



CALIFORNIA STRATEGIES, LLC

September 26, 2017

Chair Rochester and Planning Commissioners
Monterey County Planning Commission
1441 Schilling Place
Salinas, CA 93901

HEARING SUBMITTAL	
PROJECT NO./AGENDA NO.	20150048 #3
DATE RECEIVED	9/27/17
SUBMITTED BY/VIA	Public @ Otter
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Chari Rochester:

Our firm represents several commercial cannabis operations in Monterey County. We have carefully reviewed the staff report and proposed amendments to the proposed draft cannabis ordinances. The Board Ad Hoc Committee and Staff should be congratulated for their comprehensive work and quick ability to interpret the dynamic State statutory and regulatory framework related to commercial cannabis operations and make recommendations to reconcile your existing medical cannabis ordinance with changes in State law.

We have previously met with County Executive and Planning staff and have three key comments as you consider modifications to your ordinances:

Incorporation of Adult-Use

We strongly agree with the approach staff recommended for incorporation of adult use into the Monterey County Cannabis ordinances.

Distribution

As staff outlined, the legislative reconciliation of the medical (MCRSA) and Adult Use (AUMA) statutes into a consolidated framework called the Medicinal and Adult Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MAUCRSA) removed the Transportation license type and now only a licensed Distributor can transport cannabis. Previously, under MCRSA a Distribution license could not be held by other licensees. Now under MAUCRSA, Distribution licenses are no longer exclusive and can be held by other licensees (except Testing Labs) to allow for vertical integration similar to other agricultural operations in Monterey County and throughout the State. However, a vast majority of existing cannabis cultivation exists on Farmland zoning. In order to transport cannabis to the next stage of the supply chain a cultivator must have a Distribution license which is not currently allowed on Farmland zoning. **We are requesting a minor modification to the ordinances to allow for "self-distribution" only to be allowed on Farmland zoning.** This would avoid having to retain third party distributors to simply pick up cannabis product from farms to take to retail, packaging, or manufacturing steps in the supply chain thus eliminating unnecessary costs in the cannabis supply chain and providing cultivators the same efficiencies afforded to all other forms of agriculture. We are limiting this request to self-distribution on the Farmland zone to preclude the establishment of distribution centers/warehouses that would collect and distribute for

other parties on Farmland zones. The change, we believe, would better capture the intent and purpose of vertical integration and the ability for self-distribution allowed under MAUCRSA.

Possession or Use of Firearms by Third Party Security Firms at Cultivation Locations

The proposed ordinances continue to preclude possession or use of firearms at all commercial cannabis operations. **We are requesting a minor modification to allow for the possession or use of firearms by third party security firms at cultivation locations to enhance security and create greater deterrence against criminal activity or theft.** While there are relatively few known incidences at cultivation locations thus far, we believe farms in Monterey County are being targeted and security firms have limited options to actually provide the necessary security and deterrence required by the ordinances and associated security plans.

We are recommending these changes be incorporated into the revised cannabis ordinances proposed to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors prior to the end of this year. We look forward to continuing to work with staff and understand additional changes will be considered in the future, but believe these changes are essential to the successful early implementation of a cannabis regulatory framework in Monterey County. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jared Ficker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Jared Ficker
Partner

cc: Monterey County Supervisors