

October 17, 2024

To: Lake County Board of Supervisors

From: Douglas Herzog

Subject: Support Appeal AB24-02 of Highland Farms Permit UP 20-96, IS 20-116

Honorable Board Members,

My name is Doug Herzog and my property directly adjoins the property where Highland Farms intends to cultivate up to 19 acres of cannabis. My family has lived on this property for over 40 years.

I support the appeal of the Highland Farms permit. There are several major reasons.

The first reason is that my wife and I take care of my elderly parents who live with us. All of us suffer from a variety of health issues that the Highland Farms permit threatens to make worse. My father has severe breathing issues and requires several inhalers of different medications to get through the day. My mother and wife also have serious health problems that compromise their immunity. I am on disability with conditions that will be made worse if the Highland Farms permit is approved -- especially from odor and dust.

Highland Farms' odor mitigation plan is not sufficient to mitigate the health risks to my family. We are directly down-wind from their operation. Their only solution is to plant "fragrant plants" to mask the odor from outdoor growing, but that will not mask the stench of the cannabis. Fragrant native plants bloom at a different time of year than cannabis, so their solution is not effective.

They also keep denying there is serpentine on the project site. Our commute to and from town will go right past the project and its access road. The serpentine dust contains asbestos which will make my family's health issues worse.

The second reason is that we depend on a perennial spring to get our water. Water flows year-round and does not stop when the rains stop. Only during the last month of the year of a multi-year drought (the worst drought in recent history) did the groundwater level drop enough to cause my spring to stop flowing.

They want to pump nearly a million gallons of water monthly, and they have not provided any proof that this area can handle a loss of that amount of water without causing a severe manmade drought condition for the groundwater that our spring depends on and cause the spring to stop flowing. Well flow rates are not a guarantee of water supply in the future. The consultants hired by the applicant claim that there is enough water for the project without facts on water availability. Without groundwater supply studies of this area, the applicant's

consultants offer opinions and guesses not backed by facts. Also, their consultant at the Planning Commission hearing who was not a hydrologist but a civil engineer incorrectly claims that our spring is fed by rainwater and not groundwater. That is misleading. Our spring is fed by groundwater just like their wells are fed by groundwater. Similarly, our groundwater is fed by rainwater like their groundwater. In all honesty, my family and the applicant are both drawing from the same groundwater source.

Thirdly, we now know that Highland Farms are “bad actors”. They have brazenly stolen our newly installed fencing that we depend on to secure our horses and livestock. They also removed surveyor markers which is in violation of the law. When confronted, they returned the fencing, and it’s completely damaged and unusable. The loss of over \$1,000 in materials alone constitutes a felony. We have filed complaints against Highland Farms with Lake County Code Enforcement and with the Sheriff’s Office. We are also in the process of pursuing litigation against Highland Farms for property rights violations because they are trying to take property from us that they do not legally own.

We also agree with the appellants that Highland Spring Road is unsafe. The safety issues must be corrected before any more cannabis operations are allowed in the area. I am constantly having close calls with other drivers coming at me head-on because the road does not have any markings or any safety signs. It is being made worse with all the growers in the area because they drive larger big rigs that cannot or do not slow down. Already, just this year, several cars had to be towed because they lost control and went off the road. The large vehicles kick up tons more dust than what we used to experience before. That dust makes it hard for my father to breathe and there are no speed limit signs to get people to slow down

For these reasons, I ask that you approve the appeal and deny the permit. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Douglas Herzog
Lake County Resident
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Lakeport, California