July 7, 2025
Lake County Board of Supervisors
255 N Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

July 8, 2025 Board of Supervisors: Agenda Item 6.9
Consideration of Summary of Cannabis Policy Recommendations and Request for Board Direction

Chair Crandell and Supervisors,

My name is Ned Fussell, and I am the co-founder of CannaCraft, a vertically integrated cannabis company with a strong presence in California. Our operations include six brands and 12 dispensaries, as well as a cannabis processing facility located in Lake County, formerly the Adobe Creek Pear Packing facility. Additionally, I manage over 30 acres of outdoor cannabis cultivation within the county.

Since 2021, I have been actively cultivating cannabis in Lake County, relocating my entire operation from Sonoma County to streamline my business for growth and development. This strategic move has enabled us to establish a solid foundation for future expansion, which I plan to execute in 2026. My long-term commitment is to continue growing and investing in Lake County's economy. However, I am increasingly concerned about recent proposals from the Planning Commission, which threaten the economic sustainability of the cannabis industry within Lake County. The proposed regulations could undermine the viability of current operations and impede future growth opportunities. I urge careful consideration of these impacts to ensure that Lake County remains a supportive environment for responsible cannabis business development.

Well-run businesses constantly evolve in response to regulatory frameworks and economic conditions. In cannabis, this evolution is nonstop as we navigate market fluctuations, shifting regulations, and increased operational demands. The changes recently proposed by the Planning Commission are not adjustments that businesses can simply adapt to these are death threats not only for my business but many others in the County.

The proposals to redraw the Farmland Protection Zone and to add setbacks from homeschools would force many compliant and taxpaying businesses out of the county entirely. I operate a cultivation site that includes parcels zoned Rural Residential. If these parcels are removed from the eligible zoning table, there is a real possibility we will be unable to renew our permits upon expiration. I strongly urge this board to support existing legally permitted operators by allowing existing non-conforming uses to continue upon renewal.

As a business owner, I cannot continue to invest in a facility or farm that may be rendered ineligible by the County through shifting policies. If stability cannot be guaranteed, I will have no choice but to move my investments and operations elsewhere.

The current ordinance, combined with the de facto Notice of Application moratorium, has already driven many farmers into less accessible hillside areas. These zones are costlier to operate in, as large agricultural equipment and transport vehicles cannot be used which significantly drives up our cost of production. Further restricting the types of allowable parcels will not improve neighborhood compatibility, nor will it lead to more successful businesses. Instead, it will drive up costs, discourage investment, and force applicants to operate on marginal or otherwise undesirable land simply because it meets arbitrary criteria.

Supporting these proposals without first conducting a comprehensive economic impact study would be irresponsible and would inflict long-term harm on the livelihoods of many of your constituents.

The constant moving of goalposts and introduction of new burdens on cultivators will inevitably lead to an exodus of cannabis operations from Lake County. At a time when the region should be promoting job creation and economic resilience, this path would instead weaken one of its most promising industries.

Lake County needs to support economic growth, not stifle it.

Sincerely,

Ned Fussell

Ned Fussell

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