December 8, 2022

To: Lake County Board of Directors

Re: Monte Cristo Cannabis Project Up 21-14 Monte Cristo Appeal AB-03, Agenda Item 6.4

I am writing to urge denial of the Monte Cristo Cannabis Project appeal on the Board's December 13 agenda.

While I take no strong opposition to legal cannabis, this project has major unfavorable impacts on the local small-town community – as neighbors so eloquently expressed at the Planning Commission meeting where the project was rightfully denied.

As a downstream property owner with a small well, my main objection relates to groundwater availability and the high potential for negative impacts to us and to our neighbors. The potential for a dry well is glaring as are the unknowns about groundwater availability, short & long term.

The Monte Christo owners argue they are simply using well water that would have been used for grapes – essentially claiming - no harm no foul. I see they have added an additional 18 acres to the 40 acres they will take out of production. The problem, however, remains the same - we're in a protracted drought and the owners have the ability to dig deeper wells, apparently without notice – causing more potential for overuse of the groundwater.

Projects drawing from an uncertain ground water table – no matter the past use – and with the ability to dig deeper should not be approved, most especially in a drought.

It should be noted that there's an alarming inequity inherent in permitting such a project in neighborhoods filled with people who do not have the means to drill deeper wells – as the Monte Cristo owners have. Most of us draw small amounts of water – just enough for personal consumption and maybe a little extra for a small garden or to fight a fire.

Many of us are retired, tax paying citizens on fixed incomes. Should our wells go dry the cost of drilling deeper into our aquafer start at about $20,000 – possibly more depending on how deep we would need to drill. In a fractured aquafer, there's a distinct possibility no water would be found. If indeed, as the project owners claim, there's no "expected" impact from their proposed water use, why are they not offering to pay or share costs associated with wells that dry up in the future?

This sadly, is a case of big business at any cost.

The question at hand, what good at what cost to what people is easy to answer. Monte Cristo stands to gain – the people stand to lose. Monte Cristo wouldn't be pursing this project if there was no substantial gain to be had.

In small tight-knit communities we look to our neighbors for support. This neighbor didn't bother to attend a local town hall meeting to discuss the proposal. Big business at any cost is the message they sent. Is this really what is best for Lake County?

Finally, I ask this question. How confident are you that continued draws on ground water as will occur with this project will not create a negative impact on our communities? There is sufficient testimony from knowledgeable people who are not convinced that the hydrology report (s) submitted by the

project proponents adequately answer the unknowns. ***Please listen to those who don't have a financial stake in this project.***

And please send the right message to our small-town communities. Deny the appeal on the basis that the uncertainty of water availability and negative impacts to small water users in drought conditions as well as the overwhelming community opposition (see the petition, listen to the testimony during the Planning Commission meeting and read all the letters of opposition) does not support allowing the project to go forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

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