

de la Guerra, Sheila **Public Comment**

From: SB Coalition for Responsible Cannabis <coalition4responsiblecannabis@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 30, 2019 11:48 AM
To: Williams, Das; Hartmann, Joan; Hart, Gregg; Adam, Peter; Lavagnino, Steve
Cc: sbcob; Lenzi, Chelsea; Miyasato, Mona
Subject: A-16 Comments: Cannabis Quarterly Report



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Dear Board of Supervisors:

[Comments primarily on A-16 but also references to A 15 and A-19]

The Quarterly update on Cannabis Taxation/licensing/enforcement came as a surprise to us when we saw it on the agenda for Tuesday. We will again ask that these reports be placed on Departmental agenda, or at the very least, that the many people who have requested notification of Cannabis ordinance related hearings, be given some advance notice and receive a copy of the report. We would also GREATLY appreciate a public Q&A wherein community members could actually have the opportunity to sit in a room with the public officials in charge of the various aspects of implementing the cannabis ordinance. We have many questions and concerns about all of these issues. When we come to public comment and speak or write to you, as Supervisors, we never receive a response. We realize Brown Act meetings are mandated that way, however, that does not mean that your staff are precluded from actually engaging in a public forum with community members.

Many of us have spent countless hours over the past 2 1/2 years attempting to provide input into the ordinances, and more recently urging and in some cases begging you to implement changes that might mitigate some of the serious impacts we are experiencing as a result of the ordinance.

We urge you, or even one of you, to please seek answers from your staff into the following questions/concerns on these issues touched on in A-16:

1. There is NO mention in the Board letter of the specific direction your Board gave on **July 16, 2019**, when you directed staff to *“engage the Planning Commission and return to the Board with recommendations and strategies to mitigate the odor and other impacts of cannabis operations along the urban-rural boundary and conflicts with existing agricultural operations. Tools could include but are not limited to bans, buffers, higher level permitting....revisions to Article X and buffer zones or other mechanisms to protect existing agricultural operations”*.

That direction was given over TWO MONTHS AGO. Yet at last weeks Planning Commission hearing, when Chair Parke asked your Planning Director when the potential amendments would be coming to the PC, Director Plowman responded in a very vague manner, hinting at “some time next year”. She also limited her discussion of the direction to “concerns about pesticide drift” and the possibility of “lower level permitting”— ironically, two recommendations that do NOT appear in the minutes. Please strongly reiterate your actual direction to staff, something that is within your power to do today, considering the fact that you formally adopted those minutes over a month ago.

Along with that, we notice that item A-19 today is a contract with the same company that prepared the INITIAL PEIR to now provide work explaining the EIR to the PC? That seems troubling, as it would seem more prudent,

given the many concerns that have been expressed by a number of people that the PEIR is insufficient and does not provide for adequate environmental review of site-specific projects, that an independent third party provide that analysis and presentation.

2. There are now over 900 Provisional licenses issued to Santa Barbara County growers, all but a few of whom have NOT completed or in some cases made any progress in obtaining local land use permits. This is unacceptable. With *over 140 land use applications pending*, dozens of which correctly require public hearings, we urge you to take whatever action necessary to alleviate this crisis. *Yes, it is a crisis*- especially for those of us whose day to day lives are impacted by the dense and unlimited cultivation of marijuana surrounding our homes in Carpinteria, and our existing agricultural operations and ranches Countywide. While we await some long-promised ordinance amendments that seem to have evaporated into thin air, we are at the mercy of possible permit approvals of projects that, based on many of your comments at the July 9 and 16th hearings, could likely be in conflict with potential future ordinance changes.

3. On Pg 7, your A16 Board letter lists “outreach and education” sessions which in fact are not "outreach". The Public Health program referenced by staff is actually a website with links to brochures and videos produced by the State. <https://countyofsb.org/phd/cannabis/> However, it would be wonderful if there *was* an active outreach program from Public Health and/or Behavioral Wellness to address the increasing concerns resulting from a greater local proliferation of cannabis and the public health crisis resulting from “vaping”. Perhaps funding more alcohol/drug counselors for the schools could be a wise utilization of the additional cannabis revenue.

4. Many of our members have questions about the details and methods behind the taxation numbers cited in the A16 Board letter, and have directed questions to the Tax Collector. Such information would also be appreciated at a public forum where residents might be able to ask questions of county officials charged with carrying out the various elements of the Cannabis ordinance.

Finally, **A-15** proposes an increase for a contractor to “*perform an assessment of the cannabis permitting process....for ways to Reduce permitting time....[among other things]*”. We truly hope that any such review will also include an independent assessment of the level of community engagement and outreach, not only by your Planning Department, but by the other Departments engaged in implementation of the cannabis ordinance. We are concerned that a focus on “reducing permitting time”, does not substitute for thorough environmental review and opportunities for public engagement on individual projects. It would seem that investing additional resources DIRECTLY into Planning and Development, in the form of contract planners or zoning enforcement officers, would be prudent.

Thank you,
Coalition for Responsible Cannabis