

**From:** [David Levin](#)  
**To:** [SENR Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** Hemp Growing Concerns  
**Date:** Friday, November 15, 2019 9:21:24 PM

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Dear Madams and Sirs,

I am writing to express my concerns about the rapid expansion of hemp farming in southern Oregon. As a resident of Jackson County living just outside of Ashland, I have witnessed this first-hand as our neighborhood has been turned into an industrial hemp growing and processing haven.

We bought our home 6 years ago in an area with mixed zoning of EFU and RR5 properties. We loved the views, the peaceful quiet, the safety of the area, the small hay and cattle farms and our like-minded neighbors. In the last two years, we have seen the entire area change. Much of the available farm land is being bought by out-of-state interests for the purposes of hemp growth and processing. In a very short time, we and others in our community have come to realize several tsignificant down-sides of poorly regulated growth in this industry:

1. *Marked increase in noise and traffic* - large trucks, machinery and processing equipment coming and going at all hours of the day and often at night in addition to the large influx of vehicles from the itinerant workers who are harvesting and processing the hemp.

2. *Environmental concerns*

- *Water* - we have witnessed multiple new wells being drilled on these properties which appear to be used for crop irrigation in place of, or as a supplement to, irrigation district water. This raises significant concerns for us as all of the properties in our area depend on our well's for our household needs. As we have seen in California, water is a precious and scarce resource and the large increase in groundwater use puts excessive pressure on this limited resource.

- *Plastic waste* - all of these farms are growing their products in miles upon miles of single-use plastic that will end up in our landfills year after year.

3. *Health concerns* - Cannabis has an extremely pungent and pervasive odor. As a physician in our community, I am seeing an increase in respiratory illness and allergic responses from the sheer amount of cannabis in the air due to these large farms and processing plants.

4. *Safety*

- *Cannabis farms attract crime*. Even the growers themselves acknowledge this fact. They have workers living at the edges of their properties for the express purpose of preventing crop theft. One of the largest growers in our neighborhood freely acknowledged this in a local hearing recently. Why are we allowing this in areas with residential properties?

- *Fire* - As these farms become more industrialized, they are building large drying facilities and some are also installing CBD extraction facilities which can carry quite a bit of risk with them. There have already been several fires this year in our area as a direct result of these activities and As a fire-prone region, not only does this seem like poor judgement but is also terrible public policy to allow such activity.

5. *Property values* - as mentioned above, our area is a mix of farm and rural residential properties. As more and more of the farm land is turned to hemp, it will drive down property values and drive out families. If this trend continues, the hemp business will drive not only make it extremely difficult for those of us on RR5 lots to sell our properties but will completely change the character of southern Oregon. Who, other than cannabis farmers, would want to move to an area knowing the above-mentioned issues?

While cannabis farming and processing may be a boon for the state or local governments in

terms of tax revenue, permit fees, etc, it is terrible for those of us who live in southern Oregon for the beauty and culture that abounds. Rural home-owners are seeing industrial scale cannabis operations develop right on their door-steps with all of the associated risks and thus far, have no real recourse. I strongly recommend that the governing bodies enact legislation or regulations to mitigate the risks associated with these practices. These industrial operations should exist in areas zoned for industrial use, not in areas intended for small-scale farming and residential properties.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,  
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