

# Marijuana woes: Yolo Supervisors ban new cultivators



Ag Commissioner John

Young speaks before the Board of Supervisors to discuss the amended interim marijuana ordinance on Tuesday. LAUREN KING — DAILY DEMOCRAT

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# COMMENTS

Yolo supervisors have put the brakes on new outdoor marijuana grows to allow the county time to recover from the rush of applicants and subsequent financial deficit.

In a 3-2 vote, supervisors Matt Rexroad of Woodland and Don Saylor of Davis dissenting, the Board moved to ban all outdoor cultivation in unincorporated Yolo County. This prohibition applies to all prospective growers except for qualified patients cultivating medical marijuana at their own home in an area not exceeding 100 square feet and property owners who submitted a Notice of Intent to the Central Valley Regional Water Control Board no later than 5 p.m. on Oct. 11.

The vote was a reaction to the county spending more than \$500,000 in general funds on the interim ordinance and related work and having more incoming applications than staff has the resources to investigate.

According to Ag Commissioner John Young, there are currently 82 permitted or soon to be permitted cultivators on 94 parcels in Yolo County and up to 800 grows in total. Since the Oct. 11 cut off was announced at the last supervisor's meeting, Young reported that his office has been getting 10 calls a day from people wanting permits.

"I think that it is a travesty that so much of the general fund is being used," said Supervisor Oscar Villegas, arguing that the county should be more aggressive in creating a fee schedule and having money come in from the supposedly lucrative industry.

"I don't want this to be our number one priority," Villegas continued, his preference being that no applications are processed until a payment framework has been created.

Villegas further argued that, at all times, the choice to issue a complete ban on outdoor cultivation should be on the table to allow the county to take a step back if there are serious issues that need to be addressed without risking litigation from prospective cultivators.

Saylor asserted that the ban is unfair for people trying to be compliant and that expanding agricultural businesses is a part of the county's general plan.

Young is in the process of creating a fee schedule so that taxpayers are not funding the county's new industry. It is anticipated to be presented at the Nov. 22 meeting.

The ban will be formally approved at the next supervisor's meeting in two weeks.

In addition to moving forward on the prohibition, the Board approved updates to the interim marijuana ordinance that include changes Young feels will make it stronger and more effective.

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Among the changes is a requirement for commercial cultivators to participate in a track and trace program when it is instituted by the county and consent to inspections. Those with lengthy criminal convictions or that are not property owners in Yolo County will not be issued permits. Cultivators will also be required to register with the county.

In the future, the interim ordinance will include language requested by Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation that prevents grows from being within 1,000 feet of tribal lands or artifacts.

These amendments were approved unanimously and will be formally adopted at the next Board meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 8.

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