

December 19, 2023

To whom it may concern,

As approved on December 19, 2023, Eureka City Council is opposed to Measure A, an initiative appearing on the March 5, 2024 ballot which would amend Humboldt's County's General Plan to restrict permitted cannabis cultivation.

Both Eureka and Humboldt County as a whole benefit from a well-regulated cannabis industry that supports small and local businesses and protects the environment and public safety. Since the legalization of adult-use cannabis in California in 2016, Eureka has become a hub for cannabis supply chain activities, including cannabis manufacturing, distribution, retail, and tourism. These ancillary activities have generated hundreds of jobs and millions in economic activity in the city, and provide essential services to nearly 1,000 small-scale cannabis farmers in rural areas of the county.

Currently, dozens of Eureka-based manufacturing, distribution, and retail businesses depend on the sun-grown and high-quality craft cannabis produced by Humboldt cultivators to sustain their businesses, and to differentiate their operations from those located in other parts of the state. Since the legalization and regulation of cannabis, the county as a whole has also seen a substantial decrease in environmentally destructive illicit cultivation operations due to the transition of cultivators into a legal framework that includes significant environmental protections.

Measure A, if passed by voters in March 2024, would threaten to undermine Humboldt's legal cannabis industry and reverse these hard-fought gains. A March 2023 analysis from Humboldt's Planning and Building Department found that Measure A would have "dire consequences to the cannabis industry in Humboldt County if passed," largely due to provisions that "discourage existing permit holders from modifying their permits in any way." Specifically, the analysis found that the restrictions imposed by Measure A include restrictions on "infrastructure intended for environmental protections or modification of activities or site configuration to adapt to the evolving industry," and that "these restrictions affect the smallest of farms permitted in Humboldt County to the largest cultivation sites."

If passed, Measure A would establish a new, comprehensive General Plan section that could not be changed absent another voter initiative, thereby preventing additional adaptive changes to the county's cannabis ordinances. Given the complex and rapidly-evolving nature of the legal cannabis industry, and the strong likelihood of future changes in market, environmental, and legal conditions, any cannabis policy which cannot be modified in response to public input is cause for significant concern.

For these reasons, the Eureka City Council is opposed to Measure A.

Sincerely,

Kim Bergel
Mayor

