

From: [Lukas Hager](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Cannabis Lounge Constituent Comment
Date: Sunday, January 26, 2025 4:32:55 PM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

To the Board of Supervisors,

As a lifetime Santa Cruz County resident and dedicated voter, I strongly support the allowance of Cannabis Lounges in Santa Cruz County. If we allow them, personal freedom and economic prosperity will increase. It will also be a boon in the fight against social isolation and will lead to the creation of more desperately needed third spaces in our community. Our local industry and tourism could suffer if we fail to adapt to these changing statewide rules

While they certainly are potential health and occupational hazards, County regulations could address many of these issues. The social consumption of Cannabis has a far lower risk of bodily injury and mental harm than drinking or even mountain biking, yet we allow bars and are proud of our mountain biking community. Further, we will not be increasing the risk of youth exposure, as these spaces will be isolated and ID-controlled. The Netherlands has allowed this arrangement for decades, yet they have managed to build a thriving social scene while also mitigating the harm to vulnerable populations.

If the board decides to prohibit these potential lounges, it will be a serious economic and social mistake. Why risk continuing our transformation into an aging retirement community when we can embrace our history at the forefront of the counterculture and build a more vibrant nightlife?

Best,
Lukas Hager

1/18/2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

701 Ocean Street, Room 500

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Concerns Regarding Cannabis Consumption Lounges – Consumer Safety, Community Well-being, and Economic Impacts

Dear Chairperson Hernandez and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to address my concerns regarding the establishment and operation of cannabis consumption lounges in our community. While such establishments present potential economic opportunities, it is critical to consider their implications on consumer safety, community well-being, and economic impacts. Thoughtful regulation and proactive policies are essential to ensure these spaces are responsibly managed and integrated.

Consumer Safety

The safety of patrons and the broader community must remain a priority in the operation of cannabis consumption lounges. To safeguard patrons and the community, training of staff and consumers is imperative.

Knowledge of Dosage and Titration

Cannabis consumption affects individuals differently. Policies considered should include:

- Cap on THC levels in products consumed on-site.
- Limit the quantity of cannabis products consumed per visit such as restricting usage to single-use product use only.
- Ensure staff are thoroughly trained to emphasize the "start low and go slow" approach, providing guidance on product potency and appropriate consumption levels.

Monitoring Consumption

To minimize risks and ensure patron safety:

- Staff must recognize signs of overconsumption and proactively assist those feeling unwell.
- Implement lounge video surveillance to monitor consumption, customer safety and enforce compliance with policies.
- Promote or provide safe ride options to ensure guests do not leave under the influence, protecting both patrons and the community.

Promoting Safe Use

Educating patrons about responsible cannabis use will safeguard patrons and is crucial to reducing potential harm. Staff should:

- Be well-informed on consumption methods, potential effects, and safe practices.
- Provide clear guidance to encourage informed decision-making and responsible use, reducing the risk of adverse effects.

Community Well-being

Cannabis lounges must operate without compromising the quality of life for residents. Key considerations include:

- **Robust Safety Measures:** Controlled access, strict age verification, compliance with ventilation and odor mitigation standards, and security management plans are vital to minimizing disruptions to the community.
- **Buffer Zones and Operating Hours:** Clear buffer zones (e.g., 1,000 feet from sensitive use areas such as schools, parks, libraries, and preschools) and limiting operating hours can mitigate potential concerns while allowing for strategic placement in economically supportive areas. Limiting the hours of operation for cannabis lounges can have several advantages in mitigating their potential impact on the surrounding community including: reduced traffic congestion; enhanced safety for children to avoid overlap times when children are traveling to and from school to limit exposure to lounges and their patrons; prevention of DUI's, particularly late night operations, often associated with increased substance use; and preservation of neighborhood norms limiting late night noise and disturbances.
- **Zoning Regulations are** essential to ensure businesses operate without negatively impacting surrounding neighborhoods, traffic, or community safety; therefore, limiting lounges to existing retail sites, adjacent parcels, or new spaces within current zoning is critical. Any expansion into areas zoned for restaurants and bars should not be considered without thorough community input, and expansion of monitoring and enforcement. Bars and restaurants are subject to stricter state-level training and state and local safety oversight to ensure compliance for public safety.
- **DUI Protocols:** Implement strict policies to reduce impaired driving risks, including consequences for licensees violating these protocols. Prior to entering the consumption area, all patrons should sign off on written lounge policies that prohibit driving while intoxicated, and conspicuous signage should be posted inside the lounge to this effect. Lounge operators should provide information about rideshare services and taxis so that patrons who fall into this category are able to safely get to their next destination. Facility operators should have business policies to temporarily or permanently bar patrons who fail to consume responsibly or who violate other posted rules.

Economic and Community Impacts

While cannabis lounges may contribute to local economies through tax revenue, job creation, and business opportunities, the associated costs must be factored into decision-making:

- **Enhanced Enforcement and Monitoring:** Licensing must include regular inspections, compliance audits, and law enforcement monitoring to maintain safety and public trust.

Establishment of an inspection plan to ensure adherence to California's Proposition 65, set forth in Title 27 of the California Code of Regulations in addition to local regulations needs to be developed and implemented.

- **Staff Training:** Mandatory comprehensive certification process must be developed and provided for lounge employees. The County should approve training content and identify the proper agency to track completion and monitor compliance. The fiscal impact of development of the training and ongoing monitoring needs to be identified to provide a mechanism to ensure the cost of these services is absorbed by the businesses.
- **Potential Health Service Impacts:** Increased cannabis use may result in higher demands on emergency and behavioral health services. Cannabis consumption has been linked to adverse health outcomes, including addiction, mental health challenges, and impaired cognition ([Source](#)).
- **Monitoring and Enforcement Impact:** The costs associated with overseeing Cannabis Lounges encompass a wide range of activities, including the development of comprehensive staff training/certification programs, thorough review and evaluation of Lounge Business Plans, consistent monitoring and tracking of compliance, conducting regular site visits, and implementing enforcement measures. Additionally, the significant societal and economic costs linked to impaired driving, frequently observed with alcohol consumption, highlight the need for robust mitigation strategies to address similar risks in the context of cannabis use.

By adopting robust regulations, zoning restrictions, and proactive safety measures, our community can lead in fostering a responsible framework for this growing industry. While economic development is important, it must be balanced against consumer safety and community well-being.

With careful planning, cannabis consumption lounges can operate safely, respecting community values while contributing positively to the local economy. I urge the Board to incorporate these recommendations into its policy framework.

Thank you for considering these concerns. I welcome the opportunity to collaborate further and contribute to the development of responsible and progressive cannabis policies.

Sincerely,

Brenda Armstrong

Brenda Armstrong

[REDACTED]

Felton, CA 95018

From: [Iraj Hakimelahy](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Cannabis Lounges
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 8:09:59 AM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Board,

I am concerned about the continuing loosening of cannabis restrictions in our community.

Please vote No to establishment of cannabis lounges in our community.

Iraj Hakimelahy

30 plus years resident of SC county

From: [M & S Haas](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: cannabis lounges
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 10:49:00 AM

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Dear Board Members,

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE vote NO on the cannabis lounges. The health of our community is at stake! Thank you!

Margaret & Steve Haas

From: [joanna.manoff](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Cannabis lounges
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 5:58:33 AM

******CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Board of Supervisors-

I am asking that you vote NO on expanding the Cannabis lounges in Santa Cruz County. I have been a resident here all my life and have been a Physical Therapist working with Stroke, Spinal cord victims, head injured, neurologically impaired, and special needs individuals for over 30 years. I have seen first hand the need and benefits of having medicinal cannabis available to individuals who need it. I am glad that those who need and can truly benefit from medicinal Cannabis can get it when they need it, but I also know that having Cannabis sites near our schools makes it more accessible to those that should not be using it. I also have two children in their 20's and have witnessed the abuse and addiction and health issues created by Cannabis that have been more pronounced among their friends and their generation with the increasing access to it. So many people that smoked Marijuana 20-30 years ago do not realize that the Cannabis that is out there today is not the same. It is more powerful, with more THC, and doing much more damage to our bodies than we realize! Not enough studies have been done! Our youth/community should not be the guinea pigs as we figure this out! Please vote absolutely NO to more lounges!

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Joanna Manoff

[REDACTED]

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

[REDACTED]

From: [Barb Tidmore](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Cannabis lounges
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 7:31:31 AM

****CAUTION:This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

I have read Ms Al Lami's letter to the editor about allowing cannabis lounges to operate in our community. I am firmly opposed to this idea for all the reasons stated. . There is no good reason to allow them other than more tax revenue for the city or county. Please vote NO.

Barbara Tidmore

From: [Lloyd Colombini](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Cannabis Lounges
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 8:30:10 AM

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Please vote NO. Thank you.

Sent from my iPad

From: [Sage Smiley](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Cannabis lounges
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 11:38:35 AM

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Hi Board

I have serious concerns about this. Where it will end? We asked you not to allow a dispensary so close to a middle and high school. You folks chose to ignore the professionals who YOU have entrusted with the care and education of our kids. Please don't do this again. Every expansion of access also expands to our kids. Please listen to the experts in the field, working with youth directly. The legalization, of which I am a fan, is having a surprisingly large effect on our kids. Not a fan. I run one of the two substance use programs for medi-cal youth in our county. I speak from direct contact and experience. I am also the mom of a 17 year old, here in Santa Cruz and what I hear from him and his friends is the same info I hear from our clients. It's everywhere, easy access, it's promoted everywhere. ALL their cannabis comes from dispensaries, their "plug" gets it and re-sells for profit.

The usage is increasing, the volume is increasing and we know the potency is extreme. The effects are serious for a surprising number of kids. We will be dealing with this and the detrimental effects for a long time.

These opinions are my own and not necessarily of the agency I work for. Thanks.

Sage Smiley, LCSW | Program Manager

(Pronouns: she/her).

Encompass Community Services



www.encompasscs.org

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From: [Emily Williams](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Cannabis use
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 12:27:52 PM

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I want to put my vote in for NO on cannabis lounges and our teens being supplied with easier access to cannabis. I feel strongly that this would hurt our teens and children.
I know too many people who have been hurt by use of cannabis.
Please do not pass this vote!

Thank you!
Emily Williams
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Shannon Conley](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: County BOS Meeting Agenda item 11, 18 - Cannabis Lounges
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 11:00:24 AM

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To the County Board of Supervisors

RE: Item 11, 18

Dear Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors,

I am a parent of children who I have raised in Santa Cruz. I am very concerned about the agenda item on the County Board of Supervisors meeting agenda for the meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 with regards to the cannabis consumption/smoking/vaping lounges in our community. I strongly urge the board to vote **no** on allowing these establishments to exist in our city. At a time when drug use has skyrocketed with the state legalization of cannabis, I believe allowing these establishments to have space in our community not only sends mixed messages to our youth but is a dangerous precedent in the acceptance of drug use in our community.

If we are to take the health and safety of our youth seriously, these establishments serve no good purpose to the community. We all know that youth cannot legally purchase marijuana, however, we all are aware that in our community that already has establishments that sell to individuals over the age of 21, adding more establishments only increases the availability of the product, making it easier for underage consumers to attain. I feel our youth are particularly susceptible to added product in the market, as the acceptance of cannabis usage is on the rise. What is alarmingly on the rise as well is the health issues that come with habitual use of the product. Our youth are bombarded with mixed messages about the safety and use of cannabis and many are self-medicating with the drug. Allowing establishments to take hold in our community is only going to increase the usage by underage consumers and increase the horrible effects to their health and wellbeing.

I have firsthand witnessed the dangerous effects of cannabis usage in youth. It has touched my personal community. There is substantial evidence that frequent use of cannabis is having a huge negative impact on youth with a rise in psychosis, and other serious mental health issues. If we care about the health and wellbeing of our youth, we should not allow the installation of one cannabis lounge.

Again, I urge the Board to vote **no** on allowing cannabis lounges in the city and county of Santa Cruz. Please let's not make it harder for our youth to resist cannabis.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Dorothy Conley
[REDACTED]
Santa Cruz, CA 95060



Virus-free www.avast.com



January 24, 2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Item 11: Cannabis Consumption Lounges

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors,

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights is writing to express our concern with the proposal in Agenda Item #11 for Cannabis Consumption Lounges. We ask the Board to pull this item from the January 28th agenda to allow for more time to assess the health impacts that this change would have on Santa Cruz County communities.

If Santa Cruz County is determined to allow cannabis smoking and/or vaping at retailers, then Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights strongly recommends not allowing indoor smoking or vaping, and instead prioritizing outdoor spaces for smoking or vaping. If indoor use is permitted, then we advise **adding a requirement that retailers with a Cannabis Consumption Lounge must be located in a freestanding building**, and not in mixed-use buildings, so that workers, residents, and patrons in attached businesses and residences are not exposed to secondhand cannabis smoke.

Likewise, we support the option to only permit consumption lounges at current retail sites or adjacent parcels, and not at new locations, which could significantly increase the number of cannabis retail locations.

A new [Surgeon General's Report](#) was released in November 2024, titled "Eliminating Tobacco-Related Disease and Death: Addressing Disparities," which addresses exposure to cannabis secondhand smoke. The report found that "Secondhand cannabis smoke contains many of the same toxic and cancer-causing chemicals found in tobacco smoke, and some of those chemicals are found in higher amounts in secondhand cannabis smoke than in secondhand tobacco smoke." The report also stated, "As states and communities consider whether use of cannabis in public places should be permitted, **protecting all populations from exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke, including exposure to cannabis smoke, in all indoor settings should remain a priority.**"ⁱⁱ

The report also emphasizes that "The increased legalization of recreational cannabis at state and local levels represents a threat to smokefree norms and protections and has implications for health disparities, due to creating exemptions for cannabis smoking" and advises that "smokefree policies will be most protective if they cover all emissions (i.e., smoke, aerosol) from the full range of products, including e-cigarettes, cigars, waterpipe, and cannabis."ⁱⁱ

If smoking and/or vaping in cannabis retailers is allowed, workers in these businesses would be exposed to increased indoor air pollution from secondhand smoke in order to do their job. **We strongly urge you to not weaken our longstanding smokefree workplace protections.**

Santa Cruz County's workforce should be able to breathe air that is free from all types of secondhand

smoke exposure—including people working in the cannabis industry. If cannabis smoking is brought indoors, employees working in these new and expanded cannabis businesses will be exposed to secondhand smoke at a much higher rate than the general public and will suffer the negative health effects of that exposure. This is a public health issue and will affect everyone in the community if an entire new class of unprotected workers must sacrifice their health for a paycheck.

Cannabis secondhand smoke and aerosol are a source of indoor pollution and toxins being emitted into the environment, and cannabis products should not be smoked or vaped in indoor spaces in order to protect the health of workers and patrons. While cannabis is now legal, it should not be used in ways that harm other people.

We advise Santa Cruz County to prioritize public health when considering allowing Cannabis Consumption Lounges, Instead of bringing secondhand smoke back indoors.

Thank you for your leadership and desire to make Santa Cruz County the best place to live, work, and visit. Please feel free to contact me at 510-841-3045 if you have any questions, comments, or feedback.

For additional Scientific Rationale and citations, see next page.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Hallett, MPH
President and CEO

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights is a national, member-based, not-for-profit organization based in Berkeley, CA that is dedicated to helping nonsmokers breathe smokefree air since 1976.

Scientific Rationale

The new [Surgeon General's Report](#), released in November 2024, confirms the current body of science that shows that both tobacco and cannabis smoke have similar chemical composition and suggests that they may have harmful cardiovascular health effects, such as atherosclerosis (partially blocked arteries), heart attack, and stroke.ⁱⁱⁱ In peer-reviewed research studies, tobacco and cannabis smoke have both been shown to impair blood vessel function^{iv} and secondhand cannabis smoke contains many of the same carcinogens and toxic chemicals as secondhand tobacco smoke.^v

Secondhand smoke from combusted cannabis contains fine particulate matter which is a form of indoor air pollution, which can be breathed deeply into the lungs and can cause lung irritation, asthma attacks, and makes respiratory infections more likely.^{vi,vii} Exposure to fine particulate matter—from tobacco smoke, cannabis smoke, wood smoke, or any other combusted source—can exacerbate health problems especially for people with respiratory conditions like asthma, bronchitis, or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).^{viii,ix}

Ventilation, air purification systems, and smoking rooms are not a solution to secondhand tobacco or cannabis smoke exposure. The American Society for Heating, Refrigeration, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), the standard setting body for the HVAC industry, affirms that mechanical solutions like ventilation and other air cleaning technologies cannot control for the health hazards of secondhand

smoke. Notably, ASHRAE bases its ventilation standard (62.1) for acceptable indoor air quality on **an environment that is completely free from secondhand tobacco smoke, secondhand cannabis smoke, and emissions from electronic smoking devices.**^x

False claims of being able to “clean” the air by filtration or using other chemicals are not a substitute for clean air. **The only known way to reduce the risks associated with secondhand smoke is with a 100% smokefree environment.** This is affirmed by all leading health agencies, including the Office of the Surgeon General.^{xi}

A study published in 2021 by Stanford researchers found that **smoking a cannabis joint indoors can produce extremely high indoor particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) concentrations, thereby exposing workers and the public to dangerous secondhand cannabis smoke.** The average PM_{2.5} emission rate of pre-rolled cannabis joints was found to be **3.5 times the average emission** rate of Marlboro tobacco cigarettes, the most popular US cigarette brand.^{xii}

Likewise, published research measuring the indoor air quality at a San Francisco cannabis lounge indicates that **particle concentrations from dabbing and vaporizing cannabis can create levels of indoor air pollution that are hazardous to human health,** even when cannabis smoking is not permitted indoors. Particulate exposure at these concentrations can cause cardiovascular and respiratory disease.^{xiii}

A 2022 study from UCSF researchers measured the PM_{2.5} concentrations in a San Francisco cannabis retailer’s smoking lounge and found that the installation of a ventilation system only resulted in a 12% decrease in the level of fine particulate matter in the air.^{xiv}

ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “Eliminating Tobacco-Related Disease and Death: Addressing Disparities,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, November 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco-surgeon-general-reports/about/2024-end-tobacco-disparities.html>

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “Eliminating Tobacco-Related Disease and Death: Addressing Disparities,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, November 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco-surgeon-general-reports/about/2024-end-tobacco-disparities.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Springer, M.L.; Glantz, S.A. “Marijuana Use and Heart Disease: Potential Effects of Public Exposure to Smoke,” University of California at San Francisco. April 13, 2015. <https://tobacco.ucsf.edu/sites/tobacco.ucsf.edu/files/u9/MSHS%20fact%20sheet%20for%20CA%204-13-15.pdf>

^{iv} Wang, X., et al., “Brief exposure to marijuana secondhand smoke impairs vascular endothelial function” (conference abstract). *Circulation* 2014; 130: A19538. http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/130/Suppl_2/A19538.abstract

^v Moir, D., et al., A comparison of mainstream and sidestream marijuana and tobacco cigarette smoke produced under two machine smoking conditions. *Chem Res Toxicol* 21: 494-502. (2008). <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18062674>

^{vi} Hillier, FC.; et al. “Concentration and particle size distribution in smoke from marijuana cigarettes with different Δ9-tetrahydrocannabinol content.” *Fundamental and Applied Toxicology*. Volume 4, Issue 3, Part 1, June 1984, Pages 451-454. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0272059084902021>

^{vii} “Air and Health: Particulate Matter.” National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showAirHealth.action#ParticulateMatter>

^{viii} Grana, R; Benowitz, N; Glantz, S. “[Background Paper on E-cigarettes](#),” Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, University of California, San Francisco and WHO Collaborating Center on Tobacco Control. December 2013.

^{ix} Brook, R.D.; et al. Particulate matter air pollution and cardiovascular disease: An update to the scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2010; 121: 2331-78. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20458016>

^x ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2022 - Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality. American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc.

https://ashrae.iwrapper.com/ASHRAE_PREVIEW_ONLY_STANDARDS/STD_62.1_2022Quality

^{xi} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20669524/>

^{xii} Ott, W., et al., Measuring indoor fine particle concentrations, emission rates, and decay rates from cannabis use in a residence, *Atmospheric Environment: X*, Volume 10, 2021, 100106, ISSN 2590-1621, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aeaoa.2021.100106>. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S259016212100006X>

^{xiii} Murphy, M.B.; Huang, A.S.; Schick, S.F., “[PM2.5 concentrations in a cannabis store with on-site consumption](#),” *Environmental Health Perspectives* 129(6), June 16, 2021.

<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/pdf/10.1289/EHP8689>

^{xiv} Huang, A.S.; Murphy, M.B.C.; Jacob, P.; Schick, S.F., “PM2.5 concentrations in the smoking lounge of a cannabis store,” *Environmental Science & Technology Letters* 9(6): 551–556, May 26, 2022. <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.estlett.2c00148>

From: [Avril Yang](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Date: Sunday, January 26, 2025 8:02:17 PM

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I would love to go to a lounge n vape im 64 now ...i confess. The has gotten me to the healthiest ive been...education is important for all ages i was a mom at 17 ...i would say that alchohol is by far the worst substance makes people mean ..the plant is fine my children do not partake they all grown i said if you want to you can be mindfull they dont want it but they will get alcohol n be ill for days ..this is real. I think the pillls kill the most i never oded on the n it helps with my anxiety lets do it b4 we are in lock down again ok. Also i was raised in a JW cult so i was not allowed to do anything so i think a lot pros n cons ...i notice old people will drink n get drunk n pop pills tooo ..there the first to say no to the plant ok bye bye ...
Sent from my iPad

From: [Francine Tyler](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Please do not allow more cannabis outlets in our area
Date: Sunday, January 26, 2025 9:19:13 PM

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Please vote no on cannabis lounges and start limiting or even closing dispensaries, if possible.
Thank you / michael and francine tyler, Santa Cruz

From: [Courtney Thomsen](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Please do not approve cannabis lounges!
Date: Sunday, January 26, 2025 9:28:04 PM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ****

Hello Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisor Members,

I am writing you to plead with you to please NOT approve cannabis lounges in our county. As a parent of teenagers and young adults, I have seen first-hand the detrimental effects of cannabis on young people. While I know the county may see this as a good move for business for the county, I ask you to consider the future of teenagers as a higher priority than trying to make the county a cannabis destination. Unfortunately, it is far too easy for young people to obtain a medical marijuana card online, even as underage users. The cannabis retailers in this county are not keeping these young people from purchasing their goods with extremely high levels of THC, known to be damaging to developing brains. If the county were to pass legislation to turn these dispensaries into lounges and hang-out destinations, I cannot imagine now much more young people will be drawn to their locations. I have known far too many families who have been torn apart from their teenagers falling into cannabis use because of the permissive nature of our culture, the dispensaries on every corner, the narrative on social media that it's healthy and non-addictive, and even the marketing of dispensaries that they are "Kind People" and welcoming spaces to visit. Many teenagers from our community are experiencing cannabis induced psychosis, leading to the breakdown of families, dropping out of college, and even homelessness in many cases. Please take a stand on behalf of our youth and say no to cannabis lounges in Santa Cruz County. This generation of young people has had enough challenges already. Please remove this potential toxic possibility from their lives by standing up for their wellness instead of the cannabis industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Courtney Thomsen
Resident of Scotts Valley

From: Jenny Putt
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Please vote no for on-site cannabis use locations
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 9:54:53 AM

****CAUTION: This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Please vote no for on-site cannabis use locations in tomorrow's vote. Protect our youth. See the following article for evidence as to why.

<<https://lookout.co/cannabis-lounges-pose-a-risk-to-the-health-of-santa-cruz-county-youth-the-board-of-supervisors-should-vote-no/>>

Cannabis lounges pose a risk to the health of Santa Cruz County youth — the board of supervisors should vote no

<<https://lookout.co/cannabis-lounges-pose-a-risk-to-the-health-of-santa-cruz-county-youth-the-board-of-supervisors-should-vote-no/>>

lookout.co <<https://lookout.co/cannabis-lounges-pose-a-risk-to-the-health-of-santa-cruz-county-youth-the-board-of-supervisors-should-vote-no/>>

Thank you!!!

Jenny Friedrich (mom of two daughters on the westside)

Sent from my iPhone



January 24, 2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Supervisors Cummings, De Serpa, Hernandez, Koenig, and Martinez:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Santa Cruz County Tobacco Education Coalition regarding the proposed establishment of cannabis lounges in unincorporated county areas. We seek to provide some considerations from a public health perspective for you to consider while formulating policy in this area.

Coalition Chairs

Katie Thompson
Luz Areli Sotelo

Member Organizations

Breathe California
Capitola Police Department
Community Prevention Partners
Dominican Hospital
Downtown Streets Team
Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust
Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance, Inc.
Salud Para La Gente
Salud y Cariño
Santa Cruz Police Department
County of Santa Cruz
Department of Public Works
County of Santa Cruz
Friday Night Live
County of Santa Cruz
Health Services Agency
Santa Cruz County
Office of Education
Santa Cruz County Sheriffs
Save Our Shores
Scotts Valley Police Department
Watsonville Department of Public Works
Watsonville Police Department
Watsonville Wetlands Watch
and Community Members

Contact Information

P.O. Box 962
1070 Emeline Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
PH: (831) 454-4141
FAX: (831) 454-5048

The Tobacco Education Coalition is a partnership of people and organizations committed to advocating for a tobacco-free and smoke-free lifestyle and environment. **We ask that you consider only allowing non-inhalable modes of administration (no smoke or vaping) to keep indoor air clean for all workers, keeping in mind there are many other ways of using cannabis that will allow indoor air to stay clean.**

Smoke is smoke: The 2024 U.S. Surgeon General Report¹ has highlighted that many of the same toxins and carcinogens that are in tobacco smoke are also in smoke from cannabis. At least 33 chemicals known to cause cancer have been identified as being common to the smoke formed by the burning of cannabis and the smoke from the burning of tobacco.²

Keeping hard-fought smoke-free laws whole to protect workers: Smoke in lounges would go against the spirit of current California smoke-free workplace laws, which were some of the first in the country, and which aim to protect all workers, including hospitality workers. In our efforts, we have learned that people who use tobacco as individuals, and who also have jobs in hospitality settings, were glad not to have to breathe more secondhand tobacco smoke than they wanted, while on the job. We hope lessons like this show that regardless of how people spend time outside work, they should be protected from smoke while at work. Secondhand smoke of any kind in indoor workplaces affects employees (including servers and janitorial staff) and other workers (such as delivery drivers and enforcement staff).

No ventilation system can fully address toxins in smoke: If the standard is to keep the air clean enough for employee protection, there is a lack of solid evidence-based objective research to show that smoke's health impacts could be fully addressed by ventilation systems. The World Health Organization³ has acknowledged that nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke cannot be eliminated by ventilation and recommends 100% smoke-free indoor environments. A 2021 study⁴ in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* concluded that toxins in smoke from cannabis cannot be removed enough by engineering interventions to protect workers fully in indoor spaces.

In addition, the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has recommended one approach for more than the last decade, and last reiterated in 2023, that the only means of avoiding health effects is not to have smoking inside or near buildings.⁵

The risk to tobacco-smoke-free laws: Smoke in cannabis lounges also opens up the door for tobacco companies to argue that if air filters can filter out cannabis smoke, why not tobacco smoke? Smoke in indoor spaces would endanger 50 years of workplace health protections for hospitality workers.

Preserving health while formulating policy: On behalf of the coalition, please consider all the work that has been done by public health workers and members of the public to ensure the health of workers in indoor spaces. However you formulate policy around cannabis, please preserve the current smoke-free workplace protections.

There are many ways to keep products safe for legal purchase, but the commitment to clean air in all indoor workplaces, including and especially inside hospitality-related workplaces, must be protected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Uang".

Randy Uang
Member, Santa Cruz County Tobacco Education Coalition

¹ U.S. Surgeon General (2024), *Eliminating Tobacco-Related Disease and Death: Addressing Disparities: A Report of the Surgeon General*. "Smokefree Policies and Other Tobacco Products and Cannabis", p. 558-559.

² California Environmental Protection Agency (2009), "Evidence of the Carcinogenicity of Marijuana Smoke", Reproductive and Cancer Hazard Assessment Branch, August 2009.

³ World Health Organization (2007), "Smoke-free Inside", Facts about Second-Hand Tobacco Smoke, page 4.

⁴ Rotering TL et al. (2021), "Emerging Indoor Air Laws for Onsite Cannabis Consumption Businesses in the U.S.", *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 61(6): e267-e278.

⁵ American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (2023), "ASHRAE Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke", guidance for 2023-2026.

From: [Jean Brocklebank](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Cc: [Manu Koenig](#); [Felipe Hernandez](#); [Kimberly De Serpa](#); [Justin Cummings](#); [Monica Martinez](#)
Subject: Regular Agenda Item 11 - cannabis consumption
Date: Sunday, January 26, 2025 11:59:55 AM

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Supervisors ~

I have read the investigative reports that quoted medical professionals in the NY Times and now I have just read the following Guest Commentary by a pediatric nurse on Lookout. This absolutely calls for the **Precautionary Principle!** What are we doing, by experimenting on the health of children as well as adults?! The THC levels in 2025 pot are

I urge your NO vote on Agenda Item 11

- 11. Consider options to allow cannabis consumption at retail locations and potential cannabis business tax revisions related to consumption and non-cannabis goods (County Administrative Office)

Jean

https://lookout.co/cannabis-lounges-pose-a-risk-to-the-health-of-santa-cruz-county-youth-the-board-of-supervisors-should-vote-no/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_campaign=Sunday%20Reads%2012625

[Opinion from Community Voices](#)

Cannabis lounges pose a risk to the health of Santa Cruz County youth — the board of supervisors should vote no

Nadia Al-Lami

Quick Take

We should be concerned about cannabis lounges, writes Nadia Al-Lami, a director of adolescent health in Santa Cruz County who has witnessed the harmful effects of high-potency cannabis on youth, including increased risk of psychosis. On Tuesday, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors is due to consider allowing on-site cannabis consumption lounges, which Al-Lami believes would increase the visibility and accessibility of these products, disproportionately affecting vulnerable teens and communities. She urges the board to reject this proposal and implement stronger regulations to protect our youth.

As a pediatric nurse practitioner and adolescent health director working in Santa Cruz County for the past seven years, I have seen the significant impacts of potent THC/cannabis products on my patients.

At [Tuesday's meeting of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors](#), the board is set to consider allowing on-site cannabis consumption/smoking/vaping lounges in our community. The supervisors are still deciding if this is a good idea, and I strongly urge the board to vote no.

These adult-only spaces might seem harmless, but their ripple effects could leave our teens more vulnerable to substance use than ever before.

Allowing secondary on-site consumption lounges would increase the availability and visibility of cannabis retailers. [Studies show](#) that how close cannabis retailers are to where kids live, learn and play influences the likelihood that they will use cannabis.

This is also an equity issue — Latinx youth are [three times more negatively impacted](#) by how close cannabis businesses are compared to other races/ethnicities. Keep in mind that the products on the market today are vastly different from the ones sold 10 or 20 or 30 years ago. In the 1990s, cannabis products had roughly 5% THC. [Today, my patients are consuming products with 80% and 90% THC.](#)

This is not the same cannabis that many of us adults today were exposed to in our youth. These products are rapidly evolving, and both the potency and amount of THC consumed by our youth is unprecedented.

Cannabis is legal on the state level, but not at the federal level, making it more difficult to quickly and comprehensively study the effects of these increasingly potent products. Even still, we do have substantial evidence that [frequent use of cannabis increases risks of psychosis](#), including schizophrenia among adolescents and young adults. It also increases risks of depressive disorders, suicidal ideation and [suicide attempts](#).

I have seen this with my patients. A 14-year-old with uncontrolled vomiting due to cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, a result of chronic cannabis use. A 15-year-old with early-onset psychosis who began smoking with his brother at age 12. A 13-year-old with treatment-resistant depression who smokes “dabs,” (a highly potent form of THC) multiple times per day.

My patients tell me that they learn about cannabis from their friends and social media. And it has been documented that most of the information on social media is [promoting cannabis rather than offering warnings](#) about potential risks.

Given how much product marketing there is online compared with public health messaging, there is a strong misperception about the health consequences of using these products with such high concentrations of THC.

When I ask them, many of my patients say they believe cannabis is not addictive, even though it has been [documented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) that roughly 3 in 10 people who use cannabis have cannabis use disorder.

Many who use cannabis report they prefer to use cannabis to treat their anxiety, depression or sleep problems because it was recommended by a friend, a social media post or “someone in the industry.”

Nearly all of my patients who use cannabis report getting it from a dispensary. When I probe,

they say their “friend” or “source” is buying from a dispensary, marking it up and selling it to young people.

If lounges are permitted to open in secondary locations, the number of dispensaries could effectively double. So, though it is not legal for individuals under the age of 21, the presence of these consumption lounges, the increasing visibility and normalization of cannabis and the products they sell in our community are having a direct impact on our youth.

To ignore this impact would be irresponsible.

Beyond impacts to the health of our youth, these lounges raise additional concerns about impaired driving, secondhand smoke exposure and the rollback of smoke-free air and workplace laws.

In light of these concerns, I ask the public to voice their opposition and the board of supervisors to vote against cannabis lounges until more research is done on the potential harms of these products and more regulations are in place to keep our community safe.

To the board, please work to ensure that policies have our community well-being in mind. Require safety warning labels on products that have documented health risks based on the evidence available. Prohibit lounges to limit access and normalization of the use of these products. If you must allow them, at least cap both the potency and amount of products allowed to be consumed in the lounges.

If you are concerned about the continuing loosening of cannabis restrictions in our community, let the board know. Email them at boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov by 5 p.m. Monday.

Let's prioritize health over profits.

Nadia Al-Lami is a pediatric nurse practitioner and adolescent health director practicing in Santa Cruz. She is the current treasurer and former co-president of the Northern California Regional Chapter of the Society of Adolescent Health and Medicine. She holds a master's degree in nursing and was an adolescent health fellow at UC San Francisco.



January 24, 2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
BoardOfSupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov

Re: Agenda item 11 for January 28, 2025, Consider options to allow cannabis consumption at retail locations and potential cannabis business tax revisions related to consumption and non-cannabis goods (County Administrative Office) - OPPOSE

Dear Supervisors Cummings, DeSerpa, Hernandez, Koenig, and Martinez,

On behalf of ***Getting it Right from the Start***, a project of the Public Health Institute, a 501c3 non-profit organization that has served California to promote public health for the past 55 years, we are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposal regarding the permitting of additional cannabis on-site consumption activities. Since 2017 we've worked with city and county officials to discourage on-site consumption, as we do all across the nation. As of January of 2024, 67% of jurisdictions allowing storefront retailers in California wisely continued to prohibit on-site consumption lounges, including Capitola, Santa Cruz and Watsonville.¹ Rather than leading as you have in tobacco control, the proposed measures will undermine the public health protections wisely adopted by your cities.

For decades, public health advocates, medical providers and many unions have fought to promote clean indoor air and protect workers and the public in general from the health risks associated with secondhand smoke. Indeed, Santa Clara County has been a leader in tobacco control, passing its recent groundbreaking law on tobacco filters, building on a proud history of other measures. For this reason, we are surprised and dismayed to see a willingness to undermine public health, renormalize smoking and weaken worker protection solely to increase the profitability of a handful of vocal business owners.

Smoke-free air and worker protections have been one of the great advances of the public health in the last century. We strongly oppose allowing onsite cannabis consumption lounges because such an action significantly undermines the progress made to ensure smoke-free air. It puts employees and customers at an increased risk for heart disease,

¹ Getting it Right from the Start. 2024 Local Cannabis Policy Scorecards and Press Kit. Public Health Institute.
https://www.gettingitrightfromthestart.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Press-Kit_2024-State-of-Cannabis-Policy-in-California-Cities-Counties.pdf

AQI thresholds for PM_{2.5}

particulate matter in such lounges. Here are 3 **Figures** with some of the recent evidence from UCSF researcher S. Schick, PhD. who has studied air at 45 cannabis consumption spaces in California. First a reminder of what are considered unhealthy or hazardous levels for particulate matter (PM2.5 – the dangerous sized particles for health), AQI is Air Quality Index.

PM_{2.5} at 45 field experiments

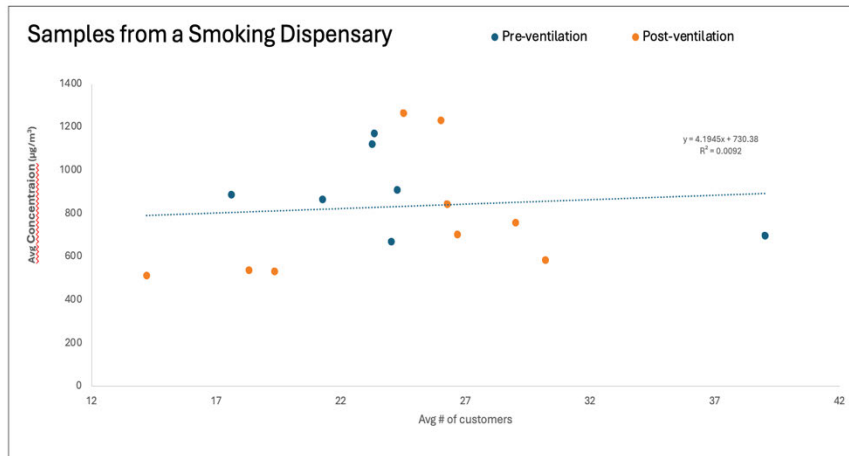
[illegible]

⁴ Tong, M., Goodman, N., & Vardoulakis, S. (2024). Impact of secondhand smoke on air quality in partially enclosed outdoor hospitality venues: a review. *BMC public health*, 24(1), 1872. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-19394-w>

types, showing that dispensaries with onsite smoking had uniformly dangerous levels of particulate matter, sometimes extraordinarily so, rivaling those of severe wildfire situations.

Third, the data showed that the oft-cited ventilation systems, as we already knew from

Ventilation did not decrease PM_{2.5}



tobacco research, are ineffective, and merely a ruse to justify allowing the return of smoke-filled spaces.

Let's be clear. We need to have balanced objectives for a legal cannabis sector. Those objectives should be to provide legal access to a safer product and end the illicit market, but they

must also should include the specific goals of protecting youth and public health including not driving up consumption, or social normalization of cannabis use or of smoking. Our laws say that protection of the public welfare should have primacy in the regulation.

Cannabis is the leading substance of abuse in our nation. Harmful, daily use has skyrocketed in young and older adults. It is a significant contributor to a subset of serious mental illness cases including psychosis and mood disorders.⁵ Our California cannabis industry has migrated almost exclusively to ultra-high potency products that have doubled the rate of addiction and vastly increased serious adverse effects including cannabis induced psychosis and schizophrenia, depression and suicidality.⁶ One in ten young American adults is now using cannabis daily or near daily, triple rates of daily use in the early 1990s. The ten-fold increase in potency of flower^{7,8,9} and the proliferation of

⁵ Starzer MSK, Nordentoft M, Hjorthøj C. Rates and Predictors of Conversion to Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder Following Substance-Induced Psychosis. *Am J Psychiatry*. 2018 Apr 1;175(4):343-350. doi: 10.1176/appi.ajp.2017.17020223. Epub 2017 Nov 28. Erratum in: *Am J Psychiatry*. 2019 Apr 1;176(4):324. doi:

⁶ [Report of the California High Potency Cannabis Scientific Committee to the California Department of Public Health](#). October 30, 2024.

⁷ ElSohly MA, Ross SA, Mehmedic Z, Arafat R, Yi B, Banahan BF 3rd. Potency trends of delta9-THC and other cannabinoids in confiscated marijuana from 1980-1997. *J Forensic Sci*. 2000 Jan;45(1):24-30. PMID: 10641915.

⁸ Freeman TP, Craft S, Wilson J, Stylianou S, ElSohly M, Di Forti M, Lynskey MT. Changes in delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD) concentrations in cannabis over time: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Addiction*. 2021 May;116(5):1000-1010. doi: 10.1111/add.15253. Epub 2020 Nov 7. PMID: 33160291

⁹ Geweda MM, Majumdar CG, Moore MN, Elhendawy MA, Radwan MM, Chandra S, ElSohly MA. Evaluation of dispensaries' cannabis flowers for accuracy of labeling of cannabinoids content. *J Cannabis Res*. 2024 Mar 9;6(1):11. doi: 10.1186/s42238-024-00220-4. PMID: 38461280; PMCID: PMC10924369.

industrialized high potency extracts like shatter, resins and waxes has more than doubled the risk of developing cannabis use disorder compared to twenty years ago, now reaching 20-25% of those who use cannabis.^{10,11,12} These trends have also been associated with greatly increased risk of developing psychosis or schizophrenia, by as much as 3-5 fold with daily use, or daily use of products with more than 10%THC, respectively.^{13,14} In 2022, past month cannabis consumers were almost four times as likely to report daily or near daily use (42.3% vs. 10.9%) and 7.4 times more likely to report daily use (28.2% vs. 3.8%) as alcohol consumers.¹⁵ It is now very difficult to find traditional lower potency cannabis in California retailers. The industry has intransigently fought measures to make products safer and less addictive or attractive to youth, as well as to inform consumers of risks.

In Northern California, including the Santa Cruz area, our own research with Kaiser Permanente has shown that use during pregnancy, which is quite harmful, has doubled to 9%, 2012-2022, with major racial disparities, less present for other types of use. Use by black pregnant women rose from 20% to 28%. Use by Latina pregnant women has doubled from 5.7% to 10.4%, a group that has traditionally had low rates and better neonatal outcomes. Use by Asian pregnant women, although with the lowest rates, still tripled from 0.7% to 2.4%.¹⁶ This is associated with adverse maternal outcomes like gestational hypertension and preeclampsia, and harm to the exposed newborn including low birth, weight, prematurity and NICU use, and is associated with long term developmental harms to the exposed infants.^{17,18}

Opening onsite consumption lounges creates new social environments that will further normalize cannabis use and dependency, aggravating these concerning trends.

¹⁰ Leung, J., Chan, G. C., Hides, L., & Hall, W. D. (2020). What is the prevalence and risk of cannabis use disorders among people who use cannabis? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Addictive behaviors*, 109, 106479

¹¹ Feingold, D., Livne, O., Rehm, J., & Lev-Ran, S. (2020). Probability and correlates of transition from cannabis use to DSM-5 cannabis use disorder: Results from a large-scale nationally representative study. *Drug and alcohol review*, 39(2), 142-151.

¹² Hall, W., & Pacula, R. L. (2003). *Cannabis use and dependence: public health and public policy*. Cambridge university press.

¹³ Di Forti M, Quattrone D, Freeman TP, et al. The contribution of cannabis use to variation in the incidence of psychotic disorder across Europe (EU-GEI): a multicentre case-control study. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 2019;6(5):427-436.

¹⁴ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Committee on the Health Effects of Marijuana: An Evidence Review and Research Agenda. The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2017 Jan 12. PMID: 28182367.

¹⁵ Caulkins JP. Changes in self-reported cannabis use in the United States from 1979 to 2022. *Addict Abingdon Engl*. 2024;119(9):1648-1652. doi:10.1111/add.16519

¹⁶ Young-Wolff KC, Chi FW, Lapham GT, Alexeeff SE, Does MB, Ansley D, Campbell CI. Changes in Prenatal Cannabis Use Among Pregnant Individuals From 2012 to 2022. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2024 Aug 30. doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000005711. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39208448.

¹⁷ Young-Wolff, K. C., Adams, S. R., Alexeeff, S. E., Zhu, Y., Chojolan, E., Slama, N. E., Does, M. B., Silver, L. D., Ansley, D., Castellanos, C. L., & Avalos, L. A. (2024). Prenatal Cannabis Use and Maternal Pregnancy Outcomes. *JAMA internal medicine*, 184(9), 1083–1093. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2024.3270>

¹⁸ Avalos LA, Adams SR, Alexeeff SE, Oberman NR, Does MB, Ansley D, Goler N, Padon AA, Silver LD, Young-Wolff KC. Neonatal outcomes associated with in utero cannabis exposure: a population-based retrospective cohort study. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 2024 Jul;231(1):132.e1-132.e13.

Typically, lounges have a line-up of dab rigs which provide the highest potency products of all, often to those who are dependent. Workers are inevitably exposed to secondhand cannabis smoke. If a worker is a woman of reproductive age who becomes pregnant, so too will her child be exposed.

Proposals such as AB1775, the 2024 Cannabis Café bill, will allow on-site consumption lounge operators to operate smoke-filled cannabis restaurants and clubs, twenty-five years after our state ended tobacco smoke filled restaurants and clubs. It will increase the number of exposed workers and patrons and the typical length of stay in a lounge.

It's important to note that evidence suggests that cannabis smoke and/or vapor may be even more harmful than tobacco smoke. You may hear cannabis lobbyists coming to tell you that cannabis smoke is safe. We heard those lies the State legislature last year. This is simply not true. Researchers have compared the pollution levels (as fine particulate matter in the air) when a user smokes a Marlboro tobacco cigarette to the pollution levels that occur when the user smokes cannabis in a joint, bong, and pipe, as well as when they vaporize cannabis.¹⁹ They found that all the methods of cannabis consumption produced as much or more pollution than the tobacco cigarette; cannabis joints were the most polluting, producing 3.5 times more particulate matter than the tobacco cigarette. In another study that compared cannabis and tobacco smoke, cannabis smoke was found to have 20 times higher levels of ammonia and 3-5 times more hydrogen cyanide, some aromatic amines, nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide.²⁰ Secondhand cannabis smoke and vapor pollutes the air as much or more than tobacco. One minute of exposure to cannabis smoke impaired cardiovascular endothelial cell function as much as one minute of tobacco smoke, but the negative effect lasted considerably longer.²¹ Use of vaporized rather than smoked cannabis did not reduce this risk.²²

Decades of research has shown that ventilation systems do not reduce toxic levels of particulate matter in secondhand tobacco smoke and many of the harmful constituents found in cannabis smoke cannot be eliminated through air ventilation systems or air cleaning technologies. In fact, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) states in their standards for ventilation for acceptable indoor air quality that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, that cannabis smoke should not be allowed indoors, and that ventilation and other air filtration

¹⁹ Ott, W.R., Zhao, T., Cheng, K.C., Wallace, L.A., & Hildemann, L.M. (2021). Measuring indoor fine particle concentrations, emission rates, and decay rates from cannabis use in a residence. *Atmospheric Environment: X*; Volume 10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aeaoa.2021.100106>.

²⁰ Moir, D., Rickert, W. S., Levasseur, G., Larose, Y., Maertens, R., White, P., & Desjardins, S. (2008). A comparison of mainstream and sidestream marijuana and tobacco cigarette smoke produced under two machine smoking conditions. *Chemical research in toxicology*, 21(2), 494–502. <https://doi.org/10.1021/tx700275p>

²¹ Wang X, Derakhshandeh R, Liu J, Narayan S, Nabavizadeh P, Le S, Danforth OM, Pinnamaneni K, Rodriguez HJ, Luu E, Sievers RE, Schick SF, Glantz SA, Springer ML. One Minute of Marijuana Secondhand Smoke Exposure Substantially Impairs Vascular Endothelial Function. *J Am Heart Assoc*. 2016 Jul 27;5(8):e003858.

²² Liu J, Nabavizadeh P, Rao P, Derakhshandeh R, Han DD, Guo R, Murphy MB, Cheng J, Schick SF, Springer ML. Impairment of Endothelial Function by Aerosol From Marijuana Leaf Vaporizers. *J Am Heart Assoc*. 2023 Dec 5;12(23):e032969..

technologies cannot eliminate all the health risks caused by cannabis and other smoke. Neither dilution ventilation, air distribution (e.g., “air curtains”) nor air cleaning can be relied upon to control environmental smoke exposure.²³ Indeed states like New Jersey are finally working to correct the ill-advised exemption for casino environments that has long put many thousands of workers at higher risk, after extensive research documented the toll of exposure on their health.

In addition to health risks for employees and customers, we are concerned that allowing social consumption of cannabis at cannabis consumption lounges or licensed special events will increase the possibility of intoxicated driving accidents in Santa Cruz County.^{24,25} This is particular concern when it comes to the use of cannabis edibles, which can take a few hours after being consumed before having their full effect but is relevant to all consumption outside of the home. Shouldn’t policies that inevitably lead to more people driving while high on the streets of Santa Cruz be avoided? This too generates costs to law enforcement and health care and tragedies for families.

Furthermore, under Proposition 64, on-site consumption is limited to the physical premises of a licensed retailer, **sales of cannabis cannot be authorized at remote locations from a licensed premise** as is being discussed. “a local jurisdiction may allow for the smoking, vaporizing, and ingesting of marijuana or marijuana products on the premises of a retailer or microbusiness licensed under this division.” Furthermore, marijuana consumption cannot be visible from any public place or non-age restricted area.

Cannabis advocates will seek to frame this as an equity issue, but this is largely false opportunism. First, most retailers are not equity licensees, they are profit-making businesses just like any of the restaurants where smoking is not allowed today. And rather than food they specialize in sale of an addictive substance. It is not the Board’s obligation to maximize their profits at the expense of the health of the community. Any increased tax revenues will be offset by the cost of increased addiction, mental health and physical health issues. Disparities in consumption can exacerbate existing health disparities in vulnerable groups, especially these at risk for mental health issues, such as LGBTQ youth, those under age 26 whose brains are still developing, and other subsets at greater risk.

²³ ASHRAE. ASHRAE Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke. June 2023.

https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/about/position%20documents/pd_environmental-tobacco-smoke-2023-06-28.pdf

²⁴ Wilson, F. A., Stimpson, J. P., & Pagán, J. A. (2014). Fatal crashes from drivers testing positive for drugs in the U.S., 1993-2010. *Public health reports (Washington, D.C. : 1974)*, 129(4), 342–350. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003335491412900409>

²⁵ Elvik R. (2013). Risk of road accident associated with the use of drugs: a systematic review and meta-analysis of evidence from epidemiological studies. *Accident; analysis and prevention*, 60, 254–267. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2012.06.017>

Lastly, these policies are not necessary to have a thriving legal cannabis retail sector in Santa Cruz. Statewide the number of licensed retailers has grown steadily. Of course, some fail. That is normal. Most new restaurants do not last 5 years or even one and we cannot realistically expect all cannabis retailers to succeed, nor is it government's role to expose workers to harmful smoke to make sure they succeed.

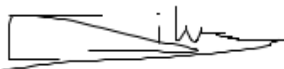
Rather than allowing harmful on-site consumption lounges, the County can take other important steps to help its cannabis retailers succeed by: a) first by not licensing too many, so that those which are licensed are not competing in a race to the bottom of low prices and aggressive advertising (we recommend no more than 1 storefront per 20,000 residents and not too many delivery companies); b) by effectively enforcing against the illicit market, and c) by taking legal and enforcement steps to end the sale of illegal intoxicating hemp products in Santa Cruz, which are often unsafe synthetic compounds which compete with legal cannabis. These steps would provide real relief to legal cannabis operators while also protecting public health and youth.

Specifically, we recommend that Santa Cruz County:

- a) Pull this item from the 1/28 agenda for further in-depth study of the health issues involved, which were not adequately assessed.
- b) Not authorize any on-site consumption lounges.
- c) If allowed limit their activities to edible consumption.
- d) Not allow any expansion of activities to include food sales or consumption or club/entertainment activities.
- e) Consider the above-mentioned recommendations to protect legal cannabis operators of limiting licenses, and more active enforcement against illicit operators and intoxicating hemp.

Cannabis is no ordinary commodity. It should not be treated as such. No one should go to jail for its possession, but no one should land in the hospital or be forced to be exposed to its smoke keep their job. Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.

Respectfully,



Lynn Silver, MD, MPH, FAAP
Director, Getting it Right from the Start
Public Health Institute
lsilver@phi.org, +1 917-974-7065

From: [Julio Andrade](#)
To: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Cannabis Consumption Lounge Letter
Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025 4:26:35 PM
Attachments: [Cannabis Consumption Lounge 2025.pdf](#)

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ****

Good evening, Board of Supervisors,

Cradle to Career Santa Cruz County is committed to fostering healthy and thriving communities, particularly for families and youth; we are reaching out regarding the proposed ordinance changes that would allow on-site cannabis consumption lounges. While we understand the interest in exploring new economic opportunities, these changes must be carefully evaluated to prioritize public health and equity. We strongly urge the Board to delay its decision until the potential health and safety impacts of these lounges are thoroughly assessed and addressed.

For more details please see the attached letter.

In community,
Julio

Julio Neri Andrade
Director
831.359.6168 | jandrade@c2csc.org



[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)



January 23, 2025

Board of Supervisors
Santa Cruz County
701 Ocean St #500A
Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

Cradle to Career Santa Cruz County is committed to fostering healthy and thriving communities, particularly for families and youth; we are reaching out regarding the proposed ordinance changes that would allow on-site cannabis consumption lounges. While we understand the interest in exploring new economic opportunities, these changes must be carefully evaluated to prioritize public health and equity. We strongly urge the Board to delay its decision until the potential health and safety impacts of these lounges are thoroughly assessed and addressed.

Opening on-site cannabis consumption lounges is fundamentally an equity issue. Research has shown that proximity to cannabis retailers has a significant impact on youth cannabis use. The further youth live from these establishments, the less likely they are to engage in recent cannabis use. Notably, Latinx/Hispanic youth face disproportionately more significant risks, with their likelihood of recent use being significantly reduced when cannabis retailers are located farther away. This underscores the importance of policies protecting all youth, especially those from communities already facing systemic inequities.

To protect the well-being of our communities, we recommend the following measures if on-site consumption lounges are permitted:

1. Restrict Locations to Minimize Community Impact:

These establishments should be located away from sensitive areas, such as schools, parks, childcare facilities, and residential neighborhoods. Maintaining greater distances between these lounges and spaces where youth live, learn, and play is one of the most effective ways to shield them from harm.

2. Ban Indoor Smoking and Vaping:

Smoking and vaping indoors can harm patrons and staff due to secondhand smoke exposure. Prohibiting these activities aligns with public health standards and ensures a safer environment for everyone involved.

3. Adopt Comprehensive Harm Reduction Strategies:

Measures should be implemented to mitigate potential risks associated with on-site consumption. These strategies could include:

- Providing staff training to monitor consumption responsibly, offer guidance on product usage, and manage serving limits to prevent overconsumption.



- Partnering with transportation services to promote safe travel options for patrons and reduce the risk of impaired driving.
- Collaborating with law enforcement and community organizations to ensure compliance with regulations and promote public safety.

The decision to allow on-site cannabis consumption lounges has far-reaching implications for public health, safety, and equity. Delaying action to understand these impacts better will enable the Board to implement more informed and effective policies that safeguard our communities.

We appreciate your leadership and commitment to balancing economic initiatives with the health and safety of all who live, work, and play in Santa Cruz County. Thank you for considering these recommendations. We are available to provide further input or collaborate on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julio Neri Andrade".

Julio Neri Andrade
Executive Director

Cradle to Career Santa Cruz County
jandrade@c2csc.org – (831)359-6168

Subject: **Support for On-Site Cannabis Lounges at Existing Retail Locations**

Date: 01/27/25

From: Bryce Berryessa, President | Treehouse

Overview

Santa Cruz County faces an essential decision regarding cannabis consumption lounges. We strongly support option one presented in the staff report, which allows lounges co-located at dispensaries or adjoining parcels, as it strikes the best balance between supporting existing businesses, enhancing public safety, and promoting economic growth. In contrast, Options Two and Three, which permit lounges at off-site locations, would harm legacy retailers, disrupt the current market, and fail to align with the transparent public process that informed Option One.

Why Co-location For Lounges Is the Right Choice

1. Sustains Existing Businesses and Prevents Oversaturation

- Santa Cruz County already has one of the highest dispensary-to-population ratios in California.
- Allowing off-site lounges under Options Two and Three could double the number of cannabis outlets in the county, further saturating the market and endangering the viability of existing retailers.
- Legacy businesses, which already face high costs, heavy taxes, and fierce competition, would suffer as their customer base is further fragmented.

2. Encourages Responsible Consumption and Enhances Tourism

- Co-located lounges provide a safe, controlled environment for cannabis consumption, reducing risks of public use and nuisance.
- This aligns with Santa Cruz's identity as a canna-tourism destination while minimizing community pushback.

3. Backed by Transparent Public Process

- Option One is the product of a thorough public review process and has strong support from most cannabis retailers.
- Options Two and Three lack similar scrutiny and would disproportionately harm retailers in high-density areas like the 41st Avenue corridor.

4. Equitable and Feasible for All Retailers

- Option One allows almost all existing retailers to create lounges onsite or on adjoining parcels. This ensures growth opportunities without disrupting the market.
- By limiting lounges to these locations, the county avoids zoning and licensing complexities while promoting fair competition among operators.

5. Minimizes Regulatory and Administrative Burdens

- Expanding lounges offsite would require significant changes to zoning codes, licensing, and enforcement mechanisms, costing time and resources.
- Option One is a simpler, more cost-effective approach that minimizes administrative hurdles while meeting public and business needs.

Why Options Two and Three Are Problematic

1. Creates Oversaturation and Competition in High-Density Areas

Allowing off-site lounges would introduce up to 13 new outlets, disproportionately impacting areas like the 41st Avenue corridor, which already hosts the highest concentration of cannabis businesses in the county.

2. Undermines Legacy Retailers

New off-site lounges would act as additional retail points, diluting the customer base and intensifying competition for businesses already struggling to remain profitable.

3. Lacks Public Support

Unlike Option One, Options Two and Three were not subjected to the same rigorous public process and lack the broad stakeholder support necessary for successful implementation.

Recommendation

We urge the Board to adopt Option One for the following reasons:

- It provides a fair and feasible path for existing retailers to expand into lounges while preventing market oversaturation.
- A transparent public process supports it and aligns with community interests.
- It promotes responsible consumption, enhances public safety, and supports canna-tourism.
- It minimizes regulatory and administrative challenges.

Options Two and Three, on the other hand, would disrupt the market, harm legacy businesses, and contradict the county's stated goal of supporting sustainable cannabis regulation.

Conclusion

Adopting Option One ensures Santa Cruz County takes a balanced, forward-thinking approach to cannabis policy. This decision supports local businesses, protects public interests, and positions the county as a leader in responsible cannabis regulation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Bryce Berryessa
President | Treehouse
bryce@ourtreehouse.io

Subject: **Support for Amending the Cannabis Business Tax (CBT) for Economic Growth and Fair Competition**

Date: 01/27/25

From: Bryce Berryessa, President | Treehouse

Overview

This memo advocates for two critical updates to the Cannabis Business Tax (CBT):

1. Redefining “Gross Receipts” to tax only cannabis-containing items.
2. Establishing a separate, lower tax rate for cannabis consumption lounges.

These changes are essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of cannabis businesses in Santa Cruz County, particularly as retailers look to invest in new business models such as consumption lounges.

Why Redefining “Gross Receipts” Is Essential

1. Minimal Impact on County Revenue

- Non-cannabis-related sales account for less than 2% of total revenue from county dispensaries.
- Excluding these items from the CBT will have negligible fiscal impacts on the county while creating significant opportunities for business growth.

2. Encourages Investment in Consumption Lounges

- Many consumption lounges plan to generate substantial revenue from ancillary sales such as food, beverages, and entertainment.
- Applying a 7% tax to gross receipts from all revenue—including non-cannabis sales—makes these lounges financially unfeasible. Lowering this tax burden is critical to fostering their development and success.

3. Promotes Fair Competition

- Current CBT rules unfairly disadvantage cannabis retailers compared to smoke shops and specialty stores that sell similar items (e.g., pipes, rolling papers, and merchandise) but are not subject to the tax.
- Revising the tax code to exclude non-cannabis items allows cannabis retailers to expand their offerings and compete on an even playing field.

Why a Separate Tax Rate for Lounges Is Critical

1. Aligns Taxation with Revenue Sources

- Cannabis consumption lounges operate differently than retail dispensaries. Much of their revenue will come from ancillary sales, not cannabis products.
- Establishing a lower tax rate for lounges reflects this difference and supports their viability as a business model.

2. Stimulates Economic Development and Tourism

- Lowering the tax rate for lounges encourages more retailers to invest in this model, enhancing local tourism and creating new economic opportunities.
- Lounges provide a controlled, safe space for consumption, aligning with the county’s goals of promoting public safety and responsible cannabis use.

3. Consistency with State and Local Precedents

- Other jurisdictions, like Capitola, already exempt non-cannabis sales from their cannabis tax codes, providing a proven framework for Santa Cruz County to follow.

Recommendations

We urge the Board of Supervisors to:

1. Amend the Definition of Gross Receipts:
 - Exclude non-cannabis items (e.g., merchandise, food, and entertainment) from the CBT.
 - Align county practices with other jurisdictions to support retail diversification.
2. Establish a Separate, Lower Tax Rate for Lounges:
 - Create a tax rate specific to cannabis lounges that reflects their unique revenue streams and operational model. Provide a financial incentive for businesses to invest in this innovative model while fostering economic growth.

Conclusion

These proposed amendments to the CBT are vital for the future of Santa Cruz County's cannabis industry. They ensure fairness, encourage business investment, and stimulate economic growth without significantly impacting county revenue. We appreciate your consideration of these changes and look forward to working together to create a more sustainable and equitable regulatory framework.

Sincerely,
Bryce Berryessa
President | Treehouse
bryce@ourtreehouse.io