

EIR comments 10/11/17
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To Whom It May Concern:

I live at the top of Trout Gulch in Aptos about three miles beyond the “End of County Maintenance”. We are a community of about 150 properties split between two Road Associations, Upper Fern Flat Road Association and Sparrow Valley Road Association. I am the current president of the SVRA.

Although I do not have any problem with Marijuana or people growing it generally, I am having a lot of troubles with the impact of the amount and aggressive nature that comes with the grows in our area. I get a lot of complaints from my constituents regarding traffic, water, electricity, Fire, vagrancy and road ware.

I will try to save the detailed stories and stick with my issue regarding the EIR.

Road maintenance and Traffic seems to be taking up the largest portion of our road meetings since we are suffering from last winters rain damage and find ourselves without the funds to fix everything that needs fixing.

TRA-2.1 Rural Road Management

I see that the mitigation here is to require growers to be a part of any CSA covering their property. This is a double-edged sword. Yes we get money from them, but it is nowhere near the representational proportion of the ware and tear on the roads that a commercial operation in an community inflicts on their neighbors and on already unhealthy road systems.

TRA 2.2 Fire

The last two big fires in the Santa Cruz Mountains have been started by growers. We are extremely worried about this in our area as there are only two ways out and the roads are already compromised. I would like the county to stick with the 120,000 gallon fire tank restriction. Growers are making money by putting communities at risk.

The following comments are a general overview of my take on the EIR as I reviewed it:

I understand the thinking to bring the growers out of the dark and have them regulated. I just want to see this happen in an appropriate area. The growers are making large amounts of money off of the backs of unfortunate neighbors who have to put up with all the impacts.

I know of one woman who purchased a property at 5001 Fern Flat for \$1,200,000 and put \$300,000 into the house only to later have major growers on BOTH sides of her property. There was nowhere on her 5 acre parcel that you could not smell or hear the operations on both sides. I know I would be incredibly angry with that. In the EIR (I forget where) it addressed this as “less than significant”. I don’t think anybody would feel that way if they were put in her place. It has kept her from moving in and she is thinking of selling.

3.9-10 Water

I have heard from another home owner who says after several grows moved in by her place, her well ran dry and had never done that before. Again it is someone making money off of the back of their neighbors. I am afraid that the accountability for this ordinance will not have the teeth it will take to keep the fair distribution of water to our community.

My last comment is that by only allowing Indoor Grows it forces people to use massive amounts of electricity. This does not seem to square with the values of Santa Cruz communities. I feel we should set the bar licensing to a point that forces them to locate in the valley or in commercial areas where these kinds of community issues will be much less of a problem and can be supervised more easily.

Thanks for listening, Dave Hemp (SVRA)