
From: Brian Comnes <bcomnes@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2026 11:45 AM

To: eventura@haugebrueck.com; info@cityofsuttercreek.org; Pam Caronongan <pcaronongan@cityofsuttercreek.org>; jsierk@cityofsuttercreek.org; jswift@cityofsuttercreek.org; Dan Riordan <driordan@cityofsuttercreek.org>; Claire Gunselman <cgunselman@cityofsuttercreek.org>; sfeist@cityofsuttercreek.org

Subject: Comments to Planning Commissioners for the July 8, 2026 meeting

Note to City Recorder - Pease make this correspondence part of the administrative record for July 8, 2026 Planning Commission dispensary hearing.

We urge you to reject the dispensary application, the proposed ordinance changes and the other recommendations put before you by City staff for July 8 meeting. Approving a cannabis dispensary in Sutter Creek would be a shame.

The dispensary application before you is for a business currently illegal in Sutter Creek, not to mention the whole of Amador County and over half the cities and towns throughout the state. You have an opportunity to keep it that way.

The City staff recommendations will certainly advance the cultural degradation of our City - The Jewel of the Mother Lode.

Assertions and decisions by City staff that a dispensary is not a threat to public health and safety are disingenuous and openly ignore a large body of evidence that has been submitted to you by myself and others in your agenda materials.

The CEQA exemption is clearly in error for reasons detailed by Amador County's letters submitted to you in response to this application. Do not approve the faulty CEQA exemption before you.

The development agreement is admitted by City staff as a way to avoid a citizen vote for a new tax required by California constitution. That 8% tax and 1% community fund requirement are both taxes paid by applicants customers. New taxes, under the California constitution require a vote of the people. You don't even have a vote from the City Council for the tax. All the Council did on 2/17 was approve (by 3-2 vote) that staff explore and report back to them on a "pilot" project. (see minutes of 2/17 Council Meeting.) They also voted that night unanimously to return the study results direct to themselves not the Planning Commission. Yet here it is before you as resolutions for approval to modify City Code/Ordinances.

The recommended approvals come from unelected staff, not the Council. The conditional use permit and site plan simply ignore health and safety impacts of selling \$42million of high potency THC products in our City. In spite of numerous letters to you outlining documented

evidence of THC harm and pitfalls, City staff is asking you to ignore these critical factors required to meet the standards of public health and welfare as required by CEQA, the County General Plan and charter of the Planning Commission. Don't approve those items.

Amador County and all its incorporated cities all currently prohibit such dispensaries, including Sutter Creek. Let's keep it that way.

Question 1 - How can you even process an application for a use permit for a business that is still illegal in the City? Until the ordinance banning dispensaries is amended, your response to applicant should have been a quick declination. In effect you are investing City effort and time into pursuing an illegal operation.

Question 2 - At City Council's June 1 meeting there was a review of the draft City Budget. City manager reported this:

"With the ongoing collection of Measure P (Transaction and Use Tax) funds into our baseline planning, as well as some generous donors and grants, and impact fees from Valley View Commons apartments, the City is well-positioned to address critical infrastructure needs while maintaining healthy reserves. "

So why do we need a dispensary?

Question 3 - Why should Sutter Creek join the minority of cities and towns that allow dispensaries?

- Of California's 58 counties only 24 allow some form of retail cannabis, meaning roughly 59% of counties ban recreational dispensary sales.
- Of California's 482 municipalities (cities) only 161 permit dispensaries, which means roughly 67% of California cities ban recreational dispensaries (321 of 482).

Why is that ?

Question 4 - Extra revenue is enticing, but at what cost to the safety and health youth? The applicant's 5 year business plan is clear. They expect to sell \$42mm of THC products in our community. That is a lot of THC product that will "leak" out to our youth community. ACUSD made it clear that they expect drug use in our schools to go up if you approve this application. Don't do it!

Today, ACUSD reports one in four of their 11th graders are reporting usage of Marijuana. See the chart.

Amador County Unified School District CA Healthy Kids Survey Summary of Reported Marijuana Use

CHKS 24/25	Student Sample:	Marijuana (smoke, vape, eat, or drink) (Age of Onset)
7th	344	5% (age 10-14yrs) 95% (never have used)
9th	341	20%(age 10-16yrs) 79% (never have used)
11th	181	27% (age 10-17yrs) 74% (never have used)

Question 5 - What about property taxes? A Sutter Creek dispensary forces County to deal with the documented problems related to THC. In response to you RFC, Amador County was very clear they expect their costs to go up with NO access to that bonus

revenue. The result - we all will pay more property tax to cover that!

Question 6 -What is the likely cultural degradation to the Jewel of the Mother Lode.? Applicant openly sells "getting high." Applicant prides itself in its ability to "destigmatize" cannabis in the face of a lot of evidence that high potency THC has known negative effects. At near 90% concentrations, THC is not a "wellness" product as claimed by vendor. That impaired experience is what the applicant actively markets and sells.



Question 7 - What other establishments in Sutter Creek sell products that require a vendor funded youth safety education program? Applicant itself, in essence, is admitting that THC is really bad for kids and that is why they throw in a "youth education" program. The hypocritical part is applicant's corporate mission is to "destigmatize" the marijuana experience and help you "discover you high" once you get a little older. Teens quickly see the cynicism that juxtaposition of "its bad now, but something good to discover later." Teens quickly get cynical of being told THC is bad but see the City condoning (requiring?) more drug sales.

Question 8 - Who has been reaching out to City Council on this issue? What do they think? A review of correspondence received by Council yields the following data. It's clear that those who bother to reach out reject a dispensary 8 to 1.

council date	Council correspondence received	
	against	for
2/17	0	0
3/2	4	0
3/16	60	6
4/6	7	1
4/20	3	0
5/4	0	0
5/18	2	0
6/1	3	4
6/15	1	1
Total to date	80	12

Other information to consider:

- There is more and more evidence that cannabis, particularly that containing THC, is not a healthy product (see web links and attachments that follow).
- The Amador Highway Patrol DUI data related to marijuana DUI's show increased arrests since state legalization in 2017 (from 86 in 2016, 126 in 2017, 114 in 2018, 120 in 2019, 107 in 2020).
- Dispensaries require a security guard. What does this suggest about the nature of applicant business?
- Here is what California's Dept. Cannabis control has to say

Mental Health

There are potential risks to your mental health from cannabis use.

Research suggests that mental health disorders may develop or worsen from:

- Daily cannabis use
- Near-daily cannabis use
- Higher-potency cannabis use

These types of use have been linked to Cannabis Use Disorder, and may lead to:

- Hallucinations
- Thoughts of self harm
- Schizophrenia
- Suicide attempts
- Depression
- Suicide
- Anxiety
- Temporary psychosis

Minors and Young Adults

Our brains actively develop until around the age of 25. Using cannabis regularly while younger can cause long-term problems with thinking and mental health.

Parents, be aware. Edibles and other cannabis products can be mistaken for food or candy. Like medications, you should keep cannabis products in child-resistant packaging. Store and dispose of cannabis products where they cannot be easily seen or accessed by children and pets.

California Poison Control: (800) 222-1222
 Animal Poison Control: (888) 426-4435
 Dept of Cannabis Control: cannabis.ca.gov
 Dept of Public Health: cdph.ca.gov



**Department of
Cannabis Control**
CALIFORNIA

If raising revenue is the primary impetus for amending the cannabis ordinance in order to permit a dispensary, can't we find healthier ways to raise revenue?

We urge you to not turn to drug profits to fund City needs. Protect Amador Teens! Please reject this application and its supporting documents.

Sincerely,

Brian and Barbara Comnes,

Sutter Creek

list of attachments

===== NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS OF CANNABIS =====

1. SAMHSA Know the Effects, Risks and Side Effects of Marijuana <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/learn/marijuana/risks>
2. CDC Cannabis <https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/index.html>
3. NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE How Cannabis Use Impacts Long-Term Health <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/how-cannabis-use-impacts-long-term-health>
4. Frontiers in Psychiatry The Behavioral Sequelae of Cannabis Use in Healthy People <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychiatry/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2021.630247/full>
5. CU Anschutz Medical Campus Largest Study Ever Done on Cannabis and Brain Function Finds Impact on Working Memory <https://news.cuanschutz.edu/news-stories/largest-study-ever-done-on-cannabis-and-brain-function-finds-impact-on-working-memory>
6. Mayo Clinic Most of the side effects of cannabis are due to the THC content. But different types of cannabis have different amounts of THC. This can make it very hard to know the right amount to take. The side effects seem to be worse the higher the dose of THC a person uses. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-marijuana/art-20364974>
7. Extract from DCCC flyer

7 attachments



flyer.png
316K

 **Tsamhsa the Effects, Risks and Side Effects of Marijuana (Weed, Cannabis, THC) _ SAMHSA.pdf**
433K

 **MAYO Marijuana - Mayo Clinic.pdf**
226K

 **Frontiers _ The Behavioral Sequelae of Cannabis Use in Healthy People_ A Systematic Review.pdf**
1193K

 **CDC Cannabis Health Effects _ Cannabis and Public Health _ CDC.pdf**
193K

 **NW How Cannabis Use Impacts Long-Term Health _ Northwestern Medicine.pdf**
216K

 **ANSCHUTZ Largest Study Ever Done on Cannabis and Brain Function Finds Impact on Working Memory.pdf**
3884K