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Date: 10/10/2017 8:12:00 PM
Subject: EIR comments

I am troubled by the potential environmental impacts of marijuana growing in sensitive areas of Santa Cruz if not conducted under strict environmental and fire safety restrictions. In the Santa Cruz Mountains, substantial damage has already been done by:

illegally clearcutting redwoods to create areas for marijuana growing;

by using dangerous insecticides, rodenticides, and pesticides, that migrate into streams;

by creating illegal stream diversions;

by use of generators, grow lights, and unpermitted wiring, creating substantial fire risks;

and by conducting these activities in areas where there is no access sufficient for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles to reach the site in case of fire or other event.

I believe that all of those activities associated with unsafe marijuana growing must be barred by the County ordinances.

I believe that any site where these unsafe practices have occurred should be prohibited from future marijuana growing.

I believe that sensitive environmental areas such as the Santa Cruz Mountains should be off-limits. These areas are precious environmental resources and must be protected.

Growing marijuana commercially should be conducted just as any other commercial farming is — on real farmland, with full regulation of appropriate water access, fire protection, pesticide etc. use. No site should be approved where fire trucks cannot readily get.

If people want to grow marijuana commercially, it should be done as any other agricultural activity. Because until recently it was illegal, all sorts of environmentally inappropriate locations and activities have been employed. If marijuana is to come out of the shadows, it must meet the requirements for legal agriculture, in typical agricultural areas, not hidden in sensitive redwood forests where stream diversions, pesticides, clearcutting, and fire risks can be major environmental impacts.

Sincerely,
Daniel Hirsch