comment re: PLN-2021-17384 Agenda # 22-1652

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Dear Clerk, and all County Supervisors,

It has come to my understanding that my public comment, submitted on January 16 prior to the January 17 deadline, was not acceptable due to its lack of an associated agenda #.

It is utterly outrageous to me that this is a disqualifier, given that only now after the comment deadline is the County providing the associated agenda #.

I am once again submitting my comment, below. It is in regards to Agenda # 22-1652.

Please fix this broken process for public input, and please begin to hear the widespread Petrolia community opposition to this project.

Thank you,
Flora Brain

New comment resubmitted today, January 21, 2023:

Dear Rex, Steve, Natalie, Mike, and Michelle,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Planning Commission's November 17, 2022 approval of the Conditional Use Permit for 5 acres of new cannabis cultivation, drying, processing, and propagation facilities by Cisco Farms Inc, on Chambers Road in Petrolia, Record # PLN-2021-17384. This is in regards to Agenda # 22-1652.

As a resident of downtown Petrolia with children attending Mattole Elementary School located on Chambers Road, and as a local citizen who is working hard on building resilience and sustainable economic transition in our community, I strongly oppose the development of new cannabis infrastructure at this scale in our rural community, and I specifically oppose any and all further approvals necessary for Cisco Farms Inc to proceed. My reasons are organized below:

- **Impacts to community safety, especially traffic safety around Mattole Elementary School and Triple Junction High School, located on Chambers Road:**
 - Petrolia lacks any sidewalks. My children and their neighbors walk or ride bicycles to school along Mattole Road and Chambers Road. Traffic safety is already a concern, such that residents continually seek ways to slow down traffic and ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. This proposed cannabis development would necessitate more large trucks and increased traffic, notably supply trucks from outside our community whose drivers are unfamiliar with our local

roads, and this ***threatens the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists*** on both Chambers Road and Mattole Road, as those trucks and vehicles come in from Ferndale and Redway. This is a particular concern for me in downtown Petrolia, where my family lives.

- The existing temporary 1-lane bridge across East Mill Creek, located approx. half a mile east of Mattole Elementary School, is approached via a blind curve from both directions. It is already a dangerous spot when drivers do not slow down appreciably. Increasing truck traffic through this location - as *will* happen should Cisco Farms, Inc. be allowed to develop as requested - will increase traffic hazards in this location. It is easy to imagine what could happen there in the event that a large supply truck collides with a smaller vehicle, pedestrian, or bicyclist at that location.

- **Undermining efforts to create a locally appropriate, ecologically and socially responsible cannabis industry in the Mattole Valley:**

- Further development of large scale cannabis operations relying on light dep and mixed light undermine the efforts of small scale, locally appropriate cannabis farmers, businesses, and coops, who are working hard on creating a viable cannabis industry that is ecologically and socially responsible. I support my small scale, full sun, responsible neighbors who are working towards a better cannabis industry future. They are the future that I and many local residents want. As such, I cannot support Cisco Farms, Inc.

- **Lack of enforcement of existing cannabis farms:**

- I have approximately zero faith in Humboldt County's ability to enforce cannabis cultivation regulations at this time. I continually see permitted greenhouses with lights on after dark. I see grows that were permitted with the requirement to catch rainwater, operating with zero rainwater catchment infrastructure evident. I understand that Hum Co's enforcement is complaint-driven, and that will never work in a county and community that prizes "live and let live" and "never snitch" as their most dearly held code of ethics. As such, I have zero faith that large new permitted grows will be done to the letter of their permits. It is not happening now. This reality intersects with, and informs, the following objections:

- **Need to conserve and steward Mattole River water:**

- There is a longstanding recognized need to conserve water in the Mattole River watershed, for both endangered salmon species as well as human use. Groundwater pumping affects water levels in tributaries, the river, neighbors' springs, and ultimately affects us all. I have zero faith that even if permitted to only catch and use stored rainwater, Cisco Farms Inc.'s operations will never use groundwater. See above point.

- **Need to protect dark skies:**

- One of the most precious things we have here in the Mattole are dark skies – except when greenhouses light it up. Even permitted operations frequently keep their lights on after dark. This disrupts diurnal rhythms of nocturnal and crepuscular wildlife, and it irritates humans who enjoy dark skies. See above point re: lack of enforcement of existing cannabis farms.

- **What are we teaching our children?**

○ Right now, children in the lower Mattole Valley are working with their school and local community activists on a theatre production that centers around the need to reduce the use of plastics. Simultaneously, we as a community are working hard to create alternative futures for our children, futures beyond and outside of an outdated industrial cannabis industry that relies on industrial plastics, imported fertilizers, gas-powered generators, electric lights, stolen water. Approving yet another – the biggest yet – industrial cannabis operation in our community undermines all of our efforts to demonstrate to our kids that we are working creatively to forge a better future. We envision and work towards a future where our children make money by restoring salmon, restoring the health and productivity of this watershed, teaching and guiding others to visit our incredibly unique and biologically rich Lost Coast and Mattole ecoregion with respect and appreciation for its uniqueness. We envision a future where small scale locally appropriate and socially responsible farmers provide the highest quality cannabis to markets that value its production methods. We envision a future in which careful water stewardship results in enough water for wildlife and humans to coexist, and we make our livelihoods sharing these skills with others. In short, we envision a community and economies that steward and give back to this land. We are sick and tired of resource-intensive resource extraction. It is time for something new, and we **are** creating it. Please do not hobble our efforts by approving more of the same industrial blight and resource extraction that has recently so deeply failed so many, and continues to fail our watershed during its last gasps. Please support us to do something so much better. Together, we can. Thank you for your dedication to our county's future.

Sincerely,

Flora Brain

Petrolia, CA 95558

On Mon, Jan 16, 2023 at 2:00 PM Flora Brain <florabrain@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Rex, Steve, Natalie, Mike, and Michelle,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Planning Commission's November 17, 2022 approval of the Conditional Use Permit for 5 acres of new cannabis cultivation, drying, processing, and propagation facilities by Cisco Farms Inc, on Chambers Road in Petrolia, Record # PLN-2021-17384.

As a resident of downtown Petrolia with children attending Mattole Elementary School located on Chambers Road, and as a local citizen who is working hard on building resilience and sustainable economic transition in our community, I strongly oppose the development of new cannabis infrastructure at this scale in our rural community, and I specifically oppose any and all further approvals necessary for Cisco Farms Inc to proceed. My reasons are organized below:

- **Impacts to community safety, especially traffic safety around Mattole Elementary School and Triple Junction High School, located on Chambers Road:**

- Petrolia lacks any sidewalks. My children and their neighbors walk or ride bicycles to school along Mattole Road and Chambers Road. Traffic safety is already a concern, such that residents continually seek ways to slow down traffic and ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. This proposed cannabis development would necessitate more large trucks and increased traffic, notably supply trucks from outside our community whose drivers are unfamiliar with our local roads, and this *threatens the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists* on both Chambers Road and Mattole Road, as those trucks and vehicles come in from Ferndale and Redway. This is a particular concern for me in downtown Petrolia, where my family lives.
- The existing temporary 1-lane bridge across East Mill Creek, located approx. half a mile east of Mattole Elementary School, is approached via a blind curve from both directions. It is already a dangerous spot when drivers do not slow down appreciably. Increasing truck traffic through this location - as *will* happen should Cisco Farms, Inc. be allowed to develop as requested - will increase traffic hazards in this location. It is easy to imagine what could happen there in the event that a large supply truck collides with a smaller vehicle, pedestrian, or bicyclist at that location.

- **Undermining efforts to create a locally appropriate, ecologically and socially responsible cannabis industry in the Mattole Valley:**

- Further development of large scale cannabis operations relying on light dep and mixed light undermine the efforts of small scale, locally appropriate cannabis farmers, businesses, and coops, who are working hard on creating a viable cannabis industry that is ecologically and socially responsible. I support my small scale, full sun, responsible neighbors who are working towards a better cannabis industry future. They are the future that I and many local residents want. As such, I cannot support Cisco Farms, Inc.

- **Lack of enforcement of existing cannabis farms:**

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- **Need to protect dark skies:**

○ One of the most precious things we have here in the Mattole are dark skies – except when greenhouses light it up. Even permitted operations frequently keep their lights on after dark. This disrupts diurnal rhythms of nocturnal and crepuscular wildlife, and it irritates humans who enjoy dark skies. See above point re: lack of enforcement of existing cannabis farms.

- **What are we teaching our children?**

○ Right now, children in the lower Mattole Valley are working with their school and local community activists on a theatre production that centers around the need to reduce the use of plastics. Simultaneously, we as a community are working hard to create alternative futures for our children, futures beyond and outside of an outdated industrial cannabis industry that relies on industrial plastics, imported fertilizers, gas-powered generators, electric lights, stolen water. Approving yet another – the biggest yet – industrial cannabis operation in our community undermines all of our efforts to demonstrate to our kids that we are working creatively to forge a better future. We envision and work towards a future where our children make money by restoring salmon, restoring the health and productivity of this watershed, teaching and guiding others to visit our incredibly unique and biologically rich Lost Coast and Mattole ecoregion with respect and appreciation for its uniqueness. We envision a future where small scale locally appropriate and socially responsible farmers provide the highest quality cannabis to markets that value its production methods. We envision a future in which careful water stewardship results in enough water for wildlife and humans to coexist, and we make our livelihoods sharing these skills with others. In short, we envision a community and economies that steward and give back to this land. We are sick and tired of resource-intensive resource extraction. It is time for something new, and we **are** creating it. Please do not hobble our efforts by approving more of the same industrial blight and resource extraction that has recently so deeply failed so many, and continues to fail our watershed during its last gasps. Please support us to do something so much better. Together, we can. Thank you for your dedication to our county's future.

Sincerely,

Flora Brain

Petrolia, CA 95558

16 January, 2023
Humboldt County Building and Planning Department
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Members of the Humboldt County Planning Department and County Supervisors,

I am writing regarding the proposed Cisco Farms cannabis cultivation permit (PLN-2021-17384).

In reading the Mitigated Negative Declaration, I am concerned that the magnitude of the proposed farm will greatly effect the infrastructure of the hamlet of Petrolia. Petrolia currently struggles with rural isolation, difficult roads, limited housing, limited necessary services and an already overwhelming influx of temporary workers requiring health and well-being services that are already stretched to capacity. A farm and processing facility of this size will necessitate increased personnel; workers [full time and temporary] and increased delivery drivers [construction materials, concrete, soil, modular homes, etc.]. With no cell phone connection, no public internet connection, no restaurants, no laundry, no public bathing and only two public port-a-pots, the needs of these additional personnel in our village can not be currently met.

In addition, I have great concern that Chambers Rd. can not accommodate the increased traffic needed for a project of this size. Chambers Rd. is a 1 mile category #4 dead end roadway. At the juncture of Chambers Rd. and Mattole Rd., the Mattole Unified School educates the children of Petrolia and Honeydew from prekindergarten to high school. Students often walk and ride their bikes to school and drop off for students is at the school entrance on Chambers Rd. There are 18 homes on Chambers Rd., the nursery for the Mattole Restoration Council, three cannabis farms and one vegetable farm. In places, Chambers Rd. is too narrow for 2 cars to pass comfortably, portions of the road are gravel or heavily damaged with pot holes, the "temporary bridge" across Mill Creek [a perennial class I watercourse] is a very narrow single lane and the road has been maintained by neighbors; because it has not been adequately maintained by Humboldt County in years. For the residents of Chambers Rd., the only emergency evacuation route is Chambers Rd. and past an eucalyptus grove; which poses a significant fire risk. There is only one road in and only one road out.

The proposal indicates that this large industrial construction project will require increased traffic around the village square, past the school and down the already disintegrating Chambers Rd. At peak season, the project would employ approximately as many workers as there are houses along the road and unless the road is greatly upgraded the increased traffic will be dangerous for all.

I ask that you consider the affect this industrial scale farm will have on the safety of our neighbors, our road, our homes and our quiet rural life.

Respectfully,

Kay Rablenovich

Petrolia, CA 95558

Humboldt County Building and Planning Department
3015 H Street
Eureka, California 95501

Planning Department,

This correspondence will detail my opposition to the current proposal for the large cannabis production facility as presented by Cisco Farms (PLN-2021-17384). My concerns can be summarized into three major points: the large size proposed for the grow accessed by a substandard road and bridge, the capture and retention of a large volume of rainwater and the fire risk to the facilities associated with an already isolated and restricted area.

Chambers Road has been neglected for at least the last six years that I have lived at the end of the road. It is filled with large pot holes, possesses two blind curves as approaches to a "temporary" single lane bridge (without guardrails) and lacks the necessary lane markings and width to truly qualify as a safe passageway. This is particularly true as the road passes the Mattole School where parent traffic and the narrowness makes it risky to pass through. A cannabis facility as proposed by Cisco Farms, with the added traffic of cars and large trucks, would only make the situation worse and add an additional factor of danger for all who travel on the road.

Although the proposal goes to great length in detailing that it could collect all the rainwater it needs, even in times of drought, it ignores the fact that this rainwater will not be available for the local streams and eventually the Mattole River. The Mattole watershed is already in a state of decline as a consequence of the prolonged drought and losing this amount of water to a large industrial grow will make the situation even more dire. Additionally, all the efforts put forth by the Mattole Restoration Council and the Mattole Salmon Group to rehabilitate the watershed for fish habitat will once more be severely diminished by this capture of rainwater.

The proposed location for the facility lies at the end of Chambers Road where access for fire fighting equipment is extremely limited. Not only is the road quality substandard, it also passes through a heritage eucalyptus tree grove that harbors decades of detritus that if ignited, would cut off any egress from the facility. Even alternative escape routes, on private roads, are endangered by fir forests and locked livestock gates. Getting fire fighting equipment in and positioned expeditiously to service such a large production facility, including housed workers, is problematic at best.

Perhaps a more modest proposal that would not place such a large strain on an existing substandard infrastructure would be a more reasonable proposal. Hopefully, what I have described above will help in your deliberations concerning this proposed cannabis grow.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Raplenovich

Petrolia, California 95558
January 16, 2023

From: Thomas Rosin <thomasgailrosin@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 21, 2023 5:15 PM
To: COB
Subject: Fwd: Agenda Item No. 22-1652 Jan.24, 2023 (FILED 12/5/2022) L CISCO FARMS, PETROLIA Fwd: PLN-2021-17384-APPEAL

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Prior Forwarded Message previously sent to Board of Supervisors, Humboldt County, USA

From: Thomas Rosin <thomasgailrosin@gmail.com>
Subject: Agenda Item No. 22-1652 Jan.24, 2023 Fwd: PLN-2021-17384-APPEAL (FILED 12/5/2022) L CISCO FARMS, PETROLIA
Date: January 21, 2023 at 4:52:05 PM PST
To: cob@co.humboldt.ca.us

Agenda Item No. 22-1652 for Supervisors Meeting January 24, 2023
LN-2021-17384-APPEAL (FILED 12/5/2022) L CISCO FARMS, PETROLIA

Begin forwarded message:

From: R. Thomas Rosin <thomasgailrosin@gmail.com>
Subject: PLN-2021-17384-APPEAL (FILED 12/5/2022) L CISCO FARMS, PETROLIA
Date: January 15, 2023 at 2:38:47 PM PST
To: cob@co.humboldt.ca.us, RBohn@co.humboldt.ca.us, mbushnell@co.Humboldt.ca.us, narroyo@co.Humboldt.ca.us, smadrone@co.humboldt.ca.us, mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us
Cc: Marcia Ehrlich <mne145@icloud.com>, Robert Thomas Rosin <thomasgailrosin@gmail.com>

PLN-2021-17384-APPEAL (FILED 12/5/2022) L CISCO FARMS, PETROLIA

Accessor Parcel Numbers 105-191-001, 104-232-005, 104-191-001

Dear Supervisors of Humboldt County, CA:
January 15, 2023

We have written previously to the Humboldt County Planning Commission asking for a positive declaration of environmental impact of the Cisco Farms Petition 2021-17384. We here join an appeal, to deny Cisco Farms Petition asking for the introduction of vertically integrated, industrial and commercial farming of cannabis into the Mattole River watershed. We now appeal to you as Supervisors to reconsider and deny such approval that threatens the legacy of community life, environmental and biome restoration and resilience so central to the life work of so many who live here for decades.

This coastal region of Petrolia 4 miles from the Pacific Ocean bordering the King Range Preserve has a half century legacy restoring the biome for three species of Salmon by repairing riparian environments, enhancing groundwater reserves and surface flows,

while enhancing permaculture, alongside beef and c cannabis gardening for both subsistence and market. As a prime location attracting fisherman, cannabis tourism and trekking the Lost Coast, this community has celebrated, through weekly markets and annual events, the principles of local production, self sufficiency, biome restoration and resilience—all of which would be impacted by by this new level of industrial agriculture and commerce brought deep into the Mattole heartland. As we argued previously;

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Humboldt County has long attracted national and international attention. The county has been known throughout USA, Europe, and Mexico for its cottage industry of cannabis farming families. Must Humboldt County stand by and accept the transformation of cottage agriculture by vertically integrated factory farming: Generators running day and night to fan, light, and over stimulate crops? The intensifying use of water would divert rainfall from the free flowing Mattole River. This Mattole watershed is central to a half century of effort to restore three wild species of Salmon, the Coho, Chinook, and Steelhead to our oceans and countryside. We pled the special nature of the Mattole watershed, in which a citizenry has long supported Sanctuary Forests in the headwaters, and the Mattole salmon Group and the Mattole Restoration Council on the mid-river and delta. These NGOs have been engaged in myriad, half century long efforts to restore and enhance and enhance the local biome,

to improve riparian habitats, scour middle stream beds, enhance ground water reserves, reduce forest fuel to prevent fire, remove lumbering roads causing erosion, and improve culverts to afford fish passage to spawning gravels upstream.

These restorative NGOs are an expression of the integrated community life established here particularly centered in Petrolia, with its school, its social and medical services, voluntary fire department, Community Center and its Grange, whose days are enlivened by Sunday breakfast and weekly markets, a quarterly Cabaret night of dining, dancing, and performances, summer camp, yoga classes, shared rituals of solstice and equinox, annual running and riding competitions, and yearly celebrations of dining on local produce and beef, paid for by minted silver Petrolia coins. Such community life remains a natural outgrowth of a cottage economy of subsistence, salmon and biome restoration, enhanced by cannabis and beef for local consumption and export.

Over the last decades we have witnessed numerous experiments in permaculture and integrative gardening demonstrating resilience by enhancing soils and biome, testing varieties and species in symbiotic combination. Experiments in the vermiculture of worm and fungi have enhanced soils, while a silviculture of tree planting encourages micro-climates as means to achieve resilience in the face of global climate change. These various properties, adjacent to the Cisco parcels, are, in effect, a study zone for learning strategies and techniques, a guide and inspiration for reforming past agrarian practices in timely response to a changing climate.

This joining of three NGOs, local gardeners, and artisan craft and vintage specialists have created a community devoted to biome and landscape enhancement, testing ever expanding experiments in resilience. They have brought wealth, knowledge, and international recognition to our community. Please protect our legacy for future generations, for that legacy serves to educate and inspire.

Most disturbing to us all residing in Petrolia on the Mattole watershed is that so many of those engaged in petitioning for such integrated, industrial and commercial farming have permanent residences outside our watershed. The commercial endeavors at the scale they propose will effectively work to dissolve the quality of community that the people of Petrolia have successfully advanced for several decades.

Why, one must ask should such iconic, successful experiments in biome restoration and resilience now be swamped by the sight, smells, sounds, congestion and over-consumption of energy and water for an industrial scale enterprise with its sprawling nurseries, plastic covered green houses, farm labor housing, processing plants, water storage tanks, and heavy equipment for processing, construction and transport, along with space devoted to parking

, commerce, and storage—all to be located at the end of a narrow dead-end road?

Such vertical integrated industrial farming challenges the legacy, values, and daily experience of the communities that inhabit the Mattole watershed. Here 4 miles from the Pacific Ocean, as a favored entrance to the King Mountain Conservation Reserve, we have a valley congenial to artisan craft, cannabis tourism, fishing and trekking the Lost Coast. Such proposed enterprises as Cisco Farms now proposes in a time of excessive costs, falling prices, intensive competitions of scale, and limited markets, might just leave us with the abandoned wreckage of their own debris.

Yours most sincerely,

Gail Lee Wread & R. Thomas Rosin,
Prof. Emeritus of Anthropology
Sonoma State University

[thomasgailrosin@gmail.com](mailto:<thomasgailrosin@gmail.com)

From: robie tenorio <robieinthegarden@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 22, 2023 11:49 AM
To: COB
Subject: Comments for Supervisors meeting 1/24 -Agenda item L-1 (Planning & Building) 12-1652
Attachments: January 24th.docx

Caution: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Dear Ms Hayes, Clerk of the Board

Attached please find my comments for the upcoming Supervisors meeting 1/24/23, Agenda item - Planning & Building - L-1, 12-1652

I had previously submitted them on January 17th but I do not see them in any of the materials posted on the Legistar.

Thank you,
Robie Tenorio

January 17, 2023

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
825 5th street
Eureka, CA 95501

Re: Appeal for the Permits granted November 17, 2022 to Cisco Farms Inc., on
Chambers Road in Petrolia, Record # PLN-2021-17384.

Dear Supervisors,

Please support the Appeal of PLN 2021-17384.

To be very clear this project that has been permitted by the Planning Commission is inappropriately sited for its industrial size.

Chambers Road is a very small, often one lane, dead end road, that begins in front of the Mattole Valley school. The road begins at the T of Mattole road; because of the hill leading up to the center of town this is almost a blind turn right in front of the School. It is essential that you as deciders understand the location of this industrial scale business.

Public Process

I attended the November 17th Planning Commission where this application was discussed and permitted. The meeting was challenging on a technical level because the remote audience was not able to hear the Chair, so those of us wanting to make comments during the public comment period were not able to. But more importantly was the obvious confusion the Commissioners had in regards to Community support for this project.

The Friday before the meeting on November 11th, 2022 I looked over the agenda, read the Staff report and many of the other reports attached to this project, Cisco Farms. I also read Attachment 6, which contained at least 14 letters, written in August, from Community members, many who live on Chambers Road who vigorously opposed the project. I submitted my comments opposing the project to the Planning Commission. As an environmentalist and restorationist with more than 35 years of work in the Mattole Watershed, I have made written comments and spoken at many Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings about the negative environmental and social impacts from the permitting of large industrial size cannabis farms in the Mattole Valley.

After reading the robust response from the Community expressed in those 14 letters I was confident that the Planning Commissioners would understand that this particular site on Chambers Road was not appropriate for an industrial size Cannabis business. I assumed that rather than deny the project outright perhaps a significant downsizing conversation would be had and a more social and environmentally appropriate project would develop. BUT much to my disbelief what I heard the Commissioners saying was how much the Community supported the project. WHAT? Unable to speak (because of

those technical problems) during public comment I was unable to bring the issue of community opposition up. Planning Staff was present for the entire meeting and from my view did NOT bring to the Commissioners attention the robust response from the Community in the form of the 14 letters written in August. Staff made no mention that in fact, contrary to the Commissioners understanding and comments, there was not overall support from the Community for this project.

The commissioners voted to approve the plan all the while extoling the community support for the project. The chair of the meeting, Noah Levy said, "Clearly this project has a lot of community support from the letters we have received". Also when the size of the project was addressed, the mitigation to those concerns was the reassurance that the applicant was probably not going to make it that big so no need to be concerned about the size.

At the next Planning Commission meeting, on December 1, 2022 during public comment, Bonnie Blackberry brought up the issue of the 14 letters. The Chair said, " he had not seen the collection of letters", Commissioner McCacavour stated, "nor did I". Later in the meeting the Chair said he was mistaken and he had seen the letters.

I explain this all to you in hopes that you will understand that not only is this project completely inappropriate for this area the public process was very flawed. I will add that in August many of the letter writers specifically requested to be notified of any meetings or actions regarding the Cisco Farm. They were not notified of its being placed on the Planning Commission agenda for November 17th 2022.

Project Concerns

This project as planned is inappropriate for a small neighborhood far from services and infrastructure that would support an industrial scale farm. The roads are not fit for adding more large trucks and workers (up to 34 employees) traveling to and from work. The social, medical and emergency infrastructure is not there to support the level of development proposed for this project.

The road to Cisco Farms, Chambers Road, begins at the school. My grandchildren attend this school and their safety entering the schoolyard from Chambers Road would be compromised if this project were allowed to proceed as permitted. As would the safety for all the other children and people who walk, run and use Chambers Road. Right across the street from the school is the Community center. This is a very well used center of town. It is vital that you understand the on the ground impacts of permitting a large industrial scale farm in the middle of it. Visit the location; see for yourself why the community overwhelmingly opposes this project.

If you travel to the project site you will also see that there is a one-lane bridge that has blind curves before and after it. There is also the very serious issue of Wild Fire. The project is sited out of the Petrolia Fire District and in the SRA but the local VOLUNTEER department would still have to respond to any emergency (both medical & fire).

Evacuation on this one lane, already deteriorated road at the same time as personnel are responding to an emergency is a recipe for disaster.

I have to add that I am a surprised and disappointed that considering Humboldt County's economic situation in regards to Cannabis cultivation the Planning Commission would think it is beneficial to permit an industrial scale Cannabis Farm in the middle of an area that has small cannabis farms operated by families living on Chambers Road, their children attend the school, they are active on the Fire Department and in the community and they are struggling to keep their small family farms afloat. Further development of large scale cannabis operations relying on light deprivation and mixed light undermine the efforts of small scale, locally appropriate cannabis farmers, businesses, and coops, who are working hard on creating a viable cannabis industry that is ecologically and socially responsible. It looks like sabotage.

There are many problems with this project and its location. Please read the detailed letters of those appealing this project.

Please support the Appeal of PLN 2021-17384

Thank you,

Robie Tenorio

From: kathrynradke@gmail.com
Sent: Sunday, January 22, 2023 5:02 PM
To: COB
Cc: Bohn, Rex; Madrone, Steve; Arroyo, Natalie; Bushnell, Michelle; Wilson, Mike
Subject: RE: comment for appeal of # PLN-2021-17384

Caution: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Apparently, I needed to include the agenda number # 22-1652 for this letter. However, the agenda wasn't released until shortly before 5 pm on Friday January 20, several days after the deadline for submitting letters.

Kathryn Radke

From: kathrynradke@gmail.com <kathrynradke@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2023 10:16 PM
To: cob@co.humboldt.ca.us
Cc: rbohn@co.humboldt.ca.us; smadrone@co.humboldt.ca.us; narroyo@co.humboldt.ca.us; mbushnell@co.humboldt.ca.us; mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us
Subject: comment for appeal of # PLN-2021-17384

16 January 2023

Re: appeal of the Humboldt County Planning Commission's 11-17-22 approval of the Conditional Use Permit for 5 acres of new cannabis cultivation, drying, processing, and propagation facilities by Cisco Farms Inc, on Chambers Road in Petrolia (Record # PLN-2021-17384).

Dear Humboldt County Supervisors,

I am writing to protest the approval by the planning commission of this conditional use permit. The application and associated environmental documents **do not at all address the cumulative impacts of this project on the Petrolia community**. I am the chair of the Board of Directors of the Mattole Valley Community Center, the secretary of the Board of Directors of the Mattole Valley Resource Center, and the overall coordinator of the Mattole Valley Neighborhood Emergency Services Teams (NEST) organization. The needs and vulnerabilities of the local community are therefore front and center for me much of the time, as for example during the month of earthquakes, flooding storms, and lengthy power outages since December 20, 2022.

Having the planning commission chair report that letters from the community submitted before the hearing were "supportive" was insulting beyond belief. Did he even read the letters? Why didn't staff correct him?

Here are some of my concerns about the proposed mega-project:

The Chambers Road access to the project is not appropriate for a large-scale operation:

-The intersection of Mattole and Chambers Roads is right at the entrance to the Petrolia school grounds, across the Mattole Road from the community center, and at the top of the steep Crane Hill on the Mattole Road. Vehicles consistently speed up Crane Hill and their drivers cannot see over the crest until they are very near the top where there's a crosswalk used by school kids as well as community members. **Many near-accidents have occurred at that intersection**, including narrow misses of kids or vehicles turning from Chambers onto Mattole Road, as well as close calls with wandering cows. Increased vehicular traffic through

this intersection will increase these dangers immensely, especially when large trucks have to make the turn onto Chambers, because visibility is restricted by a grove of eucalyptus trees. Parents drop off and pick up their kids right there.

-Workers at the proposed project are going to drive to the Petrolia store, food truck, and post office during the noon hour, when high school kids walk from the school to the store, increasing the chances of accidents. Moreover, kids walk from home to school and back home along Chambers Road.

-Chambers Road is the one-way exit to Mattole Road for residents during wildfires. The marginal width of the road makes it questionable whether emergency vehicles can go up Chambers while passenger vehicles are driving out. **The one-lane bridge over Mill Creek is a bottleneck.** Visibility approaching the bridge from both directions is limited by blind curves, trees, and steep hills. Having up to 34 workers needing to exit the proposed project in addition to other Chambers Road residents will only intensify the nightmare of getting people out during a fire.

-The condition of Chambers Road is poor – strings of “filled” potholes can be seen on the Google Maps satellite view. Large potholes and the broken road surface have not been repaired near the end of the county road portion of Chambers – that section has to be crawled through by vehicles. It is ludicrous to think that anyone could drive that section at 25-40 mph, as was reported to be the speed range for driving Chambers Road. In practice, the whole of Chambers has to be driven at 25 mph or less – mostly less.

The increased number of cannabis workers will burden an already-stressed community.

-Housing. If only 8 full-time workers will be housed on site, where are the other 4 full-time workers going to be housed? And where are the 22 peak season workers going to live? Housing is already severely limited in our area - many workers on existing operations commute daily from Ferndale/Eureka/Fortuna, etc. or live in substandard housing here.

-Power. PG&E has a waiting list for domestic power drops in the area; power delivery is already maxed out for Southern Humboldt for years. This project and associated housing will not be able to use PG&E power.

-“Public” services. Limited services such as internet access and public porta-potty toilets are being provided in Petrolia by the community center and the family resource center. Pumping costs for the toilets require constant fund-raising pleas to the community and most contributions are literally nickels and dimes. Many cannabis workers already in the area rely on these services and do not appear to contribute in any significant way to their costs. Using their cell phones over the internet is often their only source of contact outside the valley. The community center considers the ability to communicate outside the valley to be necessary for public safety and has assumed its cost, again raising the necessary funds. Sources of potable water are limited locally and no public laundry facilities exist. Garbage and recycling have to be disposed of by individuals.

-Emergency services. Petrolia is already stressed for sufficient personnel to provide emergency services for current residents. Another large increase in cannabis workers will lessen the ability of our volunteer EMTs and fire department members, as well as the ability of the entire community, to deal with medical emergencies, fires, earthquakes, winter storms, power outages and floods.

-Traffic on the Wildcat (Mattole Road) between Ferndale and Petrolia. Many workers on existing cannabis operations drive this road daily to work in Petrolia. Dangerous speeding, driving in the middle of the road, and driving on the wrong side around blind curves have increased markedly in the past several years. Large truck traffic that services the cannabis industry has taken a big toll on the pothole-filled road. That wear and tear will increase greatly to build and service the proposed project at the size and scale heedlessly approved by the planning commission.

Many stalwart community members in Petrolia have had it with the endless stream of approvals of large-scale cannabis operations, frequently as multiple operations run by essentially the same people. Enough is enough!

Folks behind the desks need to come out here and spend some time looking carefully at what this has wrought.
We do not need another mega-grow in Petrolia.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Radke

Petrolia

From: Dan Weaver <dancweaver@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 22, 2023 10:40 PM
To: Holtermann, Michael
Cc: lostcoastmadman@gmail.com
Subject: Letter of Support for Cisco Benemann Proposed Project on 1414 Chambers Road Petrolia Ca.95558 PLN -2021-17384

Caution: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

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>
> My name is Daniel Weaver. I have resided in Petrolia on Conklin Creek Rd. for over 35 years and have been a neighbor of Cisco and the Benemann family throughout that period. Before that, I served as a grunt in the USMC, and in the US NAVY as a carrier fighter pilot for over two decades, including two combat tours in Vietnam. I retired from the Navy in 1977. I then worked as a criminal defense investigator and testified in state and federal courts, retiring in 2009.
>
> I have seen Cisco complete his environmental engineering education at HSU, and have observed his long term stewardship of the Benemann property on Conklin Creek Rd. as well as a wide range of other community support activities. I knew two of the prior owners of the large acreage at 1414 Chambers Rd. and of the history of timber harvest and livestock operations there, and looked forward to Cisco's ownership and future use of the property.
>
> I am aware of the nature of CISCO's pending permit application for his property, the existence of opposition to the permit approval, and of Cisco's willingness to meet publicly with those in opposition. I myself share many of the same concerns expressed to Cisco. I have recently experienced large scale timber harvest operations next to my own property on Conklin Creek Rd., and yes, it was noisy, in my view shed, led to increased road truck traffic, and resulted in long term forest changes adjacent to my property I had no control over. Yet at the same time, the operation was conducted lawfully and professionally in accordance with an approved permit with strict environmental protections, provided well paid seasonal employment for many county residents, provided high quality building materials, and in the long run resulted in creating a landscape of regenerated future timber regrowth.
>
> What does this have to with Cisco's permit application and opposition? My own experience indicates that change is challenging and often difficult. To move forward in a manner acceptable to a majority is best achieved by working together cooperatively, addressing goals and concerns openly, and achieving results that serve the common good.
>
> I seems that such an opportunity exists in the case at hand. Approving Cisco's permit and establishing a format where his potential operation can be reviewed, commented on by those most affected, and adjusted where possible could lead to harmonious long term results. All the parties in this matter live in or have an interest in the same general geographic area and belong to a community with clearly supported peaceful lifestyles. This seems a matter best resolved at a local level without placing that burden on tax-supported agencies with broader responsibilities. This seems worth a try.
>
> Respectfully submitted, Daniel Weaver
>
>
>
>

From: Hugh McGee <hugh@nat-eco.net>
Sent: Friday, January 20, 2023 3:56 PM
To: COB
Subject: Letter of Support PLN -2021-17384
Attachments: LOS_PLN2021-17384.pdf

Caution: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Hi Michael,
Attached is my Letter of Support for PLN-2021-17384.
Thank you,
Hugh

Hugh McGee
Restoration Ecologist
Native Ecosystems, Inc.

hugh@nat-eco.net
www.nat-eco.net

Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner #0179
CA Contractors License No. 1038624

Native Ecosystems, Inc.

Ecological Restoration Consultants

707-599-7814 (Text/Call)

Design | Planning | Permitting | Biological | GIS | Project Management

Habitat Restoration – River, Riparian, Wetlands, Forests, Grasslands, Oaks

January 20, 2023

To: Michael Holtermann, Humboldt County Planning Department
CC. Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
From: Hugh McGee, Petrolia Resident
Re: PLN-2021-17384

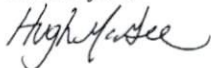
Dear Michael,

I am writing in support of Cisco Benemenn's commercial cannabis project, PLN-2021-17384, that is proposed at 1414 Chamber Road in Petrolia, CA.

My family and I have lived in the town of Petrolia for 16 years. I have spent the past 20 years working on ecological restoration projects in the Mattole Watershed, Humboldt County, and throughout the Western United States. During my time in Petrolia, I have been a full time employee of a local non-profit watershed restoration group, where I am currently employed as an ecologist and program director. Conservation and protection of the Mattole Watershed is incredibly important to me, as is sustaining rural economies in Humboldt County. I have known Cisco for over a decade and he has always been a trusted neighbor and community member. He is currently collaborating with local non-profits and state agencies on a large scale forest and grassland restoration on his property.

I have reviewed the application and permit documents and visited the proposed project site. This project has been reviewed and approved by multiple state and local agencies, and the applicant has completed all necessary actions required by the CCLUO. I don't see any reason why this project would not be approved, and I support the project. Humboldt County is facing an economic collapse in our rural communities. Supporting agricultural projects like this gets us one step closer to sustaining those communities.

Thank you,



Hugh McGee
Petrolia Resident of 16 years
Restoration Ecologist
Owner - Native Ecosystems Inc.
hugh@nat-eco.net

January 16, 2023

Hello again,

I respectfully re-submit my letter of opposition to the Cisco Farms, Inc. (PLN-2021-17384) proposal at this time when an appeal its approval is being heard (see previous letter 8/25/22 below). I truly hope that in this appeal process, the Planning Commission will realize how strong the opposition to this project is, & how harmful a project of this size would be to the small community of Petrolia, as well as to the precious environment in the Mattole Valley. This project should not be approved.

Thank you for hearing my voice.

Sincerely,

Lynn McCulloch

senora@frontiernet.net

**rural property owner in Ferndale & Petrolia opposed to large-scale cannabis cultivation in Humboldt County

August 25, 2022

To whom this may concern,

Once again I am sending my comments to the Humboldt County Planning & Building Department re: large scale cannabis cultivation in the Mattole Valley. The conditional use permit being solicited by Cisco Farms, Inc. is once again, too big for the small rural valley inhabited by a number of residents who feel that this kind of development is changing the quiet place they chose to live in, where truck traffic through the local school zone, fan noise, lights, smells, fire danger, acres of plastic, & potential water pollution are exactly what they oppose for their community. It is also, once again, dividing the community.

Sadly, we feel that our comments go ignored each time another over-sized cultivation plan goes forward. I have been told that growers submitting these plans are advised to go for "pie in the sky" as they draw up their proposal, in case they want to increase their size once the initial phase has been completed. I ask WHY ARE THEY NOT SUBMITTING PLANS FOR THE SIZE WHICH THEY FEEL IS ETHICAL instead. One acre grows should be the limit, & I don't mean one acre of greenhouses. I mean one acre of "in ground" plants, with possibly a small greenhouse nursery, limited to ONE. Cannabis cultivation has gotten way out of hand in our county. Where are the regulations that support SMALL, ETHICAL ONE ACRE FARMS? If the price is just too low to sustain a farmer with only one acre, then maybe that farmer needs to have a few other enterprises going on. This large scale model is not good for our county's youth. It makes it look like large-scale farms are the best option to make enough money to live here.

Our ecology is being altered, as in unmonitored water extraction & pollution to our rivers & streams. The very reason that tourists want to visit our area, that is to experience the clean air & water & open spaces, is being challenged by increased cultivation on overly large scales. Those of us who live here also value those things. We can no longer "green light" over extraction & exploitation of our open spaces. It's time to set limits NOW, or our grandchildren will be looking at nothing but plastic greenhouses, or their leftover waste left behind post cultivation, & dried up rivers & streams. They will not have the luxury of a night sky filled with stars, or the silence found in our still wild places.

Maybe this sounds extreme, but if things continue to go unchecked, this might be exactly what we are left with. Even the unincorporated areas need

to have a say in this. Please hear our voices of opposition & start ensuring that large scale cultivation is stopped.

Thank you for your time & attention.

Sincerely,

Lynn McCulloch