



NEWS RELEASE
San Bernardino County
Supervisor Dawn Rowe

CONTACT:

Matt Knox
Chief of Staff
(909) 387-4855

Supervisor.Rowe@bos.sbcounty.gov

August 10, 2021

Board of Supervisors Adopts Stricter Penalties Targeting Illegal Cannabis Growers

SAN BERNARDINO – The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted an urgency ordinance to immediately increase penalties for illegal commercial cannabis cultivation in the unincorporated areas of the county. Law enforcement officials estimate there are over 1,000 active cannabis farms, with most of them concentrated in the rural, desert areas of San Bernardino County.

“The Board of Supervisors delivered on our promise to aggressively tackle the illegal cannabis problem that is devastating our rural communities,” said Supervisor Dawn Rowe. “The goal of the urgency ordinance that went into effect today is to hold illegal growers accountable and send a message that they are not welcome in San Bernardino County.”

The ordinance approved during Tuesday’s board meeting drastically increases criminal and civil fines for growers and property owners who allow the activity to occur on their land. Previously, violators of the county’s prohibition on cannabis cultivation were subject to \$100, \$200, and \$500 criminal or administrative fines for first, second, and third offenses, respectively, over a 12-month period. Under the provisions of the new fine structure, violators will now face \$1,000, \$1,500, and \$3,000 per day fines for first, second, and third offenses, respectively, for illegal farms with fewer than 200 plants. For cannabis farms with more than 200 plants, illegal growers will now be subject to daily \$3,000, \$6,000, and \$10,000 fines for non-compliance.

“I want to thank all of the passionate residents who made their voices heard throughout the process of developing this ordinance,” added Rowe. “They played an integral part in raising public awareness about this problem”

Earlier this year, the Board of Supervisors approved \$4 million in direct funding to the Sheriff’s Department to increase the number of Marijuana Enforcement Teams (MET) from one to five. MET is responsible for serving search warrants at suspected illegal grow sites. County Code Enforcement also received a funding boost in the current fiscal year budget for five additional officers that will be dedicated to cannabis enforcement activities.

####