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Date: 10/31/2017 7:57:00 PM

Subject: PLS INCLUDE THESE NEIGHBORS- NO Commercial Cannabis here, please

FROM LAURA LEY VA & LES STRNAD  
 2505 Eureka Canyon Road  
 Corralitos, CA 95076

Cannabis Comments C/O Matt Johnston  
 Planning Department  
 701 Ocean Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: No on Commercial Cannabis around/above Nisene Marks-Soquel Demo and beyond

Dear Santa Cruz County Cannabis Licensing Folks,

We recognize the need for regulation and licensing in regards to Cannabis cultivation and manufacturing in general, especially as unregulated operations do impact the hydrology, with pollutants, runoff, erosion, etc. and the wildlife habitat, and come with associated other problems including crimes. However, we are strongly opposed to our area becoming designated for commercial greenhouse OR in-ground grows. We are very fearful what this would do to our unique and beloved area and for our family's and neighbors' safety. We would actually like to see a moratorium, or at least a very big limit, on growing cannabis- legal or illegal- in our remote South County forest neighborhoods. It is a mountain forest- a wildlife refuge and part of a valuable open space system- best left as is for the watersheds and important watershed recharge, the wildlife, the heritage and health of the rare interface of redwood, tan oak and madrone forests with chaparral and pine slopes.

In the thickly forested intersection of Eureka Canyon, Ormsby, Buzzard and Highland Way, our quiet remote neighborhood adjacent to Nisene Marks Park, the largest State Park in the County, is already under impact with more grows. This is a spectacular area of the County with gorgeous sweeping views of the mountains and the coast. We chose over 20 years ago to purchase our home in this area, 6 miles from the closest store, 40 minutes from Santa Cruz and Silicon Valley- because we are nature conservationists who wish to live peacefully within the redwood forests of these awesome Santa Cruz mountains. We are neither growers nor users of marijuana, however, we do not condemn anyone for doing so, quietly and for their own personal use (6 plants?) or even if they have a small, unimpactful greenhouse in their yard they can manage.

#### RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT- ZONING CONFLICT:

BUT... We do NOT want grows larger than 10 x 10, or commercial grow operation permits in this remote forested TP / AG zoned mountain area up here. I see a lot of "insignificant impacts" in the EIR related to commercial cannabis operations in "timberland and agriculture" areas, but we do not have the water sources up here to support them, unless they collect rainwater or from the already tapped creeks. Many of our neighbors are "off the grid"- don't even have PG & E available on their personal properties- much less power for commercial operations. There would be even more FIRE risks. Our creeks and groundwater would be at more risk of being overdrawn, and from pollution by organics and nonorganics, sewage, rodenticides, etc., and we, wildlife and pets would be impacted by all of this.

Our watershed, Corralitos Creek, is a Restoration Creek for steelhead and salmon- these pollutants will run off and find their way into the creek. Same with Soquel Creek watershed.

One of the important reasons many of us live here is the clean air quality. Harvest season in the Cannabis industry creates poor air quality and air pollution.

Nisene Marks Park is the largest State Park in the County and it is home to a large population of wildlife including Mountain Lions, fox, bobcat and other keystone species- they rely on our open properties to connect with their larger territories in Sierra Azul and elsewhere. Commercial Cannabis production requires fencing, will be noisy and will impact these at risk populations through polluted water and soils and traffic even more than they already are.

Not least of the problems is there would be (already is) more crime, and the closest Sherriff is at least 20 minutes away, should there be an emergency. This is a very long wait. Our access roads have been damaged by storms and mudslides, and are very small, and can hardly handle the traffic we have now, much less more. Firetrucks need to be able to access these commercial growing facilities. Also, if there is more tree loss due to clearing, the area will only get hotter and drier. Erosion, landslides and storm water problems will only increase with grading. Etc. and Etc. (Just a quick question- How out of place would it be to license commercial hops farms and distilleries in the forested redwood wilderness?)

I do not know how the EIR can say that there will be "insignificant impact" on these pristine forested areas zoned TP and/ or Ag/R by commercial grows.

#### UNDESIRABLE ASSOCIATED IMPACTS AND MORE CRIME- SAFETY AND COST:

Over time things here have already changed due to more cannabis and fires. We do NOT want to see our area and our terrible roads become even more over-run than they are by those who have little respect for us or our beautiful forests, clean air, streams, safety and peace. More traffic from Cannabis has already created more familiarity with our remote area by those

who come back just to commit petty or major crimes- such as theft, shooting from the road, or dumping toxic waste. We already have limited law enforcement available here. And this is the type of element that commercial cannabis will continue to invite. In fact Calaveras County is an example of how Licensing has increased more illegal growing alongside those who are legal, as it attracts anyone to come in and get the business underway- as many will take an “act now, apologize later” strategy.

There was a shooting off of Highland Way just 2 miles from my home this summer with Fish and Game who were thankfully busting a polluting illegal grow... but what if this had involved someone like me, a hiker, just out with my ornery dog on a walk in my “back 40” encountering some armed, undocumented man guarding a grow? Even 5 years ago I felt pretty safe as a woman running alone for miles with my dog through the gnarly forests of adjacent Soquel Demo and Nisene Marks Park, or along the barely used dirt Buzzard Lagoon Rd., or Highland Way. Now not as much. We have gang type graffiti painted on our favorite roadside rocks, we have trash and toxic waste dumped off the side of the road into the creeks, and people who are not respectful hanging around during the seasonal harvests. We have strange guys parked on our property wandering around our little dirt road early on Saturday mornings, doing who knows what. There are more thefts, more late-night semi-automatic weapon gunshots, so frankly I do not feel as safe in my own home now that there is more growing activity. Someone could argue that this is just population growth but the types of “questionable” visitors is what we are concerned about, not the numbers. We have a lot more bicyclists who visit now than in the past who do not pose the same concerns.

How will these impacts be improved, if growers are licensed to operate on our neighboring parcels free and clear and can amp up their operations commercially? More roads, buildings, fences, more traffic, trespassing, crime and disturbance from questionable types?? Same amount of limited law enforcement....

In Calaveras County, the licensing and permitting of Commercial Cannabis has also brought more ILLEGAL growing operations hiding as a guise in the shadows of Legal growers. They are grappling with costs of the increased crime and related dangers to their citizens and their enforcement personnel.

HOW will mitigation actually address these issues? We will not move from our beloved home- but should there be any major operations permitted up here that will impact us and the surrounding areas further in these ways, expect that there will be a huge fight to protect our safety and quality of life, as well as property values.

#### WILDERNESS IMPACTS:

“Timberland and agriculture” areas include wildlife corridors and open space areas here in which we quietly live adjacent to Nisene Marks Park amongst the Mountain lions, bobcat, many owl species, turkey, fox, newt, salamander... and we simply cannot believe that their habitats and natural ranges, water and food will not be impacted by fencing, new roads, more noise, traffic, tree clearing, grading, building and pollutants, and rodenticides that will kill the animals who eat the rodents that are poisoned. This upsets us greatly and I will fight to protect these habitats.

NOT TO MENTION AESTHETIC IMPACT on these awesome pristine coastal redwood mountain vistas....This area should be valued as a treasure to the County.

#### AND- MITIGATION-

Although we understand the County plans to take mitigation seriously- as a Landscape Architect and real estate investor I know there can be limitations in mitigation and enforcement, and there are always those who can find a way to “sneak” through the loopholes of mitigation plans. I have fears that it will not be as successfully enforced in our more remote mountain areas, just as building code is not. Many developers and those seeking to improve their properties in Santa Cruz County and other municipalities I work in such as Los Gatos have a “do it anyway and apologize later” mentality, and those with the duty of enforcing environmental regulations like water use and toxic waste requirements in construction do not always catch the violations-

My fear is that the highest intention of low impact through mitigation will be undermined by lack of monetary or enforcement personnel resources (only 2 are being proposed!?) or thorough follow through; and the health of our natural resources and habitats and citizens in our remote neighborhoods will pay the price. Having said this, I would like to believe that regulation and mitigation efforts by the County will be strongly upheld and enforced.

IN CONCLUSION- we do feel there is a need to regulate, and enforce the regulations of, the industry; and we strongly oppose commercial growing in the remote neighborhoods and wilderness-open space systems throughout the Upper Corralitos/Eureka Canyon/Soquel Demo/Upper Aptos Hills/Buzzard Lagoon/Ormsby/Summit-Mt. Madonna/Highland/Mount Bache/Spanish Ranch corridors over and around Nisene Marks Park and around Sierra Azul. Thank you so much for listening to our voices and concerns regarding Cannabis in our area. Please let us know if there is anything we or our neighbors can do, or more we can add to the conversation, to help.

Sincerely,

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AND

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