



*Josephine County Board of Commissioners*

*Daniel E. DeYoung, Chair • Herman E. Baertschiger Jr., Vice Chair • Darin J. Fowler, Commissioner*

October 13, 2021

The Honorable Cliff Bentz  
U.S. House of Representatives, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
1239 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Federal Marijuana Enforcement

Dear Mr. Bentz:

Thank you for inquiring about the impact of unlawful cannabis production upon Southern Oregon. There are a variety of meaningful ways in which you can participate in the effort to reverse the present situation. Methods of assistance include:

- Encourage federal law enforcement, including the US Attorney's office, to make the investigate and prosecution of narco-networks their top priority for the next three years. We estimate that three years of intensive effort is required to drive the narco-networks out of our community and restabilize the situation. That timeline, though, depends upon securing indictments as swiftly as possible.
- Take all practical steps to ensure that no federally managed water (such as at Lost Creek Reservoir) is sold, lost, or otherwise provided to producers of unlawful cannabis. Encourage the strict enforcement of federal laws related to water theft and environmental degradation caused by unlawful cannabis production.
- Classify the "employment" of workers at unsanctioned cannabis farms as a presumptive human trafficking offense and prosecute the bosses accordingly. The attached letter that we sent to Governor Brown bears a brief description of the situation, including photos.
- Prompt the Internal Revenue Service to waive its valuation threshold when deciding whether to investigate ill-gotten funds that were derived from unlawful cannabis production.
- Make available long-term sources of federal funding that are dedicated to local law enforcement and civil code enforcement programs.
- Boost the capacity of federal crime lab resources and make those resources available to state and local investigators, including land use code enforcement investigators.
- Make asset forfeiture a presumptive component of prosecutions resulting from unlawful cannabis production, regardless of the valuation threshold.
- Encourage members of congress and their staff to participate in flyovers of the region in order to personally observe the awful breadth of the problem.

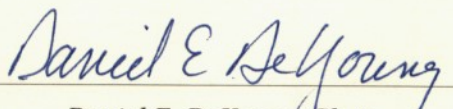
These are some ways in which you and your colleagues in congress can help eliminate unlawful cannabis production. Josephine County is hugely appreciative of any assistance you can provide. The county's point of contact in this matter is Sheriff Dave Daniel (541-474-5123).

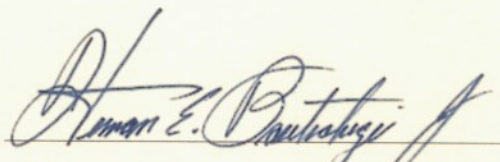
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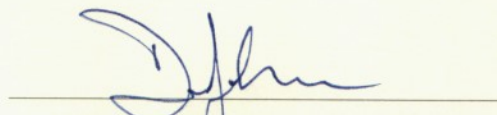
500 N.W. Sixth Street, Dept. 6, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526 • Phone: (541) 474-5221 Fax: (541) 474-5101

Best regards,

Board of County Commissioners

  
Daniel E. DeYoung, Chair

  
Herman E. Baertschiger Jr., Vice Chair

  
Darin J. Fowler, Commissioner



# Josephine County, Oregon

Daniel E. DeYoung, Herman E. Baertschiger Jr., and Darin J. Fowler

Josephine County Courthouse  
Board of Commissioners' Office  
500 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Dept 6  
Grants Pass, OR 97526  
(541) 474-5221 #2

August 4, 2021

Governor Kate Brown  
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254  
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Re: **Narco-slavery**

Dear Governor Brown,

**Narco-slavery** occurs when organized criminal networks intimidate, relocate, exploit and abuse their laborers. Unfortunately, one consequence of cannabis legalization has been a tragic surge in **narco-slavery**. During recent cannabis enforcement operations, Josephine County officials have witnessed the appalling conditions to which laborers in the unsanctioned cannabis industry are subjected. Such conditions include:

- Feces everywhere;
- No running water or bathing facilities;
- Unrefrigerated food and dangerously unsanitary cooking facilities;
- Sleeping in containers stacked three-high;
- Living in tents and plywood shanties.

Some photos of recent raid sites are enclosed.

Typically, after law enforcement releases these workers from custody they have nowhere to go. We assume that many or most workers eventually get collected by their illicit employers and relocated to the next exploitive operation. The purpose of this letter is to assist you, Director Steve Marks, Commissioner Val Hoyle and your staff in your effort to learn about the extent and severity of this problem. We want to work together with you to end this human tragedy immediately.

Josephine County's point of contact for this matter is Sheriff Dave Daniel (541-474-5123).

Please confirm that you have received and read this letter.

Sincerely,

Board of County Commissioners

Herman E. Baertschiger Jr., Vice-Chair

Daniel E. DeYoung, Chair

Darin J. Fowler, Commissioner



























