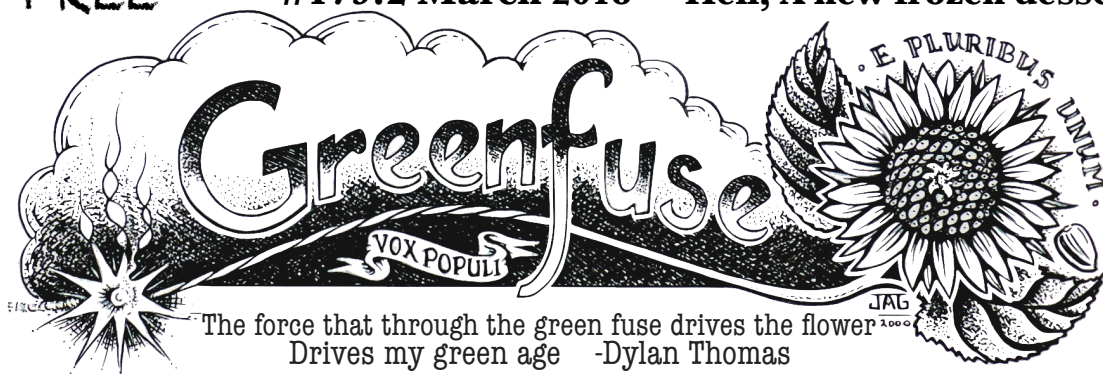


FREE

#179.2 March 2018 - Hell, A new frozen dessert?



## Cultivation: Dream Tax Meets Reality

Humboldt County to Hold Their Government Accountable for 'Illegal' Tax Changes

The Cannabis Market crash in Humboldt County isn't the only element distressing farmers this year. In addition to plummeting per pound-prices, exponential influx of costs, looming abatement letter risks and the like, farmers attempting to navigate the legalization process are being hit especially hard with yearly Measure S tax bills. So much so that a group formed in direct response to speak to the Board of Supervisors in the February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

A farm association calling themselves "The Salmon Creek Association of Small Farmers" and supporters gathered at the Courthouse during the February 13 Board of Supervisors meeting to lay out their requests to the Board which include:

- "Repeal the 2017 taxes on Interim Permits.
- Reduced taxes on 2018 Interim Permits.
- Consider developing a system for rebates or deferred tax payment plans targeting small growers.
- Find a mechanism to cost-effectively leverage enforcement of the ~8,000 non-applicants without relying on small farmers taxes.
- Work to streamline the compliance process for those small farms where environmental degradation is NOT occurring."

Imagine you are a cannabis farmer, one who stood in line at the Planning Department to get a permit December 29, to get in front of the "good-standing" line for the State permits as you were told to by the County. Imagine you also headed the warnings of the Sheriffs, Planning Department, and additional County staff and did not cultivate that year. Or picture you are a lawyer who advised their clients about liability of the tax and to make legally binding contracts with cultivators who rented their property.

Well this is the case for several handfuls of folks in Humboldt County who are coming together to hold the BOS and County Counsel accountable for their rewriting of the "Commercial Marijuana Cultivation Tax" a one of a kind agricultural excise tax passed in November 2016 with 64.5 % approval.

Now in a dark eerie jam-packed dry room of uncertainty, there just may be trichomes glistening with hope, as local renowned Environmental and Cannabis advocate and Attorney Eugene Denson, is hoping to help save the livelihoods for many local cultivators by bringing a Law Suit against the County.

The original text of the Measure was added December 13 2016, becoming Ordinance 2567 in the County Code. Then June 6, 2017 a new ordinance "2575" was approved by the Humboldt County BOS which modified the original text of Measure S Tax.

Denson first noticed the text incongruities, and sent a letter to the County of Humboldt informing them of the "illegality" of the changes made January 9<sup>th</sup> 2018. Denson explains that the changes made "substantially altered the tax after it was approved by voters" so the changes made by Humboldt County Supervisors are "illegal" because it violates Government Code 53723, "No local government, or district, whether or not authorized to levy a property tax, may impose any general tax unless and until such general tax is submitted to the electorate of the local government, or district and approved by a majority vote of the voters voting in an election on the issue."

-Dream Tax Continues on Page 15



## STOCKS THRIVE, WAGES DIVE

Start with the suggestion, which seems odd on its face, that the market crashed because wages were seen to be rising. The recent Dow Jones fluctuations have very little to do with a legitimate fear of inflation. The stock market panicked largely because CEOs and shareholders fear that they're losing their upper hand over a workforce that's cutting increasingly into their record profits.

And if inflation is coming, then the Federal Reserve is likely to raise interest rates to slow down the economy and cool off the inflation. When the Fed raises interest rates, bonds become more attractive, so people move money from stocks to bonds — and the stock market dives. It becomes harder to borrow, so businesses and homeowners have less capital to throw around. Profits get squeezed by high-interest payments. And as interest rates rise, the value of older bonds, which pay out a lower interest rate, goes down. So people are losing money all over the place. All because wages started to go up.

Everything in the structure of the economy, then, is geared toward making sure that wages never rise. And for nearly half a century, this task has been accomplished. Wages haven't budged since the 1970s.

Capitalism's "reserve army" of the unemployed has its ranks bolstered by a mechanism known as the "inflation target" or the "inflation objective." The Fed currently sets the target at 2 percent, meaning that it doesn't want to see inflation higher or lower than that. What it really means is that it doesn't want to see inflation higher than that, as the economy hasn't hit the 2 percent target in years.

But the target itself has meaning, since any little sign of wage growth is taken to mean that inflation is around the bend, so the Fed taps the brakes to keep everything under that target. When the Fed hits the brakes, people lose their jobs. That's not an unfortunate side effect of tighter monetary policy — it is the intended effect. But the 2 percent target, argue people who want to see real full employment, is too low. The Fed is throwing people out of work unnecessarily — or, at least, for no sound economic reason. ExFedChair Janet Yellen said that the decision the Fed made in 2012 — before she was Fed chair — may have been the right one at the time, but evidence since then suggests the rate could be set higher.

In Europe, central bankers have in recent years become more blatant about their role. The European Central Bank has even started to use a different, most honest term: the Non-Accelerating Wage Rate of Unemployment. In practice, they tend to mean the same thing — that only so many people can be employed before inflation rises, and the job of a central bank is to find and maintain the magic balance of unemployment and interest rates which fall disproportionately on the more vulnerable workers — namely women and people of color — who constitute the vast majority of today's working class.

In 1979 then-Fed Chair Paul Volcker moved to explode the interest rate, in large part to undermine what he and other monetary hawks saw as labor's bloated bargaining power. Volcker tamed inflation, triggered 2 recessions and paved the way for Reagan's all-out assault on unions. So Carter, Volcker, and Reagan set out to suppress the power of organized labor. For that, they relied on a growing reserve army, created deliberately by government policy.

Like most economic policymaking, the job of the Fed is to adjudicate who gets to hold power in the economy and society writ large, ostensibly in the public interest. If the Fed raises interest rates in the coming weeks and months, its answer will be clear.

Thanks to Kate Aronoff of *The Intercept*

## COUNTY WEATHER: WARM WIND? HOT AIR!

Is there is a warm wind from Sacramento and the Courts that is creating a thaw of sort in Humboldt? Cameras on sheriff's deputies, the last armed agents hereabouts to get them, sounds good. But that warm wind turned into the usual Hot Air when it hit the chambers of the County Supervisors.

It's all about the opioid threat that took so many lives last year that American life expectancy dropped for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year. Two events took place on the opioid issue that explain a lot. The first was the reaction to AB 186 penned by an Assemblymember named Eggman (will I get her name if I marry her?). It turned out that that Humboldt County was one of a handful of counties with high, higher, highest, opioid over-dose deaths. It's prize was being included in a state sponsored drug injection harm reduction program. Supervisor Rex Bohn was furious at the very idea. This was a program not suitable for his Deep North County where "needle" was Code for "homeless bum."

What would the bill do? Please read this: It would "authorize specified counties or cities within those counties to authorize the operation of supervised injection services programs for adults that satisfies specified requirements, including, among other things, a hygienic space supervised by health care professionals, as defined, where people who use drugs can consume pre-obtained drugs, sterile consumption supplies, and access to referrals to substance use disorder treatment."

There's more "The bill would exempt a person from existing criminal sanctions solely for actions or conduct on the site of a safer drug consumption services program for adults authorized by a city, county, or city and county."

I mean, is this a warm wind from Sacramento or what? *Nanny State crap*, say the people that Rex Bohn thinks are the people. *Why it's amnesty for junkies!!!* It got so bad, press reports note, that Supes Chair Virginia Bass needed to intervene and offer her more moderate, Centrist really, letter. Still there was a tone of *Why us* in the Bass letter to the unfortunate Eggman, a chill when she states for the Board that "*Humboldt County is not prepared for injection facilities....*" and that "*an injection services program is not part of the county's approach. Please remove etc.*"

Who knew, not poor Eggman, that everybody had already nodded out over another drug that's the Official One, riding to approval on the warm fartish wind of federal money to the tune of 4.8 million dollars, -- **Methadone Centers?** Sort of. Call them Hubs, not Centers. This is what they call them up in cool hip Bernie-land Vermont. And it is **not Methadone**, it's brand new and better, and no needles are involved, (but they can be) and most important you shouldn't get any pleasure out of it, (but dammit you still can,) and it is called **Buprenorphine**. Actually it is a weaker version of Methadone. I guess they found out people take Methadone for pleasure. Under the brand name Subutex there is a thriving European black market in Buprenorphine.

This big bucks deal was announced at the well attended public meeting that Bass had with Huffman, our Congressman, on the topic of opioids. I knew they were up to something, something phony yet attractive, like the strategy of *HousingFirstReadMyLipsNever*. **Buprenorphine Hubs** are the answer, offering to vulnerable people punishment way before pleasure, as is usual with liberal/conservative compromise that has been running the show since forever.

The fed program is a catch and (don't quite) release strategy. You would go to the Hub to get your tab or powder and commit yourself to an eternal probation of AA type self-examination centers. Over cigarettes and coffee. Swallowing not shooting up what the fed's best friend, Big Pharma, has to offer, paying lip service meanwhile to the rehab jargon of the moment.

So out with the Calstate program which would domesticate drug users, giving them what *they* want, not what *you* want for them. Worse, it appears the County is responsible for providing the hygienic space and the sterile supplies, along with the educated browbeating and the fresh jargon to teach — and no millions of dollars. And where's the payoff for Big Pharma? The drug users bring *preobtained* drugs! WTF. As for the warm wind from Sacramento, Assemblymember Eggman, the people of the Deep North, Rex Bohn's people, much prefer a colder approach. Climate change is not appropriate here.

Paul Encimer, *ThePeoplesWhistle*