

Opposition to SB 365

May 10, 2019

Dear Senators, Legislators and to whom it may concern,

Please vote NO on SB 365 – it has A VERY DANGEROUS HIDDEN AGENDA

SB 365 TAKES AWAY ALL REGULATIONS ON MARIJUANA GROWS IN ALL OF OREGON

This bill would make null and void all regulations of growing Marijuana in all of Oregon, regulations that were worked out between marijuana growers, citizens, elected officials, and all sorts of interest groups in literally thousands of meetings over the last 5 years. It is interesting to note that Mary Anne Cooper, VP of Public Policy for the Oregon Farm Bureau, does not even mention this fact in her latest statement on 4/29/19 to the legislation, showing again the dangerous hidden agenda of this bill. The summary of the bill does not mention this hidden agenda either. The summary (and Mrs. Coopers' letter) only talk about SCD fees and grandfathering in existing growers, things that might seem reasonable to the uninformed official. Mrs. Cooper only states that "the regulations" are "concerning to the agricultural community". The opposite is true. "The regulations" are concerning to the pot growers. The agricultural community wants the regulations. In fact, the agricultural community wants nothing to do with the farm bureau because almost all of its members are either marijuana growers or hemp growers and therefore very biased to advance their own "growing" agenda.

Therefore, if you pass this bill and its amendments, all oversight that exists on the local level for these grows will be gone. That is what the pot growers really want. And be aware that, if you pass this bill, you give unregulated rights to these people not only in one county, eg Deschutes, but in ALL COUNTIES OF OREGON.

NO TAX REVENUE WILL COME FROM THIS, ONLY HUGE COST AND HUGE CRIME

SB 365 would allow a new uncontrolled wildfire of pot grows to sweep through Oregon. You cannot imagine the nightmares that will create. You will make 6 ½ years of already existing oversupply of Marijuana in Oregon many times bigger. This bill will not generate any new tax revenue for Oregon, only mountains of new costs – many of them hidden (see below). Why? Because the taxed market for marijuana and related products is already 6 ½ times oversupplied. The pot shops cannot get rid of their products. So producers have to sell illegally. The neighboring states want none of it because they have their own oversupply. The pot growers will market more of their product to our most vulnerable populations - Middle- and High schoolers - and make our kids even more unproductive and unmotivated than they already are becoming from using pot products (ask any principal or coach). Oregon will have to spend millions of dollars on policing, prosecuting, and incarcerating the criminals that do this. The cartels will increase their presence (they are already here). Why? Because a few individuals want to make money and don't care how or who gets hurt.

WASTELAND AND HIDDEN COST TO COMMUNITIES

Oregon pot farms are mainly owned by big out-of-state groups of investors that never set foot in the state, not by little mom and pop farms like the farm bureau wants you to believe. These investors turn Oregon's prime farmland into Walmart size parking lots. Industrial buildings grow on these cement deserts that get rented out for grows with barbwire fences and armed guards. The grows run generators 24/7 365 days a year and overtax electrical systems, costing tens of thousands in upgrades to the grid that the community will have to pay for, and cause electrical outages in the surrounding communities, especially on hot summer days (this already happened). Grows also create light and odor pollution every day and night of every year.

GROUNDWATER DEPLETION AND POLLUTION

The grows drill illegal wells and suck the groundwater dry in insanely huge quantities (a house uses about 500 gallons of groundwater a month – pot grows use up to 50,000 gallons of groundwater a month for a greenhouse), forcing neighbors to spend thousands of dollars to dig new deeper wells because their wells have run dry (this has already happened in many locations). The growers pay not a penny for this groundwater as there are no meters on these wells and the wells are not accessible to monitoring of any kind, by police or water officials, located as they are on private land behind military type installations. Groundwater is one of Oregon's most precious resources. It is literally what makes living in many areas possible. It is also the reason why pot growers want to be in Oregon – because we stupidly give our “liquid blue gold” away. Contrary to popular belief, and contrary to any other “crop” grown in Oregon, pot growers do not want to use irrigation water. It is not clean enough (polluted by seeds and bugs etc), it only runs 6 months out of the year (they produce year round), and a 20,000 sf greenhouse can only use 20,000 sf of irrigation even if it sits on 40 acres of irrigation rights, a fact that many people that have never irrigated do not understand. So, the pot grows steal our groundwater, and we are naïve enough to let them. Pot grows also pollute groundwater with huge amounts of unregulated pesticides, herbicides, miticides (what do aphids, mites, mold, and fungus love? Moist, warm, enclosed, wind-free environment with fast growing heavily fertilized plants – in other words, greenhouses with Marijuana plants). Mountains of toxic leftover plant material also sicker into the ground as the dump does not accept Marijuana plants (the plants get 10 feet tall and only a small portion of the plant gets harvested). So these chemical and plant toxins constantly sicker into the ground or flow to the underground aquifers in lava tubes and septic systems, so that people who live here now have to fear for their and their children's health – and test and treat their water for toxic pollutants.

FARMLAND AND HOME VALUE DESTRUCTION

The investors and growers do not care about farm values. They do not irrigate the land. They do not grow anything outside like a farm crop would. They need to grow inside of industrial style buildings with fans and heating and cooling so that their “crop” does not get fertilized by male pollen that drifts on the wind and comes in via pollinators like bees (if this happened, the whole crop is lost because the female buds develop seeds and are then not sellable). The pastures and crops die because they do not get watered or tended, the weeds take over, everything

becomes an ugly wasteland, and nobody cares. Bye bye pretty farmland with cows and hay, hello toxic stinking industrial complex. This also destroys the lifestyle and property values of untold thousands of families with young children all over Oregon that live next to these "farms". Would you buy a house or farm next to one of these nightmares? Really? Think about it. Many families bought rural 5 acre, 10 acre, 20 acre properties close to town on farmland with the goal of raising their children with 4H cows and chickens and organic gardens in a healthy and moral way. These families will now live next to "farms" that stink year round, guarded by migrant workers with guns (often felons working for cash), drinking polluted water from wells that run dry. Would you want to raise your kids in these kinds of "neighborhoods"?

PROTECT OUR RIGHT TO WRITE OUR OWN REGULATIONS – AS YOU SAID YOU WOULD

Besides all this, we were guaranteed by the legislature that we will be allowed to write our own regulations for marijuana farms. That was the condition under which Deschutes County allowed pot grows. Without this guarantee Deschutes County would have opted out. That is also why this bill asks for protection of prior allowed grows. Why else would they have to ask for this special protection in SB 365? Because, if this bill passes, Deschutes county may well opt out – and a HUGE LEGAL FIGHT WOULD ENSUE. The grass roots groups that we had to create to fight to protect our healthy, moral, quiet, idyllic rural lifestyles, on the ranches and farms that we have bought with our hard earned money, improved with our sweat equity, and infused with our hopes and dreams, over many, many decades, will fight on. Why would you want to pass a bill like this? There is no reason to make things worse than they already are. Let's fix the mess we have before we make it bigger.

Susanne Ritter, concerned citizen