



May 31, 2019

To the Residents of Santa Barbara County:

County government's role is to balance numerous sides of a complex issue, not one side or the other, that ultimately will benefit the county long term. Developing a regulatory environment for a new industry takes time and requires patience. The County Board of Supervisors adopts policies and regulations through a robust public process open to all stakeholders – none more so than the cannabis ordinance with more than 30 public meetings with many hours of public comment.

We recognize that there are significant tensions among residents, cannabis growers, and some elements of other agricultural industries. We are committed to developing a regulatory environment to address concerns such as odor, enforcement, compatible land uses and eliminating the underground economy.

Every land use issue in Santa Barbara County is controversial, including greenhouses in Carpinteria for cut flowers in the 1990s. Cannabis is a contentious topic and one that stirs strong emotions, feelings and opinions.

Since 2016 with pending state regulations and passage of Proposition 64 to legalize recreational marijuana, the County has worked on building a local regulatory structure to reduce, if not eliminate, illegal grows and many of the negative effects identified around cannabis cultivation. Developing regulations has been conducted in a very public manner with hundreds of stakeholders across the county.

Protecting neighborhoods has been at the forefront of discussions. To that end, all permitted cannabis operators are required to meet strict development standards and conditional use permits are now required of cannabis operators in existing rural neighborhoods to help reduce further impacts. The County's compliance and enforcement teams have been enforcing our regulations and those required by the State of California to put a stop to illegal cannabis activity and operations across the county.

Since August 2018, 30 criminal enforcement actions resulted in removal of 832,649 live plants and confiscation or elimination of 31,706 pounds of dry and wet harvested plants, illegal products and delivery services. In addition to criminal enforcement, the compliance team is actively pursuing civil and land use violations to enforce health and safety concerns.

Benefits of the County's approach to the regulation of cannabis include:

- Driving out bad actors and the illegal market that create public safety and health problems
- Tax revenue to fund enforcement and regulation
- Higher wage jobs with benefits for cannabis industry employees
- Creation of a new regulated ag industry within a county that is 96.5 percent agricultural and forest land, and 3.5 percent urban.

We urge all residents to engage in local government and policy development. To join the public process, use this link to [subscribe](#) to receive news and information from the County, or go to www.countyofsb.org.

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