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To: [CannabisEIR <CannabisEIR@santacruzcounty.us>](mailto:CannabisEIR@santacruzcounty.us)
Date: 10/8/2017 1:52:11 PM
Subject: EIR comment

To whom it may concern,

As 35 year residents of a rural community on Fern Flat Road out of Aptos we have watched the many different phases of cannabis growing morph into an uncontrollable (with present regulations) and paradigm shifting monster. Our neighborhood used to feel safe and community driven, however, this has changed over the past few years as cannabis growers are now purchasing the majority of properties that come up for sale in our area. Due to the semi legalization of cannabis we are now faced with irresponsible and disrespectful people aggressively driving our roads and disrupting the ecosystem. Is no one considering the even bigger paradigm shift we are facing, climate change? Cannabis cultivation with its land clearance, water and electricity usage and poisons are surely adding to the problem.

We appreciate the stringent EIR and in a perfect world this might solve the problem, however, as we have observed only the 'good guys' follow the rules. We believe that due to this stringency many small growers won't comply due to cost and/or unfeasibility. In the past, when cannabis was illegal, the cultivation in our neighborhood was low key and unobtrusive, except for the round of 'seek and destroy' helicopters which occasionally came around policing the area for such grows. We found the policing far less obtrusive than the influx of growers and their employees that we now have to deal with on a daily basis.

In the past, when the penalty for growing cannabis illegally was confiscation of property as well as a prison sentence, people were still willing to take the risk. Based on this fact we don't understand how anyone truly believes licensing and regulation is going to prevent illegal grows from happening when one considers the profits to made.

Unless there is active policing for illegal grows, beyond the underfunded (to our knowledge) Fish and Game and Cal Fire Departments, it will be business as usual. To place the burden of policing our neighborhoods and reporting illegal grows on the residents is incomprehensible and leaves us with no confidence in the justice and politics of Santa Cruz County. There is a quality of life issue at stake here for all rural, and inclusive of, city neighborhoods and we feel it is far beyond the time when this value becomes more important than profit for cultivators and additional taxes to be collected by government.

We realize this is a very challenging issue for local government to deal with and it is a problem that won't be going away. We, therefore, ask that whoever is involved in the decision making process related to cannabis cultivation do the right thing and insist there be active policing for grows that are unlicensed or do not comply with regulations. To leave this aspect to residents is unconscionable and puts us at risk for retribution from disgruntled cultivators.

Sincerely,

Lucette and Mike Spitzer