

Lenzi, Chelsea

From: Nancy Black <nancy.black@mercurypress.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 25, 2017 1:23 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Hoop Houses

Dear Board of Supervisors,

Hoop houses have benefits, allowing the potential for greater farm and ranch profitability, as well as the possibility of water use reduction and diminished pesticide use, but they also have impacts.

My family lives in Spain and I travel there frequently. In the south of Spain there's a region that is almost completely covered with hoop houses and it's developed into a huge problem for the local government; much more difficult to correct after it's already there.

Their main issues include: fire and wildfire hazards (plastic burns, contaminating air, soil and water), illegal farmworker camps in the hoop houses (about twenty people were recently killed in a human-started fire), and the issue of abandoned hoop houses that disintegrate slowly under the burning sun and then filter into the air, water and soil. A potentially slim profit margin can determine whether a farmer goes boom or bust, and many farmers in Spain have gone out of business, leaving the land fallow and hoop plastic to slowly rip apart under wind and elements.

Who pays to clean the abandoned houses, if there are any? The new landowner, maybe. This is a potential cost of having hoop houses, and should be considered: how will the plastic be recycled when its "temporary" life is up? Off to the landfill?

With California's upcoming recreational marijuana boom, the potential for large areas converting to hoop houses is real.

It's much easier to lock the barn door before the horse gets out.

I would request there to be a simple, maybe even standardized process for hoop houses permitting, taking environmental and other impacts into consideration, that could allow for a win-win situation in which farmers get the greenhouses they need without overly impacting the viewshed, air, water and soil. A balance is possible.

Thank you for your consideration and efforts on this issue,
Nancy

Nancy Black
Vice President, Committees for Land, Air, Water and Species (CLAWS)
www.clawssb.org

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Nancy Black
Editor, Mercury Press International
<https://mercurypress.com>
nancy.black@mercurypress.com