

03/24/2016

TO: Okanogan County Representatives

RECEIVED

FR: Robert Johansen
18 Rolling Hills Drive
Tonasket WA 98855

MAR 28 2016

OKANOGAN COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

SU: Marijuana Moratorium and Subsequent Grow Discussions

Dear Sirs and Madams;

I commend you for this opportunity to be heard. In 2011 I accepted a job as a Physician Assistant in the underserved population of Okanogan County, from where I have been a resident since 2004. My wife, a surgical nurse, and I chose a home on 7 acres, 5 miles away from town so that we could experience the simple country life. We are upright citizens, church members and founders of a 501.c.4 organization that helps medically challenged and socially disadvantaged children. I myself am a 16 year military veteran and have 10+ years experience working in emergency medicine as a paramedic.

I have used marijuana as an adolescent and can attest as a medical profession and practitioner of medicine that marijuana, like tobacco and alcohol, places persons at risk socially, personally and medically. I am a father of two, ages 7 years and 14 months. I chose my residence in part to protect my children from these exposures.

At the end of my driveway, at the junction of Rolling Hills Drive and North Pine Creek, there is a marijuana grow operation. This is where my child's bus stop is for the Tonasket School District. It is my understanding that State law prohibits a marijuana grow within so many feet from children's bus stops. Further research into that law states it must facilitate two buses. At the corner of Rolling Hills Drive and North Pine Creek, there are two buses that stop there to pick up children: Tonasket School District and the Head-start program bus. These are two separately funded public education programs. My marijuana grow neighbors currently appear to be in violation of this state marijuana grow restriction. There is another, much larger marijuana grow operation 1 mile down the road, and I can not attest to the school bus stops near that location.

Less than one mile down the road from my home is Aeneas Lake. It is a recreational place where neighborhood kids and families go to cool off during the summer. We have neighborhood kids from 1st grade to high school that venture that direction regularly, some without adult or parental supervision. It is, or I say was, an isolated swimming hole. It has little or no cell phone reception. In the last year, I have witnessed an increase in unfamiliar faces meandering down the road and into the secluded beach. Mostly males ages 20-30 something. Many times, they are down there to unwind, if not "party" with alcohol and what not. Also, in the last year, there has been an increase in lake and road shoulder pollution... Since 2011-2014 I did not recall seeing so many beer bottles or cans

and trash strewn along North Pine Creek and Highway 97. I credit this to the increase of these marijuana grow campers and increased street and foot traffic. It is unnerving the number of times vehicles have pulled into my residence drive, voices are heard while walking in my proximity in the dark and or my dogs go "on alert" for no apparent reason.

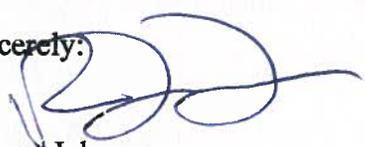
My concern for the marijuana grow proximity (<100 yards) to my child's bus stop, and my neighbor's bus stop adjacent to the opposite side of it. My understanding, through personal conversation with some pot-grow employees, is that they are largely paid cash and that is done so essentially under the table. Are the employees in these grow operations vetted or otherwise documented since there is no taxation of their wages? What is Okanogan County or these employers doing to protect my children from hiring any of these unvetted employees being child molesters? What is Okanogan County or these employers doing from protecting my simple country neighborhood and personal home from hiring any of these unvetted employees being career criminals?

Currently, my irrigation costs have increased to over \$220 an acre and I lease out about 5-6 acres of alfalfa. We are currently not getting any Federal reimbursements for our irrigation which is why I am told it is so expensive - but what if we do? Marijuana is illegal per the Federal Government. Couldn't/shouldn't these marijuana grows be billed higher for their irrigation than their non-marijuana growing neighbors? Marijuana product is reportedly so lucrative... Where is the local benefit for us given their intrusion and negative affects on property resale value for property owners such as myself?

I am also concerned for the "year round" operation potential. I am on a well. Where are these "year round" operations getting their water when there is no irrigation? Who is monitoring their winter well-water use? How is that affecting my well and our general water table here on North Pine Creek? I heard a neighbor of mine was thinking about selling their home. I am afraid this private residence will be scooped up by some under the table cash paying marijuana grow operation and I will be sharing my joint-wells water pump with them. Who is protecting me from having that 6 foot, blackened fence with video surveillance from moving that much closer to my rolling alfalfa field and unobstructed mountain views?

As a parent, and property owner, these are my concerns. Please consider some sort of zoning solution that would prevent another marijuana grow from establishing itself between myself and the 1000 yards line of sight from my front door step to my child's bus stop...

Sincerely:



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