

Community Comment
Tuesday, February 28

This is Erin Dunn with the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

Humboldt County, we have a lot of work ahead of us. It feels like our soul has been lost in an honest attempt to create a business like environment for the Pot Growing industry. We should stop and regroup, but the tidal wave of Cannabis is overtaking us and we are fighting the rising tide with wading boots and umbrellas. We are going to get soaked.

Before I go further, I want to point out that I don't know all of the marijuana terms. So I may say some of the things wrong. I hope you can hear what I'm trying to say without focusing on mis-spoken lingo.

Take the unfortunate incident in Fortuna. Fortuna has a swath of land that is surrounded by City property with established homes built around that land. That swath was never annexed by the City and therefore is under County Cannabis rules. An out of area grower has big plans for a multi-thousand plant grow.

The enormous soon-to-be grow borders many Fortuna homes. And evidently, the County does not have regulations in place for mandatory setbacks from residential areas. These residents feel ambushed—how could this happen in a residential area? I don't live in that part of town, but if I did, I would be devastated.

Allegedly, the grower is from out of the Country and I imagine doesn't give a hoot about the community they are impacting. This is about money. This isn't about "farming," this is about "growing" and growing as much as possible as often as possible.

What recourse does Fortuna have? I personally will be advocating for a no grow, no dispensary town. This is not the Chamber's stance, this is my personal stance. Fortuna could offer a break from a "Pot store on every

corner” scenario that already plagues many communities in Oregon. If you are looking for a Least-Pot-As-Possible alternative living environment, maybe Fortuna could be the town to provide that.

We could still support the growers and farmers outside of town. We have the provisions and the labor force. Just don’t give us the omnipresent pot leaf.

There are other impacts we are not prepared for. A big load of bagged trimmings was dumped at a Table Bluff beach ravine over the weekend. What good is a ban on plastic bags from the grocery store when growers are dumping trimmings in large, thick plastic bags that may eventually work their way into the ocean?

How will the Sheriff’s department keep up with all of the crime?

How can we balance quality of life with making a living? We need to be vigilant in our insistence of good stewardship. Compliance will be complaint driven. We need to be vocal any time we see environmental degradation, abuse of laws and breaking of laws. The grows in the hills are becoming the grows in our backyards. We have to say enough is enough with the unintended consequences of Cannabis legalization.

This has been Erin Dunn with a community comment.