

Union Democrat
Letters to the Editor for February 9, 2017

An open letter

To the Editor:

We understand that some people and some supervisors want to ban commercial cannabis grows, while others want to regulate these grows. Some favor the commercial cannabis ban initiative, while others prefer that the County draft a more legally rigorous ban. Despite these differences of opinion, there is one path forward that all sides can follow at this time.

First, the board can fully extend the urgency ordinance on Feb. 14, so that some level of local commercial cannabis regulation can continue to be enforced until a permanent rule takes effect.

Second, the county can release the draft environmental impact report on cannabis regulation for public review and comment in March. This will give voters valuable information as they prepare to vote on the commercial cannabis ban initiative in May. Public comments will also give the county valuable feedback on cannabis impacts and alternatives.

Third, the board can direct its planning staff and environmental consultant to evaluate the potential impacts of a commercial cannabis ban in the final environmental impact report, at the same level as the proposed regulation. This will confer the greatest legal protection to any commercial cannabis regulation/ban that the board may need to later adopt. This need would arise if the commercial cannabis ban initiative does not pass. This need would arise if the commercial cannabis ban was approved by the voters, but was later ruled invalid by the courts.

This process allows enforcement to continue, the voters to be informed, and prepares the board to timely approve a valid and defensible ban/regulation, should the need arise. While we may disagree on whether the final destination should be a regulation or a ban, we should be able to agree on a fair path to get us there.

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