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Planning Commission Sets January 22nd Special Hearing for Proposed Zoning Amendments *After a Year of Permit Appeals, Santa Barbara County Cannabis Farmers Rally around Science to Defend Right to Farm*

Santa Maria, CA – For over a year, prohibitionist forces in Santa Barbara County have fought independent, compliant cannabis farmers, appealing approved zoning permits and wasting local funds to undermine County ordinances. On January 22nd, Planning Commissioners have set a special hearing in Santa Maria to review a report from the Ag/Cannabis Stakeholder Working Group and discuss proposed Cannabis Zoning Ordinance Amendments prompted by last year’s planning commission meetings.

Prominent within the proposed amendments are a variety of methods to mitigate odor concerns. Since becoming cannabis farmers, John de Friel and Sara Rotman, co-chairs of Good Farmers Great Neighbors, have worked to dispel common misperceptions around the cannabis plant and have advocated best practices amongst their peers.

In a joint statement, John and Sara emphasized, “live plants themselves do not produce strong odors during cultivation outdoors unless disturbed by strong winds or through the harvesting process and drying process.” These occasions are rare, limited to only a few weeks a year, and farmers often already utilize natural foliage screens and hoop houses to protect plants from winds that can disturb them.

About 90 percent of cannabis terpenes and scents are released during drying. John and Sara both flash-freeze freshly harvested plants avoiding the air-drying process and the odors associated with it. “When air-drying is necessary for fresh flowers,” they said, “we recommend our colleagues to utilize the best available technologies to mitigate any odors from leaving the property. These include at a minimum vapor-phase air-cleansing systems that naturally neutralize the chemical nature of terpenes traveling in the air, or, when greater control is required, a fully enclosed environment with carbon filtration for odor capture.”

A comprehensive and scientific report published at the end of 2019 by Dr. William Vizuite at Pacific Environmental Analytics, additionally researched the effect of cannabis terpenes on neighboring crops, specifically wine grapes. His observations found that it requires 1,121 continuous days of flowering for cannabis plants to release enough terpenes for grape taint to occur. However, cannabis plants only emit monoterpenes for 21 days prior to harvest, a fraction of the emission rate necessary to taint wine grapes.

County cannabis farmers urge County commissioners and supervisors to make determinations on new regulations based on science, and hope that the promise of federal de-legalization will allow more cannabis studies like Dr. Vizuite’s to be conducted on agricultural, environmental and public health matters.

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Good Farmers Great Neighbors is a collective of Santa Barbara County cannabis industry leaders who believe that Cannabis farming is good for County jobs and our local economy. We promote best practices for sustainable growing, a healthy community and environment, and advocate for good neighbor community engagement to dispel the myths surrounding cannabis and cannabis production to help the industry thrive.

Background:

Santa Barbara County Planning Commission Special Hearing Agenda – January 22, 2020

<https://goodfarmersgreatneighbors.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Agenda.pdf>

Dr. Vizuite Study: Estimated emissions, concentrations, and deposition of monoterpenes from an outdoor Cannabis farm

<https://cosantabarbara.app.box.com/s/q97rv82305oyfnbdjhcyxrrdhu3dgkqy/file/573298155981>

Additional Resources can be found on the Good Farmers Great Neighbors event page

<https://goodfarmersgreatneighbors.com/events/>