

Hello, my name is Suzanne Houck and I have lived in the beautiful town of Sutter Creek for 10 years.

Thank you City Counsel for giving me the time to express my grave concerns regarding Embarq coming to Sutter Creek.

The following few things are from Glen Spitzer, the Director of Amador General Services Administration who gave me permission to share this information.

Behavioral/Mental Health

The three relevant County departments impacted within this category are located in the Health and Human Services Building on Ridge Road. I heard from Behavioral Health Director, Melissa Cranfill, From Public Health Director, Joanne Hasson, and from Social Services Director, Anne Watts. All expressed various concerns around increased access and use of marijuana by Amador County youth due to the fact that the proposed facility is in proximity to Jackson Junior High, the County's two public high schools, and North Star Academy.

This concern is consistent with those expressed to me by Wendy Alt, the Behavioral Health Director for Calaveras County. Retail facilities are legal in Calaveras County. With widespread commercial access, marijuana use is now rampant among adolescents at both the high schools and the junior high schools, where vape devices are routinely confiscated from students. This problem is not unique to Calaveras. The Street Journal (March 4, 2026) recently detailed an explosion of marijuana use at top-ranked Liberty High School in San Diego following the proliferation of retail facilities in the city. High schools throughout the State are struggling to address the marijuana epidemic.

Marijuana advocates have pushed for legalization and widespread use on a twin message

1. Marijuana is harmless
2. Marijuana is good for you.

However, serious medical institutions are finally releasing comprehensive studies, and those studies disprove claims of net benefit and prove alarming detrimental impacts, especially for adolescents.

With all the new information, major institutions have reevaluated their position on marijuana.

The New York Times editorial board, for example, has long supported the legalization of marijuana, but changed its position a few months ago. The Times reported that "Big Weed" and other advocates falsely claimed "marijuana was a harmless drug that might even bring net health benefits" and that "legalization might not lead to greater use." The Times has changed course this year and acknowledged "...it is now clear that many of these predictions were wrong."

The Times noted that high potency cannabis increase the risk of psychosis five fold compared to non-users. They also found that chronic cannabis users have smaller volumes of the orbitofrontal cortex, a brain region implicated in motivation and the hippocampus, a brain area implicated in stress, learning and memory.

The problem is not merely in providing greater access to our youth, but in providing a THC product that is profoundly more powerful!

Many if not most of Embarq's products have a 90 +% THC content. This product is over 20Xs stronger than the marijuana in the 90's.

A typical joint from the 60's to the 90's had the equivalent of 5-10 milligrams of THC. For perspective, virtually every vape product sold by Embarq has over 800 milligrams of THC.

These Embarq products change everything. People used to argue that marijuana was a gateway drug ... the new and improved marijuana has now become the hardcore drug on the other side of that gate. With the new concentration levels, the THC products sold by Embarq are stronger than many street drugs and most prescription drugs. Studies have concluded that the explosion of psychotic disorders among our youth is not simply caused by greater access and normalization of marijuana use, but also from the use of marijuana that is 20xs stronger than the marijuana used in the past.

On a personal note, a few years ago our youngest son was smoking/vaping high potency THC oil regularly. We witnessed firsthand, in our home, the psychotic and hostile behavior that was the side effect of this horrible drug.

In the time I have left my deepest concern is for the youth in our community. They are the targets for all of these pot dispensaries. Regardless of the 21 year old requirement to buy, friends, family members, people selling on the street will get them what they want and these kids are ones who will suffer the horrible side effects of this new and improved pot. Sutter Creek has money in the coffers right now...surely you folks do not want to sacrifice our youth and our great community because you want to use pot to fix pot holes, use to pot to repair the streets...there are other options to making the needed money for these things. I implore you to not throw our youth and our community under the bus for dirty money. Please vote NO on Embarq!