



NEWS RELEASE

San Bernardino County
Supervisor Dawn Rowe

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Board of Supervisors Proposes \$10.4 Million in Funding to Tackle Vacation Rentals and Illegal Marijuana Farms

SAN BERNARDINO – More than \$10 million to tackle illegal marijuana farms, short-term rental abuses, snow-play nuisances, and other key community concerns will be included in the 2021-22 County Budget under a proposal supported on Tuesday by Supervisor Dawn Rowe and her colleagues on the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors during a budget workshop.

“The main reason I wanted to serve on the Board of Supervisors is to give a voice to the rural residents of my district,” said Rowe, who serves as Vice Chair of the Board. “This budget proposal is a significant step towards providing a solution to outlying desert and mountain communities that have been overwhelmed by tourism and overrun by illegal marijuana farms.

Spurred by the passage of Proposition 64, which reduced illegal cannabis cultivation to a misdemeanor offense, the number of illegal marijuana farms in the county has exploded. Despite efforts by county Code Enforcement and Sheriff’s Department personnel to shut down these sites, they continue to increase at a rate that outpaces available resources.

“I have heard it said before that illegal cannabis cultivation is a victimless crime, but this is not the case in my district,” Rowe said. “This activity has significant impacts on our water supply with illegal wells and connections, in addition to the herbicides and pesticides that could very likely leech into our groundwater.”

“Not only that, but our Sheriff’s Department is aware that many of these illegal grows have a nexus with organized criminal enterprises. Our residents do not feel safe in their own homes and neighborhoods, and that is no way to live.” Rowe added.

Rowe also applauded plans to provide more funding for vacation rental compliance and snow play-related nuisances. Rowe’s district includes Big Bear Valley and Joshua Tree, two areas of the county that are continually plagued by problems associated with high volumes of tourists.

“In the mountains we see illegal parking and littering from snow play visitors, while desert residents are concerned about the disruptive behavior of vacation rental guests in their neighborhoods. We need more boots on the ground in terms of Code Enforcement personnel if we are serious about cracking down on these illegal activities,” added Rowe.

The Board of Supervisors is expected to adopt the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins July 1, at one of its June board meetings.

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