



Alexander Valley Association

SONOMA COUNTY CALIFORNIA

August 25, 2021

Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive
Room 100 A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

To the Board of Supervisors,

The Alexander Valley Association (AVA) strongly opposes the Board of Supervisors (BOS) proposal to amend the existing chapter (26) and add a new chapter (38) to the Sonoma County Ordinance which regulates commercial cannabis cultivation. Essentially, this proposal would promote cannabis cultivation. By changing the permit process for cannabis from discretionary to ministerial, the BOS is easing restrictions on cannabis cultivation. With this change, there would be no ability for public comment on individual permits.

The mission of the AVA is “to preserve for prosperity the natural, rural and agricultural values of the hills, plains and river which so richly endow the Alexander Valley”. Preserving the heritage of agriculture should also be a tenet for the BOS. Tourism, hospitality and agriculture are key drivers of the Sonoma County economy. Cannabis cultivation, on the other hand, does not evoke the pastoral image that Sonoma County is renowned for. Grown under lights in greenhouses with security fencing around them, cannabis cultivation is an industrial endeavor. It should be limited to cultivation in industrial areas. This proposal elevates cannabis cultivation to conventional agriculture and puts cannabis on equal footing with Sonoma County’s prime agricultural products which would denigrate Sonoma County as a whole.

Climate change is our new reality; one that every decision must address. It is imperative that we all work together and safeguard our natural resources very carefully. This is especially true of water. We are likely to see more severe droughts here in Sonoma County and throughout the West. The BOS should not be encouraging and promoting businesses that exacerbates the demands on resources, especially water. Rather its focus should be on promoting those uses that are already established and that have given us the worldwide reputation that Sonoma County currently enjoys. It is incumbent upon all of us to protect the resources that we have and insure that Sonoma County remains the vibrant and beautiful landscape that we all enjoy and love.

Sincerely,

Sarah Hafner, President
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