

Lauren Davidson

From: Chaya Kudla <chayaajoie@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 03, 2016 9:51 PM
To: Lauren Davidson
Subject: comments on marijuana zoning, etc
Attachments: Marijuana zoning appeal(1).pdf

Please see attached letter and relay to the county commissioners or whoever is in charge of receiving these comments.

Are our comments anonymous?

Thank you for your time,
Chaya

March 28st, 2016

Dear County Commissioners,

We are writing to voice our concern about the marijuana operations in the Methow Valley. We are not against marijuana farms, but after experiencing a **very large growing operation near our property up Benson Creek in Twisp**, we know that with some adjustments, it would be a happier middle ground for everyone. Even the growers themselves want happy neighbors.

Like most people, we were drawn to the Methow Valley for its rural beauty, green agriculture and its dark skies at night. The operation up Benson Creek has changed this experience for us. Our green farmland view is now plywood fencing, multiple high tunnels and hoop houses along side infrastructure such as multiple large shipping containers, RV's and dry, abused land. At night, the Benson Creek marijuana farm now has a huge **bright glow above their operation because of their use of lights all night long** in their hoop houses and high tunnels. This has created visual nighttime pollution, creating an unsightly view as well interference with the dark night skies.

We understand why it might appear to make sense to allow these operations on agriculture land, however they are not farming, they don't even plant in the ground. They grow their plants in pots with trucked in soil mix (at least the operation up Benson Creek does). This does not benefit the agricultural land it is sitting on. Instead of farming the land, it is getting compacted due to lack of use, infrastructure, cars and no irrigation. **This type of operation is better suited for an industrial zoned area.**

We would encourage you to consider the number of businesses/permits and/or the number of marijuana plants allowed on one parcel and near proximity. The amount of hoop houses, high tunnels, infrastructure, tacky fences, RV's and cameras on one property from multiple businesses can quickly make an agricultural area go from a beautiful green valley to grim and unsightly. This is what has happened up Benson Creek and **another good reason for limiting these operations to industrial zoned areas.**

The large amount of marijuana being grown on one parcel also increases the intensity of the smell during harvest/processing, **which is so strong we can smell it from inside our house!!** Who wants to smell that continuously for months? Would you? If only one high tunnel and business (or limited number of plants) was allowed this would decrease the amount of smell immensely. It is truly ridiculous that FIVE separate grow operations could be permitted on the same parcel of land. And now we hear that a sixth business has applied to grow on this same parcel. This is ruining the neighborhood, and is **another good reason for industrial zoning or at a minimum, limited to one business (with no loopholes).**

We understand there are some fencing requirements involved in marijuana permits, however due to the fact that the land up Benson Creek where the operation is, is lower

than the road, the fencing requirement **does not block view of the growing operation. We and our children can see everything! So although they fulfilled the requirement, its purpose is not being served.** We hope that this part of the requirements can include not being able to see their growing operation from the road. It would also do best on flat land. Being that Benson creek slowly climbs in elevation, everyone up valley essentially looks down upon this operation **increasing its exposure and visual pollution.** If it were just a fence that we could see, the offensiveness would be much less. The land and homes surrounding the operation should be considered in this regulation. From our window we essentially look down onto the farm, inside the fences.

Traffic up Benson creek has also dramatically increased since the operation began. The numbers of businesses, employees, and curious spectators have increased the amount of cars traveling up and down Benson Creek Drive on a daily basis. What once was a quiet, intimate valley and neighborhood has turned into much noisier and busy road.

In the county some operations have had burglaries and break-ins, it is clear that these operations do attract a criminal behavior to the neighborhood. It no longer feels like a safe neighborhood to raise children in. We bought land up Benson Creek with a vision of a safe and quiet neighborhood to raise our children in; we now do not feel that Benson creek fits this category and appeal.

For ALL of the reasons above, we have had **difficulty finding renters** who are willing to live near this operation. For ALL the reasons above, we have considered selling our land, but now, who would buy it? **No one wants to live next to this large of an operation.** This has really created a predicament for us, our future and our savings that we put into buying this land.

Last year we drove by a small operation up Wolf Creek in Winthrop and you could not even tell there was a pot operation there. We saw how it can be done tactfully and inconspicuously, so we do know that it is possible. If you continue to allow these **large marijuana operations** in the Methow Valley without limitation, while you may see an initial increase in economic activity, **you will eventually start to see decreasing land values and people moving themselves and their small businesses away,** trying to sell land and homes that reside near by.

We hope and trust you will take all our points into consideration, please don't overlook this. Come out to the Benson Creek operation yourself and see it with your own eyes. We are happy to answer any questions you may have, but ask that you keep our names anonymous to the public.

Thank you for your time and serious consideration,

Chaya Kudla & Family
189/190 Benson Creek Drive
Twisp, WA 98856