

## Lauren Davidson

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**From:** WW AA <amwolf.mail@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 16, 2016 3:56 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Reservations Over Recent I-502 Moratorium

Greetings to the Okanogan County commissioners and associates,

My name is Andrew Wolf, and I am employed at K&M Growers LLC; an I-502 cannabis producer/processor located outside of Tonasket Washington. My employers started their business in August 2013, and I began working for them in November 2014.

It has come to my attention that the county commissioners intend to enact a temporary moratorium on future I-502 business re-zoning and expansion. I want to express my reservations to the county's new potential policy, in light of this news.

I work for an organization that regularly employs nine individuals from the community. During harvest season, we employ approximately twenty-five people for a three month period. Many of these positions are low-skilled and provide an economic opportunity to those who need relief most. I have personally met and worked with several individuals who rely on government aid when they can no longer work at our farm. Stifling the expansion and improvement of our local cannabis industry directly impacts the welfare of those most in need.

On the issue employment, it is worth noting that K&M Growers hires skilled labor as well. Three regular members of our organization are college educated. Two of our employees are furthering their education locally at the city of Omak's college campus, as well. K&M has provided these individuals with better employment that they would normally have to find outside of the community.

This meeting of skilled and unskilled labor in the work force has given residents of the county an opportunity to develop labor skills they would not find elsewhere. These skills can vary from agricultural, to technical, and manufacturing not found in our service industries

The economic impact extends far beyond employment, however. Every I-502 producer/processor invests money in local vendors and services. K&M purchases it's lumber, tools, gravel, concrete, and other raw materials from the area. This fails to account for the telephone, internet, security, legal, and many other services utilized by I-502 operators. Every dollar spent locally is effectively re-spent by other community members, contributing to the local GDP at large.

Yet again, this still ignores the indirect expenditures made by employees of the industry. Much of this new found wealth comes from retail operators outside of the county. This industry taps into a wholly new source of revenue for our often overlooked and disenfranchised community.

Recreational cannabis, in particular, should be lauded as one of the most environmentally conscious and sustainable industries in the valley. The demand for organic agriculture in the cannabis business is unparalleled with any other industry. While I am certain many producers still rely on older environmentally damaging practices, the industry as a whole is continuously moving towards environmentally positive practices. The bulk of production in Okanogan County is outdoors with minimal electricity use. When grown indoors, cannabis producers often utilize LED grow lights that require significantly less electricity.

Because many, if not most, cannabis users prefer organically grown cannabis, a proportionally large number of I-502 business owners utilize organic grow practices. By relying on natural, non-chemically derived, sources of nutrients, cannabis producers minimize damage by nutrient leeching to the local water shelf. Organic pest management also mitigates the adverse effects of chemical pesticides. These practices help promote fertile agricultural lands in the county at large. It is unfortunate that other industries do not see the same demand. I have read that approximately 5% of this natural gas consumption is used to create chemical fertilizers. I am proud to be a member of an industry that helps minimize its contribution to these wasteful practices.

I would be unreasonable to deny the negative impacts of our industry. Spacing and location is undoubtedly a concern to some community members. The smell of cannabis can at times be potent and noxious to some people. I would argue that the smell is no more intolerable than the smell of chicken manure in orchards or horse trailers during the Omak Stampede. Even the smell of Baby's-Breath can be truly unpleasant for people living in our county. Nonetheless, we do not hinder the business endeavors that may cause these incidental problems.

I must admit, some of the I-502 operations in our area are aesthetically lacking. Different business may rely too heavily on inexpensive materials to build their infrastructure. This is usually a choice of practicality not preference. When K&M first opened we relied on a lower quality trailer and a covered wire fence. We currently have replaced our old fence with a nicer wooden fence and have continued to renovate our buildings. I am sure other cannabis producers are likely to follow the same path over time. Those that do not, will likely fail and their land will be reclaimed over time. In fact, enacting a moratorium on expansion and re-zoning will only slow down further renovation in this area. This policy would be a classic instance of cutting your nose to spite your face.

As for the social impacts of cannabis in Okanogan County, the issue becomes increasingly complicated. I have not personally met an individual in the cannabis industry who supports the consumption of cannabis by people who are underage. An unfortunate by-product of creating goods or services is their misuse by members of the general public. This problem exists in every industry. One example is individuals who misuse the internet to facilitate illegal or immoral behavior. And yet still, our government does not punish the internet service provider. Instead it creates services to curtail this behavior, (police etc.).

I would never argue against an increasing need for more money in behavioral and mental healthcare in our community and our country in general. If people have a problem with addiction or substance abuse, they need ready access to help. But outlawing cannabis for the last half-century has clearly failed to help these individuals. Perhaps, if anything, this condemnation of cannabis use keeps the people who need help from getting it.

I write this letter in hopes that the county commissioners consider the impact of their future decision making. Many people are benefiting from the economic boon of cannabis in Okanogan county. It would be shame if several unhappy opponents to this industry were to negatively impact hundreds of peoples' lives.

As political philosopher Edmund Burke wrote, "Because half-a-dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field; that of course they are many in number; or that, after all, they are other than the little shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome *insects* of the hour."

Thank you,

Andrew Wolf

K&M Growers LLC.