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July 28, 2021

To:

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Plea to call for an immediate extraordinary session to address the intolerable proliferation of illegal marijuana farms across CA.

Dear Governor Newsom,

The Homestead Valley Community Council (HVCC) was formed in 1996 to address all matters affecting the Morongo Basin unincorporated communities of Yucca Mesa, Flamingo Heights, Landers, and Johnson Valley in San Bernardino County. We are comprised of delegates appointed through the community associations of each of these member communities. We are proud California communities writing you for help.

We are in crisis! There is an ongoing proliferation of illegal marijuana grow farms throughout the state, now reaching a magnitude of epic proportion. Communities like ours are being devastated by the deleterious impacts these unregulated illicit farms bring.

The matter has gotten worse in recent months and will likely get even more dreadful if nothing is done immediately. In April it was estimated about 900 illegal marijuana farms existed in San Bernardino County alone. In just three short months that number has grown to almost 1200 illicit farms.

Prop 64 (AUMA), the voter initiative that legalized adult marijuana use, promised it would end the black-market growth and sale of illicit marijuana in California. Instead, Prop 64 has caused an explosion of unlicensed, unregulated, unlawful grow farms that operate in plain sight with no fear of consequence. They tax local water resources, bring criminal elements into our once safe communities, cause ecological damage through irresponsible open discard of trash and human waste, and through the use of dangerous pesticides they devastate wildlife all the way up the food chain.

The problems these illegal grow farms impose unfortunately don't end there. The legal industry has suffered from the flood of this almost endless black-market marijuana supply, causing tax revenues expected from legal sales to fall far short of expectations. Furthermore, the operators of these farms pay no income tax, no capital gains tax, no employee tax, no regulation and production fees, and collect no sales tax when they sell their illicit product. This is infuriating!

HVCC is not calling for legislative intervention on the adult personal growth and use of marijuana made legal through AUMA. We are only seeking remedy on the few sentences in Section 8 of AUMA that downgraded the penalties and fines for illegally growing and selling marijuana from the dissuasive felony status to the inconsequential minor misdemeanor. Recently both our County Board of Supervisors and state water contractor Mojave Water Agency unanimously passed resolutions calling for legislative intervention to reinstate the felony penalty and fines that Prop 64 took away. Public statements from law enforcement on the front lines identify the felony downgrade as THE cause of this scourge. It has made it impossible for them to respond effectively as indicated by the ever-expanding number of these illicit farms appearing daily.

We understand that no new bills can be submitted in the regular legislative session this year, however as Governor you can call upon the legislature to convene a special session to specifically address this matter. The legislature has the authority to address Prop 64 and its failure to achieve its purpose and intent to end illegally grown and sold marijuana in California.

We hope you realize the urgency of immediate legislative intervention. We cannot

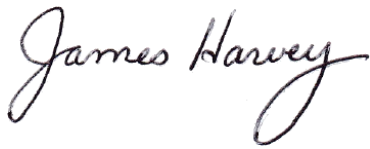
wait until next year. The problem is growing at a rate that makes the potential for further devastation unimaginable and in some cases likely unrecoverable.

Governor Newsom, please use your authority to immediately call the state legislature into special extraordinary session to tackle this problem. Your leadership on this urgent matter will send a strong message to the rest of the Country that California can adopt legal adult marijuana use policy that works. Right now we do not have that.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

James Harvey

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Harvey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent initial "J".

President, Homestead Valley Community Council
(On behalf of HVCC)