

Public Comment Regarding Cannabis Ordinance and
Program Update

Received May 2023

From: [Libby Hutton](#)
To: [Cannabis](#)
Subject: Marijuana and Risks to Children
Date: Sunday, May 21, 2023 5:34:57 PM
Attachments: [Kids and Marijuana.docx](#)

EXTERNAL

The attached letter was sent on May 20, 2023, to Supervisor Coursey and to Christina Rivera and Tina Rivera. Please include it in your record.

Thank you,

Libby Hutton

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Dear Supervisor Coursey and Ms. Rivera:

I was pleased to see the County addressing the community's mental health issues by way of the Forum on May 2nd. I had signed up to attend but a last-minute medical issue precluded my attendance. So in lieu of asking questions and underscoring my concerns in person at the Forum, I hope this email and attachments will shed some light on issues I believe are very concerning and urgently require the attention of the County.

By way of background, I have been involved in the CPS world for almost twenty years both as an attorney for the County as well as representing abused children. I am submitting this in my role as a private citizen and not as a spokesperson for any agency or anyone else working in those capacities. However, my work in those years has convinced me that marijuana and its legalization are a virtual Trojan's Horse when it comes to the impact on children and families. I am not suggesting it should be illegal however I am concerned that the County is greatly underestimating the impact on children and adolescents, particularly in the context of mental health both now and in the future.

In my work, substance abuse permeates virtually every case and inevitably, the originating substance is marijuana use by parents. As to children, there is the obvious risk of their ingesting the drug directly as reported in the front-page Press Democrat article on May 1st. I'm sure you've read and are aware of that article and the risks it identified which are serious and compelling. More insidiously, even before their birth, as reported by CNN, the exposure to marijuana during the first trimester seriously harms babies and leads to lower birth weights and other concerns. I'm including the link, below, to that article. This is precisely the kind of unforeseen, but now foreseeable, harm which I would suggest the County must address immediately so as to save a generation of children from lifelong harm and limitations.

The concerns as to mental health directly arise in the context of young teens and older teens' exposure to marijuana as their brains continue to develop until age 25. Regardless of the legal age for purchasing marijuana, the use of marijuana by young and older teens is undisputed. In my observations, these kids know that marijuana is "legal" and see their parents and other adults using it, and that's all they need to justify their own use. Added to that is the ready availability of marijuana, which, I would submit, is more accessible to them than alcohol. Dramatically compounding the health concerns and downstream mental health issues is the increasing and uncontrolled concentration of THC in the products. Cannabis Use Disorder is included in the DSM-5. Please see the link, below, to KFF Health News article dated May 9, 2023, detailing the severe impact of highly concentrated THC on any users. As detailed in the attached article from the New York Times, "How to Talk to Teens About Cannabis (So They Won't Ignore You)," the impact of cannabis use by teens is associated with lower IQs, the onset of psychotic syndrome, and worsening mental health conditions including depression and anxiety.

These articles underscore the need for the County to take immediate action to warn children, teens, families, and health providers about the extremely serious consequences of cannabis use and abuse. In the current environment, the County seems consistently to celebrate the presence of cannabis in the community with the Emerald Cup at the Fairgrounds and ongoing tax breaks to cannabis producers. Lost in the bright lights of these public events and pronouncements is any concern as to the risks of cannabis, both immediately and down the line, to the mental and physical health of children and adolescents. As a County, we owe it to our future generations to do better and act now before the Trojan horse opens its doors. The threats are imminent. The County is uniquely situated to prevent or at least minimize these risks starting with a bold campaign to un-glamorize cannabis use. Furthermore the

County, in its role as the protector of the public health, is obliged to educate citizens as to the actual risks of marijuana and, further, to control the access to and potency of marijuana in this County.

Thank you for your consideration of the foregoing.

Libby Hutton

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/05/16/health/marijuana-harm-early-pregnancy-wellness/index.html>

https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/legal-pot-is-more-potent-than-ever-and-still-largely-unregulated/?utm_campaign=wp_the_daily_202&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpisc=nl_daily202

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/24/well/family/weed-cannabis-parents-teens.html?smid=em-share>

From: loedispensaries@gmail.com
To: [Cannabis](#)
Subject: consumption lounges, etc
Date: Saturday, May 27, 2023 5:40:29 PM

To the cannabis staff,

Sonoma county is falling behind again as other jurisdictions allow consumption rooms at dispensaries to help them

attract customers away from the black market.

This is a needed revenue source for county dispensary owners who spent 5 years being processed and have suffered tremendous expense because of these unreasonable county delays. Does anyone think it's reasonable to take 4-5

years to process a CUP for a simple retail location with zero opposition?

Dispensaries with parcels that can accommodate the additional space for the cafe or lounge should be allowed. And

consumption lounges should be limited to dispensary permit holders only. No extra cannabis rules. Stop that stuff.

Treat it like a coffee shop. That's it. No need to be overwhelmingly burdensome on the operators.

Dispensaries with suitable land should be able to do special events and outdoor cannabis events on their land.

Cotati, Sonoma, and Santa Rosa are already doing consumption lounges. Sonoma county should mimic those laws

and allow the county dispensary owners to compete instead of continuing to hold them back with grossly

unreasonable/incompetent discriminatory 5 year processing and prmd crap that no other jurisdiction has to suffer through.

Give independent county cannabis retail operators a chance to compete with the banker owned mini-chains through the county.

Cannabis farmers should be able to distribute their own material to dispensaries, distributors, and manufacturers.

Cannabis co2 extraction should be allowed in ag zones DA, LEA, LIA. Hemp oil extraction is already allowed and it

the same machines and process. With the correct use bldg (F-1) an ag parcel should be able to do type 6 extraction

of thc.

Thank you for considering,

John Loe

Loe Dispensaries

Loe Cannabis

707-777-7LOE

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