



February 21, 2019

TO: Lompoc Valley Cannabis Association
FROM: Ben Greenfield, [Change Research](#)
RE: Santa Barbara County Voters Strongly Favor Pro-Cannabis Industry Policies

In a February poll of registered voters in Santa Barbara County, Change Research found that, by a wide margin, voters favor policies that will sustain and strengthen the local cannabis industry. Furthermore, voters treasure the local wine industry, and are much more likely to view cannabis as complementing wine than competing with it; accordingly, they want the wine and cannabis industries to work together for the benefit of everyone in the county. The cannabis industry is young and still developing, but voters are getting educated about issues facing the industry, and they are clear in their desire for policymakers to enact policies that ensure the cannabis economy is able to thrive and help the broader local economy to thrive along with it.

Voters Want the County to Bolster the Cannabis Industry

Voters overwhelmingly want the county to take action to sustain a regulated and licensed cannabis industry, with 76% supporting and 15% opposing. That support is strong and broad: 46% “strongly support” the county doing everything it can. And support comes from across the political spectrum: 64% of Republicans, 69% of independents, and 85% of Democrats want the county to help sustain the industry. Even a majority of those who voted against Proposition 64 in 2016 (53% of these voters) want the county to bolster the industry. And at least 70% of voters in each of the county’s five supervisor districts want the county to help sustain the cannabis industry.

Additional key findings:

- 63% support the county encouraging and providing tax incentives to local farmers to produce industrial hemp, 26% oppose
- 54% support AB 286, which would help deter black market operators by suspending the state cultivation tax and lowering the excise tax on cannabis, while 22% oppose it, after they’re informed what the bill would do.
- Most voters would like the county to focus on cannabis cultivation and farming and retail dispensaries. 73% chose one of these two when also given options of manufacturing, distribution, or home deliveries.
- Most voters don’t have significant problems with the scent of cannabis: only 28% are “really bothered” by it. The other 72% either do not consider it an odor, or do consider it an odor but are not bothered by it.

- 82% of Santa Barbara County voters either consume cannabis themselves or know someone who does.
- Of this last group, 32% say they or someone they know consumes cannabis with wine.
- 49% believe local government should not restrict the cultivation of cannabis or industrial hemp on designated land zoned for farming and agriculture.
- 43% of voters believe cannabis is good for your health.
- 55% of voters believe either that current regulations on cannabis are fine or that there should be fewer regulations.
- 51% approve of the job that Santa Barbara County is doing at regulating the cannabis industry, while 28% disapprove.

Voters See the Cannabis Industry As an Asset to the Wine Industry

Santa Barbara County voters view the wine industry as central to the county's tourism economy: 32% most closely associate wine tasting and vineyards with local tourism, more than any other industry or activity. And they are much more likely to view the cannabis industry as an asset of wine than a competitor. 34% believe the cannabis industry complements the wine industry, almost three times as many as the 12% who believe it competes with the wine industry.

63% agree that the cannabis and wine industries should work together to spur economic growth and contribute to the county's overall quality of life, while just 24% disagree. What's more, 66% of voters disagree, and 49% "strongly disagree," that the cannabis industry is hurting tourism and the wine industry.

Voters Want Policymakers to Focus On Organized Crime, Unlicensed Cannabis Operators

Voters believe that combating organized crime involvement is the top issue confronting the local cannabis industry: 45% rank this among their top three cannabis-related issues. The other choices selected by over 30% of respondents included enforcement of unlicensed cannabis operators (35%), prohibiting access to underage consumers (34%), limiting overtaxation and overregulation (33%), supporting cannabis farmers' cultivation and growth (32%) and treating cannabis as an agricultural commodity (31%).

On taxation, as mentioned above, when told about AB 286, 54% support the bill, while only 22% oppose it. And pluralities of all political affiliations support the bill.

Voters are clear on the fact that they will reward local officials who further the viability of the cannabis industry: if an official opposes allowing cannabis cultivation to grow and prosper economically, voters would be twice as likely to vote for someone else, by a 50% to 25% margin.

Change Research conducted an online poll February 15-20, 2019 in Santa Barbara County. Using its Bias Correct Engine to attain a sample reflective of the electorate, Change Research polled 990 registered voters in the district. Post-stratification was performed on age, gender, ethnicity, and 2016 Presidential vote.