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Subject: Cannabis comments

Hello,

I would like to express my concerns in regards to the proposed cannabis cultivation regulations for our County. I should note that I live in Browns Valley so my experience with the County is concentrated there, although I would assume that similar locations would have similar issues and concerns.

Although I understand that the agricultural industry as a whole is paramount to our County, I also believe we have many other assets, and things going for us, if you will. The first is the possibility of outdoor recreation and beautiful space to do so. This is made possible for us, and protected for us, by agencies such as the Land Trust. Therefore my first concern is considering and protecting areas in our County such as the Bryne-Milliron Forest. This is a fantastic piece of land that has some of the best hiking and sweeping vistas in our area. I worry that the impending cannabis operations will ruin this experience and that would be a shame. I would like to hope areas such as this, that benefit everyone in the County, and preserved so that the Land Trusts efforts and funds are not wasted. We live in a beautiful part of the world. We should be able to have some parts of the County stay just as nature intended, for us all to share. I worry about glare off of the indoor grow houses, the smell, and the possibility of unwanted activity ruining this special place, and others like it, in the County. I would ask that glare in the immediate area of the forest be kept at an absolute minimum if allowed at all. Additionally, I would hope further comments and testing to be considered so that the smell of the operations would be minimized in these outdoor recreation areas so we can still hike comfortably and bikers from all over the area can still come to our County to bike our scenic back roads. Please limit these operations along our designated scenic roads.

Additionally, as we found out this winter, these small scenic roads can also be fragile. In many cases there is one way in and one way out for entire neighborhoods. Increasing traffic for commercial cannabis operations farms will only further compromise these roads. But my biggest concern for the roads is what happens when, not if, there is an emergency. As we just saw in the fires in Sonoma and Napa Counties, the speed a fire can spread is astonishing. I would hate to see what might happen if one of the operations in an area such as Browns Valley, Hazel Dell, or Cathedral Drive, for example literally goes up in flames. With placing these operations in secluded, one route access areas, many people will be put at risk. And although I believe it was an illegal grow site, isn't a cannabis operation to blame for last year's Loma fire which was a little too close for comfort? Therefore I would ask the County to be extremely cautious when issuing permits in these limited access areas so that overall public safety is made a priority over tax revenue. Additionally substantial water storage should be required.

It is also well known that these operations are a cash-only business. They have very limited banking options, if any. Therefore these operations have large quantities of cash which can lead to increased crime, home invasion, and worse. Again on the small, scenic roads it will be difficult for the Sheriff's department to respond very quickly. This department is already stretched thin. I would suggest that the cannabis operations be in areas where the fire and sheriff's department can more easily access the sites when needed. Please consider requiring sites to have more than one access route before permits are issued.

Lastly, in reading the proposed rules for indoor grow sites I believe that it states that the plants and lights cannot be visible from other habitable structures or certain right of ways. I urge the board to keep and strictly enforce this part of the rules. Although agriculture is a part of our County, at some point all of the residents have a right to enjoy their homes and property. I cannot imagine a Browns Valley that has illuminated grow houses dotting the hills so that the residence across the very narrow valley cannot even enjoy looking at the stars, or having lights shined in their bedroom all night long.

I respectfully request that the County take this process very slow and start the operations in a controlled and close geographical area before allowing operations on every street in the unincorporated areas. There is a great deal of property and facilities that were abandoned after the flower industry all but left this area in the late 90s/early 2000s. Why don't we try to rehabilitate these areas first and go from there? For the most part these are areas that could certainly use redevelopment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kari McGee