



NEWS RELEASE

San Bernardino County
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Board of Supervisors Adopts Resolution Urging State to Increase Penalties for Illegal Cannabis Cultivation

SAN BERNARDINO – During their Tuesday meeting, Vice Chair Dawn Rowe presented, and the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved, a resolution urging California lawmakers to increase criminal penalties for illegal cannabis cultivation. Proposition 64, a statewide initiative that was approved by voters in 2016, reduced penalties for illegal cultivation from a felony to a misdemeanor offense.

In addition, Proposition 64 created a state licensing program for cannabis retail and cultivation. However, sellers and growers cannot obtain a license from the California Bureau of Cannabis Control unless local jurisdictions allow for such activities. Currently, cannabis retail and cultivation are prohibited in all unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County.

“The proliferation of illegal farms in our county is evidence that cannabis laws at the state level aren’t working,” said Rowe. “State legislators need to step up for our rural communities by approving legislation to make illegal cultivation a felony offense once again.”

Illegal cannabis cultivation carries a \$500 fine under current state law, which is a paltry amount considering many of these crops are producing millions of dollars in annual revenue. A provision in Proposition 64 allows the State Legislature to amend the measure through legislation, though it requires a two-thirds majority of both houses to pass.

Since the enactment of Proposition 64, there has been a 224% increase in the seizure of illegal cannabis plants in San Bernardino County. In total, the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department believes there are 861 illegal cannabis farms operating throughout the county.

“This isn’t a situation that can be solved solely through enhanced enforcement,” asserted Rowe. “The county is committing millions of dollars in funding to eradicate this problem, but it isn’t sustainable in the long run. Consequently, this is why it’s so important for state officials to intervene and provide relief to local governments, communities, and citizens who are struggling with the unintended and dangerous consequences that were created by Proposition 64.”

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