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Public Comment

Ramirez, Angelica

From: Dianne Pence <diannedpence@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2020 11:49 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: Hartmann, Joan; Hart, Gregg
Subject: Submittal for 4/21/20 BoS Hearing - Item#3 West Coast Farms
Attachments: BOS LETTER FOR WEST COAST APPEAL 042120.pdf; ATT00001.htm

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To: Clerk of the Board for The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
RE: Item#3 West Coast Farms Appeal. Thank you for adding this to Tuesday's 3/21/20 Hearing- WEST COAST FILE - TO BE INCLUDED IN THE RECORD.

Dear Chairman and Honorable Supervisors,

We are writing to request that you deny the appeal by West Coast to allow **this 50 acre highly visible** project to move forward. Your Planning Commission has had **significant** deliberation on this project over the past year, **denying the project 5-0**, and has determined that the size and clustering of these commercial cannabis productions along this scenic gateway corridor is **NOT** compatible with the legacy agriculture, proximity to residences and existing businesses that are tourism driven – wineries, tasting rooms, restaurants, and our community's health.

LET'S BE SERIOUS ABOUT THIS DESTRUCTION OF THIS BEAUTIFUL GATEWAY TO THE SYV!

The West Coast project, combined with the other pending **22 projects in the area (including 5 adjacent to each other lining the scenic 246 corridor and SYVCP Gateway – these start at Busy Bee then ½ mile to West Coast, 300 yards to Castle Rock to 200 yards to Santa Rita Valley AG, then crossing 246 – you have the Cisneros property at 1800 West Hwy 246 and the Sebastiano property 1000 yards to the west - which alone total 155 acres)**, will cause significant odor impacts to this area. Wine tasting is 80% olfactory. Anything you can say about how SB County's "brand" is built on its landscapes and outdoor tasting experiences, would be helpful. To the extent you rely on serving your visitors outside on a patio, that should be mentioned. Visitors that come for the outdoor experience only to find cannabis odors, will not come back. **They will go to Paso Robles for wine tasting and take their tourism dollars there!**

There are multiple threats to our community in overturning the denial for West Coast Farms located on Highway 246. Please consider:

Our People and Community:

Have you ever lived next to a pot grow? Having lived next to the Cisneros 50 acre pot grow at 1800 West Highway 246 for over 18 months, we speak from experience. **The Sta. Rita Hills immersion layer holds in the stench until well after noon. Your eyes burn, employees have headaches – your customers complain about the stench.** We have seen that residents, **school children** and legacy businesses in the Buellton area, continue to suffer from the impact of the existing, over-expanded commercial cannabis grows in the area. The stench from these operations are notable as far away as the Avenue of the Flags, Buellton's "Main Street USA" and a location for many businesses, restaurants and tourism related activities. Children at the two schools in Buellton have **reported upper respiratory complaints and headaches** to the school medical staff. Additionally, these **odors are very discernible and impact tourists visiting the 20+ tasting rooms and wine related businesses along Highway 246, Santa Rosa Road and Industrial Way.**

Visual Impact:

This parcel sits directly at the **Gateway to both the Santa Ynez Valley as well as to the Sta. Rita Hills Wine Appellation (AVA).** Highway 246 and the Rural and Inner-Rural Areas west of Buellton on Highway 246 (where the Project is located) are specifically identified as scenic roadways with high aesthetic and visual resources – this project is located **squarely within the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan (SYVCP).** Tourists visit Santa Barbara County to experience our beautiful landscapes, food and wine experiences, and outdoor activities. The PEIR acknowledged that tourists visiting the County's "outdoor facilities" would be susceptible to physical changes to the surrounding landscape, "where a change in the quality of visual resources can diminish the experience for these users." **The Santa Ynez Valley depends on those tourism revenues – and again, very important to our County's \$1.8 billion tourism industry – generating county tax revenues, tourism "heads in beds", numerous jobs and supporting so many businesses in Santa Barbara County.**

The standard mitigation measure for the visual and aesthetic impacts of this project are inadequate for this special area. They do not account for the various findings and **requirements of the SYVCP for Scenic Gateway parcels**, particularly in light of the **pending multiple projects sited for cannabis cultivation along**

Highway 246 and Santa Rosa Roads. The proliferation of the landscaping required to screen cannabis cultivation clustered along Highway 246 will impair lines of sight of landscapes on this scenic route and significantly change the visual character of this important gateway to the Santa Ynez Valley.

Hedgerow screening will not hide the **sea of white cannabis hoops** that is proposed for this project screening is not effective or generally accepted to mitigate visual impacts to sensitive visual environments, therefore any reliance on vegetative screening must include a duty to maintain such screening for so long as the project is operational, supported by a performance bond.

Clustering of Parcels, Total Acreage & Ag Compatibility

Due to the low tolerance thresholds for cannabis, there is a *very serious risk of liability to legacy farmers due to pesticide migration*, even for responsible applicators that apply materials in accordance with State law. This risk significantly interferes with existing agricultural operations and impacts the future viability of existing agricultural crops and economies. Farmers will be fearful to spray even organic materials on their crops, lest they risk being sued by their cannabis neighbor, as has occurred already. **Locating projects away from legacy agriculture reduces the risk to legacy farming operations and cannabis farmers alike.** This project site is located among many acres of legacy agriculture and has already impacted neighbors' ability to continue their farming operations - including both grape and avocado businesses.

There is new evidence that cannabis terpenes are absorbed by wine grape berries and surrounding tissue, which can taint wine flavor where cannabis is grown adjacent to vineyards. The specific metrics of this impact is still unknown and require additional testing and study, but airborne cannabis terpene contamination has been established in Santa Barbara County. The risk of harm to our County's vineyards outweighs the claimed benefits of cannabis tax revenue. ***This risk can be mitigated by locating cannabis projects away from, and not next to vineyards.***

Odor

The West Coast project calls for the use of the Byers system, which as we have seen in Carpinteria **is NOT effective in controlling or eliminating odors.** It only masks them by covering up the odors with a substance which itself may be harmful to both humans and legacy agriculture. Again, moving forward with a product that has not been fully vetted and putting the community and existing businesses at risk.

As we all know, our County has excessive acreage where commercial pot can easily be grown ***without impacting existing communities and businesses.*** Planning Commissioners Parke and Ferrini have made recommendations through their overlay proposal. You have an opportunity to ***make changes in the existing Ordinance*** that was hastily approved before fully vetting the impact to our community, its residents, children and existing businesses - we need to protect the health, prosperity and well-being of our existing communities.

It's time to do the right thing for Santa Barbara County!

We ask you to support the denial of this project. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Pence
Resident and Business Owner - Buellton, California