

From: [Leah Sautelet](#)
To: [Mary Claybon](#); [Richard Ward](#)
Subject: RE: Rancho Lake Cannabis Project and Evacuation Routes
Date: Monday, January 5, 2026 9:38:46 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

Hi Mary,

Thank you for reaching out and for sharing the staff report and background from the Planning Commission hearing.

I want to clarify the role of the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) in this type of review. OES does not conduct or certify evacuation capacity, clearance times, or traffic modeling, and I am not able to determine whether a specific project would or would not affect evacuation performance along Grange Road. Fully answering that question would require technical analysis beyond the scope of OES.

That said, OES does routinely provide input related to operational awareness, preparedness, and workplace safety, particularly for projects located along evacuation routes or in hazard-prone areas.

From that perspective, the following points are relevant:

- Evacuation routes are incident-specific. While Grange Road may function as an evacuation route under certain conditions, how and when it is used depends on the type of incident, conditions at the time, and direction from the Sheriff's Office. There is no single, fixed evacuation pattern that applies to all scenarios.
- On-site preparedness supports employee safety. Ensuring that employees and seasonal workers understand local hazards, know their zone identifier, and are registered to receive official alerts helps support timely decision-making and reduces confusion during emergencies.
- "Know Your Zone" signage and alert registration are appropriate operational measures. Consistent with comments previously provided for special event permits, adding a condition of approval that requires:
 - Posting Know Your Zone information on site,
 - Displaying a map showing zone identifiers and primary connections to major roadways, and
 - Providing information to employees on Lake County Alerts registration would be reasonable and aligned with best practices for workplace safety and preparedness.

These measures do not constitute a technical determination regarding evacuation capacity or roadway adequacy, but they do meaningfully support situational awareness and compliance with official emergency instructions during an incident.

Thanks,
Leah

From: Mary Claybon <Mary.Claybon@lakecountycalifornia.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 29, 2025 9:22 AM
To: Leah Sautelet <Leah.Sautelet@lakecountycalifornia.gov>; Richard Ward <Richard.Ward@lakecountycalifornia.gov>
Subject: Rancho Lake Cannabis Project and Evacuation Routes

Hello Leah Sautelet and Rich Ward,

On December 11, 2025, the Planning Commission heard an item for a proposed cannabis project identified as PL-25-13 (UP 21-15) located at 19955 Grange Road, Middletown. The applicants, Jim Comstock and Rancho Lake, LLC are proposing 19.6 acres outdoor commercial cannabis canopy within a 34-acre cultivation area. I have included the staff report for your review.

The applicants propose to employ approximately twelve full-time staff members, in addition to around twenty seasonal employees during peak planting and harvesting periods. During regular operations, daily vehicle trips are estimated to be approximately twenty-four; this number may increase to up to forty trips per day during peak planting and harvest periods.

Additionally, regular weekly deliveries of project-related materials will be scheduled throughout the cultivation season. The project Scope of Work includes installing a Knoxbox at the project site entrance to facilitate access for emergency responders, implementing interior roadway improvements to comply with PRC 4290 Road Standards, establishing defensible space around structures in accordance with PRC 4291, and installing a dedicated water supply for fire suppression within a steel, fiberglass, or concrete tank in accordance with applicable NFPA standards.

The Planning Commission expressed concerns regarding Grange Road's designation as an evacuation route and the potential impact of the proposed project on a safe evacuation for the Hidden Valley Lake community. Could you provide any information regarding evacuation routes in the area and whether the project may influence evacuation safety? The project review has been continued to January 8, 2026. An inquiry was sent to South Lake Fire District and the Chief Duncan deferred comment to Lake Sheriff and OES as seen in the email below. I had reviewed a comment you provided for a special event permit that was issued during the summer months. The commentary for that project included adding a condition of approval for signage with the *Know Your Zone* information and a map to main highways posted on site. Please advise if adding this condition would alleviate concerns from LCSO and OES. Your input on this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,



Mary Claybon, MSML
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Community Development Department
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From: Duncan, Paul@CALFIRE <Paul.Duncan@fire.ca.gov>
Sent: Saturday, December 20, 2025 11:14 AM
To: Mary Claybon <Mary.Claybon@lakecountyca.gov>; Wink, Mike@CALFIRE <Mike.Wink@fire.ca.gov>
Cc: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Rancho Lake Cannabis Project and Evacuation Routes

Good Morning,
South Lake County Fire Protection District has no comment and defers any concerns regarding evacuation to the Lake County Sheriff and the Office of Emergency Services.
The Lake County Sheriff and OES are the agencies having jurisdiction over evacuations.
Thank you, Paul



Paul Duncan

Assistant Chief – South Lake County Fire Protection District
21095 Highway 175, Middletown, CA
(707) 987-3089 Office
(707) 481-2362 Cell



From: Mary Claybon <Mary.Claybon@lakecountyca.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 19, 2025 10:12 AM
To: Duncan, Paul@CALFIRE <Paul.Duncan@fire.ca.gov>; Wink, Mike@CALFIRE <Mike.Wink@fire.ca.gov>
Cc: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: Rancho Lake Cannabis Project and Evacuation Routes

Hello,

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