



**May 2, 2020**

**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Ben Greenfield, [Change Research](#)  
**RE:** **Santa Barbara County Voters Consider Cannabis Farming Beneficial, Support Right-To-Farm Provisions**

A new poll of 506 registered voters in Santa Barbara County found that voters see a wide variety of economic, environmental, and health benefits in cannabis farming. Moreover, they overwhelmingly support right-to-farm protections for cannabis, which they view as a mainstream industry that should be treated similarly to other types of farms.

### **Perceived Benefits of Cannabis Farming**

Respondents were presented with 33 different aspects of cannabis farming and asked whether each made them feel more or less favorably about the industry. Their responses made clear that they find cannabis farming to be overwhelmingly positive, particularly when it comes to health, the environment, and the economy. The most positive points were:

- Public health: By a 64-point margin, voters responded positively to the fact that cannabis produced in Santa Barbara County can combat chronic illnesses.
- The environment: By a 63-point margin, voters responded positively to the fact that cannabis farming is 100% organic and pesticide-free. And by a 62-point margin, they were positive about bee populations benefiting from pollen from cannabis.
- The economy: By a 62-point margin, they responded positively to reading that the legal cannabis industry spent roughly \$122m in 2018 on goods and services from local vendors. By a 61-point margin, they were positive about cannabis farming bringing in \$6.9m in tax revenue in fiscal year 2019. And by a 60-point margin, they were positive about cannabis farming creating 5,000 jobs in the county in 2018.

On several other points as well, we saw very high positives that indicate that Santa Barbara County residents consider cannabis a mainstream industry that has a valuable place in the community, including:

- The fact that cannabis farming uses less water than other crops
- The fact that cannabis farmers donate to local charities
- Cultivation of cannabis and hemp maintains the farm economy that is central to the county's way of life
- Cannabis farmers are working with local wine vintners to promote county tourism

## **Strong Support for Right-To-Farm**

Just over two-thirds of Santa Barbara County voters--68%--believe cannabis farmers are entitled to right-to-farm protections, while 25% disagree. Virtually every segment of the population agrees, including majorities of each gender, age, and ethnic group, both political parties, and all education levels. And support is strong across the county, with majority support for right-to-farm in the Santa Barbara region, as well as in the Santa Maria Valley and Santa Ynez Valley.

These numbers suggest that if right-to-farm provisions were implemented -- especially alongside a federal legalization program -- the resulting economic growth and job creation would be accompanied by widespread support among the community of Santa Barbara County residents.

*Change Research surveyed 506 registered voters in Santa Barbara County from March 7-9. The survey was conducted online, using Change Research's Dynamic Online Sampling Engine. Post-stratification was done on age, gender, race, and 2016 presidential vote.*