

**Eric Porter**

---

**From:** Susan Lozano <susanwlozano@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 1:22 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Regarding proposed Green Handle Farm

Dear Eric Porter,

We live at 4145 Finley E. Road and will be neighbors to this development. Our main concern is the light pollution such an establishment will create. We sincerely request that there be requirements for shades on any outdoor lighting so that we are not affected by protection night lights.

We are also concerned about the terrible road condition of Big Valley Road that is so degraded that it will be even more impacted by a big business going in at that address. The access to that property is right at the corner of the road and I fear will create dangerous conditions for people entering and leaving that property as well as passing traffic using that road.

I sincerely hope there be some conditions placed on that property that after the business is abandoned it be cleaned up and not left as an eyesore on the land.

To recap:

- 1) Shades on outdoor lights to protect dark sky
- 2) Improved access to property and improved road for safety
- 3) Provision for cleanup after property/business is abandoned

With best regards,

Susan and Roberto Lozano

## Eric Porter

---

**From:** Brown, Toni <tbrown@kvusd.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 12, 2023 12:25 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Green Handle Farms; Use Permit (UP21-28) and Initial Study (IS 21-29)

June 12, 2023

Community Development Department  
Planning Division  
Courthouse-255N. Forbes St

Dear Planning Division:

My name is Toni Brown. I am a fifth generation Big Valley native. I was born in Lakeport and raised in Big Valley in an agricultural family. I was a 4-H and FFA member, raising cattle, pigs, horses, and poultry. I moved away for a period to attend college and start my married life, then returned to Lake County to raise my children. My children carried on the agricultural way of life. I have a vested interest in Lake County. When I returned to Lake County I served the Kelseyville Unified School District as a teacher. After 36 years of teaching, I retired in 2022 to enjoy the beauty of the Big Valley area where we raised our children and to help care for my grandchildren.

This past week I received a Notice of Intent to adopt a mitigated negative declaration regarding- Green Handle Farms located at 3050 Big Valley Road. This property borders our home. I am pleased after reading the environmental checklist initial study that some of my initial concerns are being addressed. I have a few that are not and will share both with you.

The report states that the project will not cause aquifer overdraft conditions, I disagree with this. For the 30 years that we have lived on our property our well supplied us with water for our home and ranch needs. Two years ago when we had cannabis crops growing on five of the bordering parcels, we had no water at times. Neighbors at parcel # 008-035-13 Big Valley Road would run water on their 80 plants day and night. Neighbors at parcel # 008-024-22 had to drop his well 30 feet to continue his cannabis watering. I do believe the watering of 29,500 square feet of cannabis will put a drain on our natural water resource.

I completely agree that this project will have adverse effects on the beautiful scenic vista of the Big Valley area. Please require that the chain link with slats or solid wood or metal fencing be in place before moving forward. This fence would also serve as security if they decide to use dogs which in the past has been quite an issue. Also I would like to see that it be maintained on a regular basis and that it is removed when the cultivation ceases to exist. The removal would bring beauty back to the area, rather than looking like an abandoned dump like parcel #008-37-20. .

I respectfully request a solid, well maintained fencing that will serve as both security and lessen the destruction of the beauty of Big Valley.

I request blackout film/materials to lessen the impact on the surrounding parcels and night skies prior to issuance of any permits.

If dogs are to be used as a security, what guarantee can neighbors have that they will be kept quiet after 10:00 p.m. Also what measures will be in place to keep them on 3050 Big Valley Road property? Parcel

#008-24-22 used a bullmastiff for security purposes. It was routinely on our property killing wildlife and our beloved cat, Mema fell victim to the Bullmastiff on Nov.2, 2021.

Air quality is my biggest concern. Having a grandchild with allergies and myself having migraine headaches induced by poor air quality. I request the best possible carbon air filtration system be placed in each grow house. In addition, for some reason neighboring cannabis growers have done a majority of work during late night and early morning hours, so hopefully this will also be addressed. The paperwork states that the applicant "intends" to install carbon filtration systems in the greenhouses. This should be "must install and maintain".

I can smell the putrid skunk smell of cannabis 3 miles away, so stating that the cultivation area is set back 1000 feet is not adequate, please ensure that the best filtration systems are in place prior to approval.

The drainage ditch at the edge of 3050 property drains directly into the McGaw Slough. The endangered Hitch migrate annually up the McGaw Slough. I am shocked that Sarah Ryan did not request for Consultation. I request that you add to the mitigation plan to keep the ditch cleaned out. My husband and I have requested neighboring parcel owners to remove smudge pots, landfill, and fecal waste from the drainage ditch. We always explain to them the importance of the drainage ditch. People new to the area do not know these things unless we tell them. They have always been thankful for the knowledge that we share and quickly clean the waste that they have put in the waterway.

My final concern is dealing with trespassers on my property due to this project. We have had to escort workers from the greenhouse and grow on parcel # 008-37-20 off our property. Three individuals armed with rifles had walked over from the property and were shooting wildlife on our clearly marked private property. We have also have numerous individuals on our property claiming to be looking for the grow house on parcel # 008-37-20. I'm not sure the best solution and welcome suggestions.

In conclusion, I realize how understaffed, and overworked the planning department is and a huge concern is that even when all these are noted on paper, making sure that they actually happen is not guaranteed. I am all about maintaining a beautiful Lake County for future generations and I hope and pray that we work together to accomplish this.

Sincerely,  
Toni T. Brown

## Eric Porter

---

**From:** Jessica Windrem <jwindrem@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 22, 2023 9:12 AM  
**To:** Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, Initial Study IS 21-29

Peter and Kathy Windrem own the property where I live, and they should remain the primary contact at their Kelsey Creek Drive address. If I could also be added to the list to receive notices, I would appreciate it. My mailing address is 4185 Finley East Rd, Lakeport, CA 95453.

Thank you,  
Jessica Windrem

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** Eric Porter <Eric.Porter@lakecountyca.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 20, 2023 10:48:31 AM  
**To:** Jessica Windrem <jwindrem@hotmail.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, Initial Study IS 21-29

Here is the address I have for you:

WINDREM KATHLEEN & PETER  
7460 KELSEY CREEK DR  
KELSEYVILLE, CA 95451

If that is incorrect, please let me know.

Thanks,  
Eric Porter

**From:** Jessica Windrem <jwindrem@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 19, 2023 3:16 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter <Eric.Porter@lakecountyca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, Initial Study IS 21-29

Dear Mr. Porter,

I reside on a property adjacent to the proposed commercial cannabis cultivation project at 3050 Big Valley Road and am very concerned about the implications of this project.

Some of Lake County's greatest assets are its clear, dark skies, lack of pollution, quiet, and undeveloped wild areas. This project could impact and compromise all of those.

Light pollution is a major result of growing marijuana plants that require 12-18 hours of light each day, and this pollution has significant impacts on humans and wildlife. Excess light outside of daylight hours will have an immediate effect on the nocturnal wildlife as well as neighbors living nearby. The property in question is near Kelsey Creek, Highland Springs, Clear Lake State Park, and Mt Konocti, all of which are natural habitat for nesting osprey, owls, coyotes, skunks, bats, and many other native wildlife. Such animals are seen and heard regularly in the immediate area of the

property. Studies have pointed to artificial light at night disrupting all types of wild animals as well as increasing the risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease in humans.

Additionally, in 2018 the Board of Supervisors proclaimed Lake County a Dark Sky Destination. In that proclamation, it stated that "Lake County promotes and interprets local building regulations that result in Dark Sky Friendly Development." It doesn't appear that the proposed development is in keeping with that intent, especially given that it is in the middle of Big Valley, where sight lines (and light pollution) extend for many miles.

I am also deeply concerned about the sustainability of the proposed operation. The infrastructure alone places a great deal of non-biodegradable materials onto the property. Repeatedly I see marijuana grow operations in Lake County establish greenhouses, generate significant amounts of trash, and then abandon the operation when it is no longer financially viable. The sheer amount of structures to be added to open agricultural land is concerning. What will happen if and when it is no longer in use?

I have additional concerns about the capacity of the substandard local roads to handle increased traffic and the potential noise and safety issues with having a large cannabis operation in the neighborhood.

This proposed project would undermine so much of what makes Lake County a desirable place to live and visit: quiet, dark, unpolluted, rural, peaceful. My family has owned and lived on the property where I reside since the 1870s, and we have always treasured these qualities. I fear that this one project will negatively affect local residents and wildlife, as well as the appeal of the area for visitors.

I hope the county will prioritize its commitment to our natural resources and quality of life over a commercial cannabis operation.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Windrem  
4185 Finley East Rd

## Eric Porter

---

**From:** Jessica Windrem <jwindrem@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 19, 2023 3:16 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, Initial Study IS 21-29

Dear Mr. Porter,

I reside on a property adjacent to the proposed commercial cannabis cultivation project at 3050 Big Valley Road and am very concerned about the implications of this project.

Some of Lake County's greatest assets are its clear, dark skies, lack of pollution, quiet, and undeveloped wild areas. This project could impact and compromise all of those.

Light pollution is a major result of growing marijuana plants that require 12-18 hours of light each day, and this pollution has significant impacts on humans and wildlife. Excess light outside of daylight hours will have an immediate effect on the nocturnal wildlife as well as neighbors living nearby. The property in question is near Kelsey Creek, Highland Springs, Clear Lake State Park, and Mt Konocti, all of which are natural habitat for nesting osprey, owls, coyotes, skunks, bats, and many other native wildlife. Such animals are seen and heard regularly in the immediate area of the property. Studies have pointed to artificial light at night disrupting all types of wild animals as well as increasing the risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease in humans.

Additionally, in 2018 the Board of Supervisors proclaimed Lake County a Dark Sky Destination. In that proclamation, it stated that "Lake County promotes and interprets local building regulations that result in Dark Sky Friendly Development." It doesn't appear that the proposed development is in keeping with that intent, especially given that it is in the middle of Big Valley, where sight lines (and light pollution) extend for many miles.

I am also deeply concerned about the sustainability of the proposed operation. The infrastructure alone places a great deal of non-biodegradable materials onto the property. Repeatedly I see marijuana grow operations in Lake County establish greenhouses, generate significant amounts of trash, and then abandon the operation when it is no longer financially viable. The sheer amount of structures to be added to open agricultural land is concerning. What will happen if and when it is no longer in use?

I have additional concerns about the capacity of the substandard local roads to handle increased traffic and the potential noise and safety issues with having a large cannabis operation in the neighborhood.

This proposed project would undermine so much of what makes Lake County a desirable place to live and visit: quiet, dark, unpolluted, rural, peaceful. My family has owned and lived on the property where I reside since the 1870s, and we have always treasured these qualities. I fear that this one project will negatively affect local residents and wildlife, as well as the appeal of the area for visitors.

I hope the county will prioritize its commitment to our natural resources and quality of life over a commercial cannabis operation.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Windrem  
4185 Finley East Rd

## Eric Porter

---

**From:** Mike Brown <mtnmb62@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 12, 2023 7:49 AM  
**To:** Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] UP 21-28

Community Development Dept.  
Planning Division c/o Eric Porter

I write to you with concerns about the request of Green Handle Farms use permit UP 21-28. There are many issues here that have not been addressed by initial study IS 21-29. My first concern is stormwater runoff. I have lived on an adjacent property for more than 30 years. During this time I have seen numerous occasions where excessive amounts of stormwater run off of parcel 008-037-01 and 008-035-14. Some years there was well over a foot of water covering the parcels. This area drains into two drainage ditches that in turn run into McGough Slough and later Clearlake itself. There were spawning Hitch is this drainage for the first time in many years. I respectfully request that containment barriers be built around all greenhouses, pesticide sheds, and drying buildings. This seems a small price to pay to protect an already endangered species. The next issue that raises concern is the depletion of groundwater in the Big Valley area. Cannabis grows use large amounts of water and a grow of this size will surely contribute to the already existing low water tables in the area and once again threaten an endangered species by depleting area creeks and drainages of sufficient runoff during drier years. I question why a full environmental impact report has not been required for this project. The last glaring issue that I see with this project is the negative effect it would have on the residents that call the Big Valley area their home. Many of these residents have lived in their homes for decades. Others are just now planning to build. During harvest time even the most extensive air filtration cannot mitigate the foul skunk laden odor that cannabis exudes. The buildings themselves would create an eyesore for all to see in what is currently a beautiful scenic corridor used by locals and tourists alike. Many of the surrounding grows have been left in a shambles as they are abandoned only to leave chemicals and large amounts of refuse in their wake. The county has not been prudent in monitoring and citing these individuals when the agreed upon codes are not followed. In conclusion, I ask that you respectfully reject this proposal in its entirety in support of the people and wildlife that call the Big Valley their home. In the very least, I would hope to put the plan on hold until all negative impacts of the project can be mitigated and monitored.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Brown  
Resident of 2871 East Finley Rd.  
008-024-120



Monday, June 19, 2023

Associate Planner Eric Porter  
Lake County Community  
Development Department  
Via email: [CannabisCEQA@lakecountyca.gov](mailto:CannabisCEQA@lakecountyca.gov)

**RE: Green Handle Farms, Major Use Permit UP 21-28, Initial Study IS 21-29**

Dear Mr. Porter,

The Lucerne Area Revitalization Association is submitting this letter to register our concerns as well as to support those of the neighbors of the property at 3050 Big Valley Road in Kelseyville, where the "Green Handle Farms" cannabis operation is proposed to be located.

Lake County Community Development is once again planning to approve a mitigated negative declaration for a project that clearly has unmitigable impacts on the neighborhood, the environment and Lake County's unique rural character.

Just two weeks ago, we submitted a letter opposing Lake County Community Development's notice of intent to adopt a mitigated negative declaration for the thoroughly flawed initial study completed for Higher Ground Farms, next to the historic Kelsey Creek Schoolhouse.

Here again, we are compelled to place on the record our concerns about this project and its initial study document, as well as the entire approval process your agency is following with these projects. Both projects that are the focus of our letters have similar issues when it comes to how they are being accurately studied and how proposed mitigations are being realistically portrayed.

In this letter, we will touch briefly on key concerns of environmental standards, water and air quality impacts, damage to the viewshed, seismicity and who the actual proponents of this project are.

**Cumulative water impact on Big Valley basin not adequately studied**

Green Handle Farms' plan is another cannabis project seeking to locate in the Big Valley Groundwater Basin, a medium priority groundwater basin under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, or SGMA.

The initial study claims this project will not overdraft the basin, but Community Development's studies about other large projects have said the exact same thing. What CDD fails to address in this initial study and in others is the cumulative impact of all of these projects on the basin.



An analogy can be found in the atmospheric river storms that hit the state earlier this year. Just one of those storms alone may not have done damage, but piled up as they were, they were devastating.

Similarly, all of these growing operations stacked on top of the Big Valley Groundwater Basin are certainly going to have a major impact.

As a matter of fact, a letter to CDD from Toni Brown, who lives next to this proposed project site, points out that the other grows clustered around their neighborhood are already resulting in significant drawdown of property owners' wells.

Yet, the initial study does not take that into account and, more to the point, doesn't appear to include any surveys of nearby property owners to gauge the impact of the other cannabis operations Community Development already has allowed to take place.

The county needs far more rigorous standards for which to study the water use of projects, as the Lake County Planning Commission sought from — but didn't get — from the Board of Supervisors two years ago.

The question becomes, if neighbors run out of water, what is the county of Lake prepared to do in order to make them whole?

### **Cumulative impact on air quality not accurately represented**

Such projects as this one have noticeable impacts on neighbors and residents, as has been stated time and again.

Smell and odor, dust and the impacts of fertilizer and pesticides cannot easily be contained or mitigated.

As with the study of impacts on the water basin, this report attempts to say the air quality impacts are either insignificant or can be mitigated.

However, yet again, this is an example of failure to study cumulative impacts on a critical resource — in this case, clean and breathable air.

Lake County Community Development continues to pass numerous industrial ag operations through the pipeline without considering them in aggregate.

Together, they create even larger, long-term impacts that are not being accurately studied or addressed, and which it cannot be truthfully argued do not have an impact on neighboring homes and operations.

## Seismic activity inaccurately represented

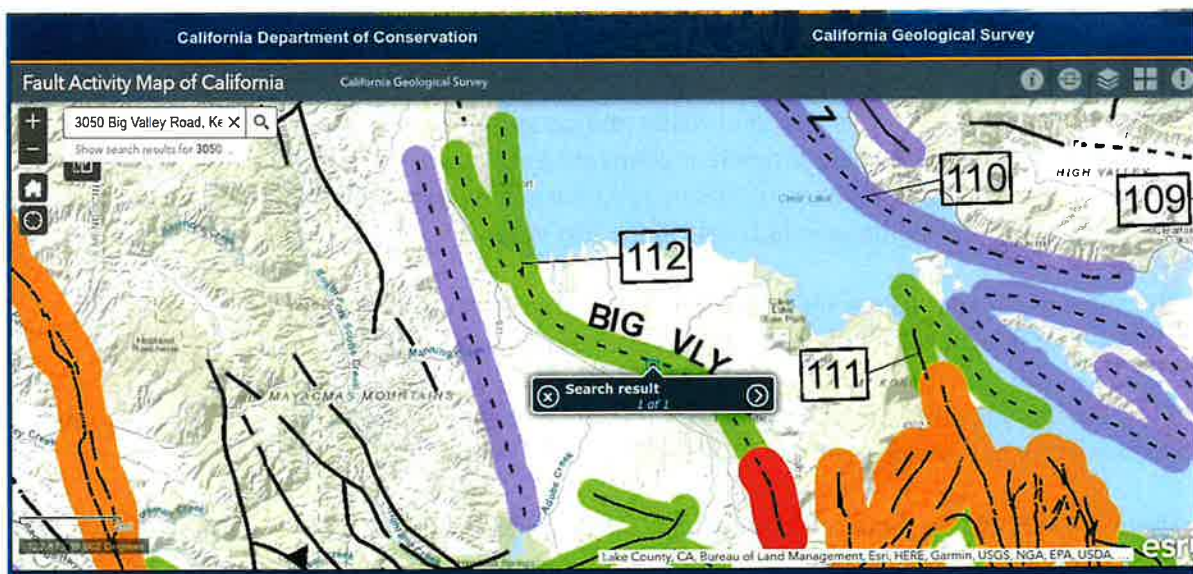
Lake County Community Development notes in its report, "The Project site is located in a seismically active area of California and is expected to experience moderate to severe ground shaking during the lifetime of the project. That risk is not considered substantially different than that of other similar properties and projects in California."

The report then states that, "According to the USGS Earthquake Faults map available on the Lake County GIS Portal, there are no earthquake faults in the vicinity of the subject site, however the North Bay has numerous faults that could rupture, and which could impact this site even though the faults are not mapped on site. This site is no more prone to ground shaking than other sites throughout the County, and all buildings requiring permits are evaluated for seismic structural integrity."

While we appreciate that this report has paid more attention to seismicity than other reports with which we are very familiar, it still fails to adequately portray the presence of earthquake faults in Lake County.

The California Geological Survey map, <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/fam/>, shows that Green Handle Farms' proposed project **sits directly on top of** the Big Valley fault, and within a short distance from numerous other small faults including the Adobe Creek, Clover Valley, Konocti Bay and West Margin fault zones.

We are including an image of the map and the project's location in the context of the fault zones below.



The county's approach to determining seismicity also fails to take into account large earthquakes not centered in Lake County that have an impact here.

Take for example the 4.4-magnitude earthquake centered near Ukiah on June 17 felt around the state, with numerous Lake County residents — including the CDD director — reporting on social media that they had personally felt it. That quake moved furniture at my home. So why isn't accurately reporting seismicity and its impact on projects such as these more carefully performed.

### **Impact on the nature of the community and neighboring properties**

On page 36, the report states that the 38-acre parcel, now considered "undeveloped land," is in an area "characterized by large parcels of rural, marginally developed and undeveloped land."

While that is accurate, it begs belief that the initial study can conclude that there will be "less than significant impact" on neighboring properties if they have an industrial operation of any kind, much less one involving cannabis, locating next door to them.

The report concludes that there is less than a significant environmental impact when considering "conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect."

I'm unclear about how that can possibly be true when placing industrial operations next to undeveloped land and farmland with homes time and again has been shown to have long-term and irreversible impacts, not just to the natural environment but to the social and cultural landscapes of the impacted residents and their neighborhoods.

### **Irreparable harm to the viewshed**

Lake County is known for its beautiful vistas and geography. However, at a time when county leadership purports to want to promote tourism interests, some of the beautiful areas that have historically drawn the admiration of visitors are now being destroyed by industrial projects like Green Handle Farms proposes to create in the Big Valley.

The initial study suggests solid wood or metal fencing. Lake County has historically been criticized for having too much chainlink fence. This project opens the door for more of it.

If this project goes through, due to its close proximity to neighbors, it should be a quality, solid wood fence, not more chainlink.

There also should be requirements that, should growing operations cease, all fencing must be left in good condition, and that it not be allowed to degrade to eyesore status.

### **Truthfulness in reporting: Who is Green Handle Farms?**

In reviewing the initial study documents, we were left with another question: What, precisely, is Green Handle Farms? And who owns it?

No actual owners are listed, other than the name of Michael Cosenza, who is listed as “project name and address,” in addition to “Green Handle Farms” being the project title.

Like other projects we’ve reviewed — in particular, Higher Ground Farms — we’re left with the impression that there is a fair amount of effort being used to not accurately portray ownership or control of these projects.

When reviewing the California Secretary of State’s website for business entities, Green Handle Farms comes up as a limited liability corporation based in Redwood Valley, under ownership that does not include Michael Cosenza.

In addition, Green Handle Farms is not in good standing with the Secretary of State’s reporting guidelines for LLCs, and is nearly seven months overdue in submitting the required filings.

Is that entity responsible for this project? If so, is following state reporting requirements necessary for cannabis operation licensing?

If not, why is whatever entity is proposing this project going under the name of an LLC in a neighboring county that is not in good standing?

This raises all manner of accountability questions, since neighbors and the general public should know who they are dealing with and to whom they should address complaints and concerns.

### **The bottom line: The quality of life for residents and government accountability**

In the new cannabis gold rush, the county of Lake has failed to take into account the very real impact on the quality of life of residents.

It’s been quite the opposite, with the county’s leadership having created a system that incentivizes jamming through projects — good or bad — at all cost in order to collect fees to prop up the county’s annual budget.

People who live in the country do not do so with the expectation that industrial projects are going to end up being located next door to them.

In fact, the county’s zoning rules have allowed critical farmland and natural landscapes to be overtaken by industrial operations, blighting the landscape and causing irreparable damage to the environment, as well as great harm to nearby residences and neighborhoods.

The resulting matters of public safety cannot be overstated. Neighbors have reported to you that their livestock and pets are being killed by roaming "security" dogs at these large grows; that workers from neighboring grows were responsible for dangerous discharge of firearms near residences — and in close proximity to both adults and small children; that hunting — or, more accurately, poaching — was occurring at the hands of these workers on neighbors' property; and that once growing season was over, properties were being left in disastrous shape, impacting the health and safety of the community.

The truth is, there are long-term health impacts that these residents face, and they are not being adequately studied by your agency, which is tasked with that work.

It's critical that the county of Lake's processes catch up to the realities of increasingly limited natural resources.

As agricultural land is being converted to industrial use and as climate change continues to impact our environment — in particular, water and air quality — our residents, young and old, are watching their quality of life deteriorate. No amount of local taxation can make amends for that.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth R. Larson  
Secretary and co-founder

**From:** [Toni Brown](#)  
**To:** [Mary Claybon](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Green Handle Farms, LLC Major Use Permit (UP 21-28)  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 11:58:12 AM

---

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Tom Renfro. I live at 4750 Renfro Drive, Lakeport, CA. 95453 I am very against the Major Use Permit (UP 21-28). There are multiple reasons I am against this permit. Big Valley Road is filled with potholes, additional traffic on this road will lead to further and faster deterioration. The smell these pot farms bring to the area is just awful. I am 85 years old and enjoy sitting on my outside deck. When my neighbor had a large pot farm a couple years ago the smell was so bad, I could not stand to be outdoors. The clientele that these pot farms attract led to a shoot out and a truck driving right through my other neighbor's yard. Please deny this project, and keep our area safe.

Sincerely,  
Tom Renfro