

October 20, 2025

Dear Chair Crandell, Vice Chair Rasmussen and Supervisors,

I am a Middletown resident writing in support of the Poverty Flats Ranch Appeal Appeal (PL-25-198), Major Use Permit (PL-25-68) for (UP 23-09).

As a homeowner in an area with limited groundwater supply, I can relate to Maria Kann's (the appellant) and her neighbors' concern about Poverty Flats' demand on a fragile water supply. Residents in South County, like residents in High Valley, have had their wells go dry. Some must truck in water. Despite these facts, the Planning Commission approved at least one cannabis Major Use Permit in our area and at least four in High Valley. Cannabis uses a lot of water in the summer when water supply is very low.

California Environmental Quality Act and the County's discretionary use permit ordinance are supposed to protect residents from proposed projects that may negatively affect the environment and residents. The County's processes and oversight did not meet the requirement to preserve health, safety and well-being of residents who will be affected by the Poverty Flats Major Use Permit.

Please review the appeal as an example of the County's cannabis permit process from the neighbors' perspective. Often, neighbors feel that their health and safety concerns about proposed projects are ignored until a permit is appealed. Although appealing a permit is no guarantee of adequately addressing a project's severe health and safety issues, it seems to be one of the few options open to neighbors. This may not be your Board's intention. If not, this appeal is an opportunity to clarify your direction to staff and the Planning Commission

Concerns about water supply are serious. Your Board recognized that when you granted the Nina Star Farms Appeal. I hope that your Board sees the same issue and its severity in the Poverty Flats Appeal. Please grant this appeal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an opinion on this matter.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kershaw