

Lauren Davidson

From: Sarah Richey <srichey02@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 10, 2016 8:48 PM
To: Planning
Cc: Perry Huston; Sheilah Kennedy; Ray L. Campbell; Jim DeTro
Subject: letter, marijuana industrial grow operations

Dear Okanogan County Planning Department and Okanogan County Commissioners:

We are writing to you as tax paying citizens of our county. We live in the Pine Creek area of Tonasket and have been affected by the many industrial marijuana grow operations that have sprung up on our road. We are very disappointed with how these operations have been able to come in and begin business without the regard for neighbor input, but most importantly zoning regulations from our county government. What was allowed and created up to this point has happened, but this Moratorium gives you all as our county representatives and officials an opportunity to create regulations and zoning that will protect our homes, livelihoods, children, and ways of life.

We live here in Pine Creek because of the open beauty that allows us to raise our children in an area with access to our family hobbies. This has all changed over the last year. We now can't have outdoor barbeques at our parents because of the 4 months of horrible odors, we look out to black plastic fencing with barbed wire along the top, have the landscape lit up by grow lights throughout the night, security guards, and have traffic in and out of the grow operations non-stop. My children now get off the bus at an industrial grow operation. During certain times of the summer and fall there are cars lined up all along the road. There are large portable shipping containers lined up along the fencing, camp trailers, portable office buildings, and cameras on every corner. We've heard this described as the "Napa Valley", but there is nothing "Napa Valley" about this. It may be padding the pockets of a few people (most of whom are not Okanogan County residents) like some of the other booming agricultural businesses like Napa Valley, but that's where the similarities end.

For one, the industrial marijuana grow operations are not agriculture. Marijuana is a controlled substance likened to mold producers who make penicillin. RCW 82.04.213 specifically explains that marijuana is not an agricultural product and that those who produce it are NOT farmers. This is the primary reason and need for zoning in our county for marijuana production. These grows are impacting our families, our ability to sell our homes without losing thousands of dollars, our air quality, and our safety. The supporters and growers are wanting to be likened to orchards and cattle ranches, but they are not.

The Washington State Liquor Control Board has regulatory and permitting guidance for greenhouse marijuana producers. Regulations detailed out for air quality, water resource, wastewater, fertilizers, etc. How can we as neighbors be assured that this is all being done? WAC 173-400-040(5) specifically addresses odors that "may unreasonably interfere with another property owner's use or enjoyment of his property".

Money cannot be a driving force in these decisions. Our county doesn't need "saving". You have to consider both sides of the issue. If you allow these operations to infiltrate our county, how many people who flock here in the summer will choose other areas. The aesthetics, the odors, and the population that this product attracts is not attractive. How many tourism dollars will we lose? Other counties have chosen this route and have successfully protected their residents and attractiveness as a county. Other counties in other states have successfully instituted "NIMBY" (Not In My Back Yard) movements to protect our current lives as they are. To protect our health, way of life, and families, these options have to be considered.

As a property owner in Pine Creek with family owning a home that borders an industrial grow operation, we want you to understand how this has impacted our daily lives. These industrial grow operations should be in areas where there are no existing homes and neighbors. They cannot be allowed to move in an existing area of

homes and families with the expectations that these families should adjust. There has to be proper zoning and regulations to make this work. We urge you to take a drive up our road to see what we live with every day. We also ask that you review the websites of some of these industrial grow operations to see their goals for our county and our backyard. www.empireexperience.com is one that is particularly disturbing with pictures of naked women posing by plants, drug paraphernalia, etc. Is this what we want for our county? Do we want to be known as this? We sure don't, and we especially don't want our children growing up with this in our backyard.

In closing, we have petitioned to you how these operations have impacted our daily lives and the future of our daily lives. This is a pivotal time to determine what our future looks like. Please consider what it would be like if you lived on our road. Please don't take preference to the opinions of those who don't live or pay taxes in our county. Red and Green cards from those who don't live or pay taxes here mean nothing. It's the true citizens of Okanogan County who will live with the repercussions of your decisions that should have input. For our families, our ability to maintain home values, our health and air quality, and our safety of our children, please don't allow any of these operations and future operations to encroach on existing neighborhoods and families.

Sincerely,

Steve and Sarah Richey
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