



CITY OF SCOTTS VALLEY

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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March 20, 2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Cannabis Lounge Ordinance

Honorable Supervisors,

I am writing this letter regarding the County's proposed ordinance to allow cannabis lounges in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County. The ordinance was brought to my attention by 5th District Supervisor, Monica Martinez, who represents the residents of Scotts Valley, and surrounding areas. As Scotts Valley is surrounded by unincorporated county jurisdiction, with thousands of county residents passing through our roadways on a daily basis, including Mount Hermon Road, the second busiest surface street in Santa Cruz County at 34,000 daily trips, we appreciate Supervisor Martinez's communication and request for our input on this important matter.

At our March 19th regular City Council Meeting, the Scotts Valley City Council discussed the County's proposed ordinance, and the majority of the City Council directed me to send this letter outlining our concerns. From the discussion at our meeting, the Council identified roadway safety and the impacts on law enforcement as our top concerns with the addition of cannabis lounges in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County. We consulted with Scotts Valley Police Department to better understand the challenges our small department faces with cannabis involved DUIs including the lack of standardized testing, the specialized training needed for officers, the extensive time that cannabis related DUIs take officers away from patrol duties (as compared to alcohol DUIs), and the challenges in prosecuting cannabis related DUIs. In 2024, SVPD made 67 DUI arrests (1.3/week) with 85% of those arrests not involving Scotts Valley residents. Five of those arrests were drug related DUIs of which four were not Scotts Valley residents.


It is reasonable to predict that onsite cannabis consumption available to residents and tourists, will increase the number of impaired drivers present on our roadways, causing additional accidents and decreasing safety for others on the roads. With only one trained Drug Recognition Officer (DRO) in the Scotts Valley Police Department, we will not be able to consistently assess suspected cannabis related DUIs during our routine traffic stops and response to car accidents.

Before making a policy decision that increases the number of cannabis impaired drivers in our community, we urge you to conduct more research on the impacts of cannabis on

driving skills, testing standards for cannabis impairment, and clear and streamlined procedures for law enforcement personnel to determine the level that cannabis impairment contributes to car accidents on our roadways. Law enforcement officers cannot consistently hold impaired drivers accountable for the damages and injuries they cause without these issues addressed.

This decision does not just affect unincorporated communities, it impacts the residents of Scotts Valley who share the roadways and it impacts the Scotts Valley Police Department's ability to keep our community safe. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and **on behalf of the Scotts Valley City Council, I urge you to not finalize the adoption of the Cannabis Lounge Ordinance at your March 25th Board of Supervisors Meeting.**

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Derek Timm, Mayor
Scotts Valley