

Letter to Governor Newsom,

Re: Moratorium on new state licensing for cannabis cultivation due to the drought conditions

The current state of the drought in California and Lake County requires us to take serious actions. A recent study claims that “2000-2021 was the driest 22-yr period since at least 800.” Population counts from 800 CE are difficult to obtain for comparison. However, by 1900 the population of California was approximately 1.4 million and has grown to approximately 40 million today. A dry season from the past cannot compare to a dry season of today with the consumption needs of our current residents and farmers.

Residential water access is the priority for any and all communities. Safe and accessible drinking water is at the simplest levels of life’s basic requirements. Here in Lake County and across many rural counties, we are seeing a large number of water trucks moving water for a variety of different reasons. From true need for drinking water to the use of water trucks to deliver water for illegal cannabis operations, the amount of water moving around our county to deal with the drought is unprecedented.

We have seen the same activity with a number of our legal cannabis grows as well. Due to placing cannabis grows outside of historical agricultural areas, water access in more remote locations can be vastly different. Our ag industry, which includes cannabis, is a large part of our economy, and we wish to protect them from further burden on our water systems as well.

Water purveyors are struggling to deal with low lake levels as well as low groundwater issues. Our water purveyors are requesting that residents conserve water, as is the state and its Water Board. Asking to conserve while continuing to provide new licenses for new cannabis operations does not make sense.

Lake County is leading by example, we have placed a moratorium on new ag projects and new cannabis cultivation projects. It is important to us that our current ag and cannabis projects succeed and that the residents of Lake County continue to have access to drinking water. We wouldn’t ask the state to do what we are not willing to do. Therefore, we are requesting that you place a moratorium on new cannabis cultivation licenses from the state until the drought emergency is lifted or until the State of California finds itself in a better position with the drought to reopen the licensing process.

Cc: Senator McGuire

Cc: Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry