

# Resist! Repeal! Refund! Recall!

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**“Estelle was a backer of the Measure S tax, and of Ordinance 2575, which illegally revised it to get millions in taxes from permit holders. Likewise, for Ordinance 2576 which purports to give the county the authority to fine pot growers \$10,000 a day. She has heard presentations of the damage these ill-considered ordinances have done to the county’s rural population, and the businesses and charities that depend on that population. That population includes most of the people she was elected to represent. . She has not used her position on the Board of Supervisors to correct or mitigate the damages caused by her votes on the Board, instead defending them and championing them.”**

A topic that continues to come up is PBD’s forced garden bed removal. Ford has addressed this numerous times, yet his staff at PBD *still* has not got the memo. I was personally told by PBD’s John Moreno, Heather and Warren Black that ‘the garden beds and soil had to be removed.’ Contrary to Ford’s claim at the meeting, the misinformation given by county staff, was not due to ‘the way I asked the question,’ but was volunteered. I’m not the only one.

Ford explained, *“Part of the thing we’re trying to do with raised beds is restoring sites to pre-cannabis condition. We are not requiring removal of dirt, just the structure. They can grow veggies... You don’t have to take the soil out, just the structure. Most of those beds are the structure for the greenhouse.”* Pre-cannabis condition!? You mean an eco-groovy permaculture paradise turned to lifeless-open soil spread out just to run off? Forgive me while I catch my balance. Clearly these officials have no experience cultivating anything, no business educating the masses, shaping policy, or enforcing sustainable practices.

One speaker shared a story of a friend who also got mixed messages about garden beds, stating, *“A friend’s beds were not used to support greenhouse. He had 4 beds, it’s good soil, you made them take the boards down and spread out the soil. That causes more damage. ...That’s an oxymoron.”* Ford interrupted, *“That’s something that needs to be rethought,”* and the speaker continued, *“Your scaring people! I know people didn’t count on PBD because it’s chaotic. This is why people don’t trust you guys. That’s why some people started process and stopped... I want to know about the big grows you’re permitting, instead of the small homesteading farmers you’re going after... these are the true people who care about the trees and the environment. The big growers don’t give a crap.”*

Another debate, still left unanswered by County staff was the validity of the 215 medical cannabis program. A speaker named John, asked, **“Is 215 still on the books**

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**with the state?”** Ford responded, **“Yes.”** The speaker followed by asking, **“Well what gives you the right to override a doctors prescription? If he says you can grow this many pounds, you are limiting that. This is between doctor and patient.”**

Ford responds, *“That’s a little bit grey and legal minds disagree on that. One of the things we all need to weigh is state and local regulation where 215 prevail. Under 215, people cannot be arrested or prosecuted criminally, BUT this does not override compliance with local regulations...in all honestly I have not gotten a clear answer from anybody on that. I’ve looked into it, people disagree on that point. That’s the best answer I can give you.”*

A previous speaker reiterated her initial comment from the audience; **“The fact that this panel doesn’t know the answers to some of these questions speaks volumes to the complexity.”** It also raises the question, how can the County violently enforce laws that they don’t even understand themselves?

The abatement program just like with legalization, is now having the opposite effect of its intention. People thought the county was going to go after the massive grows. *Instead* the county has targeted 215 holders, mom and pops, off-grid living, cancer patients, war vets, and respected community members. An estimated 10% of recipients are not even growing at all. Humboldt County’s method of abatement selection is also beyond flawed. The idea that every greenhouse on the blurry 2016 GIS system is full of cannabis in 2018, is **not** a sound basis for enforcement. It seems like the county is too lazy to do any real investigating on the ground. The county changed the cannabis tax to avoid having to send inspectors out, and now they are trying to do this Abatement process without gathering evidence either.

Another topic that came up a few times, including by Fennel was that tired propaganda that newer farmers are here with greed-based intentions. Fennel stated, *“I want the maximum number of people who care about this land to feel like they can stay here. I don’t care a whip about somebody who came here to make money.”*

If I hear another elder speak negatively of younger generations, who mostly came here in honor of this sacred plant and community the elders created, I might explode. Elders, do not forget, you created this culture, many moved here *because* of our respect for it, we followed your lead, aspired to live off-grid, and get involved with the community and non-profits to make a real difference, not offered in the often-violent mainstream society. We kept up with inflation, industry decline, and economic collapse to mirror the same effect you had. We are not greedy and we do care about the environment, so please get your facts straight. If farmers could still get ‘20k yearly by growing a single

plant in the backyard,’ as one speaker shared, we would do the same. Yet that’s not what the industry offers today. Those who grow this plant, more commonly is for the purpose of supplementing their non-livable wages, offered in any other slavery-like professions provided in the mainstream culture. This system is a crime against humanity. Elder cultivators of all, should know better.

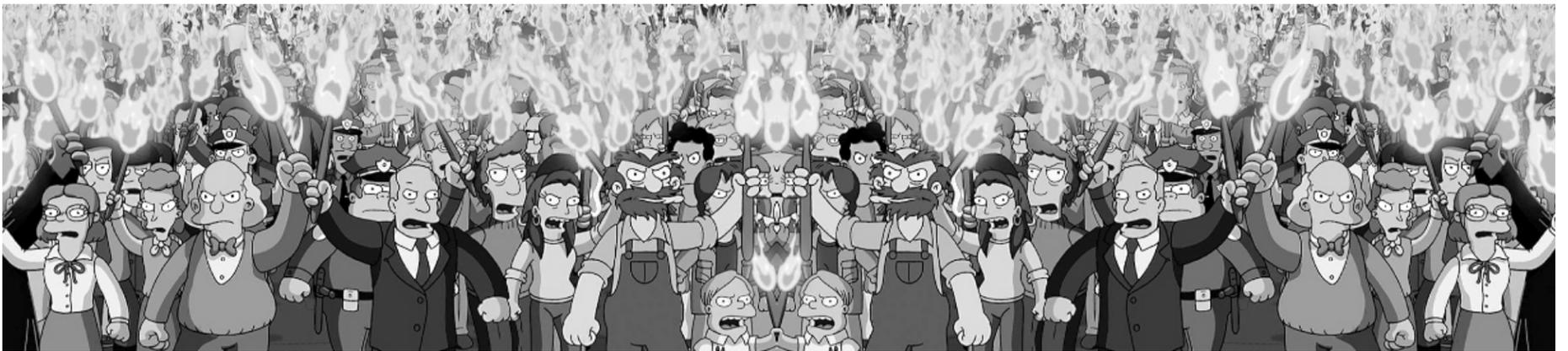
It is this lie that ‘bad people’ only ‘came here for money’ that is one of the primary reasons we are in this awful situation today. Too many bought the propaganda that put us at odds with our neighbors. It’s no different than the polarity-based tactics trump and his cronies use, putting US against some illusion of THEM. We need to stop buying the BS force-fed to us by politicians and their spun media outlets and instead stand strong together. Until we stop blaming the youth or newcomers, and redirect our resistance towards the actual agencies and officials behind this corrupt campaign, we will continue to fall for the separation myth and fail as a larger community.

Darryl Cherney addressed this misplaced blame, stating ‘Nobody is to blame everybody is responsible for where we are,’ and painted the big picture, *“Crime is raging all over streets, business is down between 40-80%, including the farm stores...people are stressed out, talking about ghost towns, we have 2 businesses closing this week, another one for sale. Our culture is being completely altered. Law enforcement is selective in who they go after... first they come for the big growers then they go after your house because that is the law, even though you can say you’re only going after these groups now... sale taxes are down and real estate is plummeting and people are going to start applying for reduced property taxes.”*

Another hot-topic was questioning the assumed authority of county government, to set ‘egregious’, ‘arbitrary’ and ‘excessive’ fines, in addition to the time period given to farmers to resolve claimed issues. One speaker asked, *“What’s your authority to charge 10k fines...[or] make people mind, that’s like spanking people if they don’t conform...”* When Fennel responded, “the Constitution of State of CA,” the speaker inquired with a simple follow up question, *“What article?”* Fennel-scoffed “Oh God-,” as if she shouldn’t be required to know, the speaker continued, *“--No Really you’ve effected people’s lives.”*

Ford responds, “That is written directly into ordinance 2576, written by County Counsel and adopted by BOS.” Fennel added, *“Its basically to get people to abate rather than tag along, because that’s what they would do and usually do in cannabis.”* Why, because farmers are all criminals? That sure sounds like what is implied here.

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