

**SISKIYOU COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
RESOLUTION**

**COUNTY 'STATE OF EMERGENCY' – PROLIFERATION OF ILLEGAL
CANNABIS CULTIVATION**

WHEREAS, the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) and its partner agencies have experienced the unprecedented proliferation of illicit cannabis cultivation sites throughout the county, both on public and private lands, which, on private property number at least 1500 to 2,000, overwhelming SCSO and partner agency resources; and

WHEREAS, during 2019 a SCSO team (Siskiyou Interagency Marijuana Investigation Team – SIMIT) has served 154 search warrants on private property illicit marijuana cultivation sites, seizing 44,369 illicit cannabis plants, 16,759.5 pounds of processed product, 15 firearms, and, during 2018, 21,426 illicit plants, 14,406 pounds of processed marijuana, and six (6) THC extraction ("Honey Oil") labs at numerous county locations were seized, which illustrates an alarming upward trend in proliferation; and

WHEREAS, during 2019, the North State Major Investigation Team (NSMIT), a regional California DOJ-led team with SCSO membership, seized 17,230 illegal plants, 1,044 pounds of processed marijuana, made eight (8) arrests, and during 2018, on Gazelle-Callahan Road, seized 5,071 illicit plants, and stopped an illegal operation that included 15 active greenhouses in the area; and,

WHEREAS, counter-drug operations on private and public property have identified nearly universal non-compliance with the county's ban on outdoor cultivation of cannabis and have uncovered hundreds of pervasive fire hazards, insecticides, pesticides, rodenticides, fertilizers, trash, and unsanitary conditions which severely impact health, safety and quality of life for countless county residents and led to 3 carbon monoxide deaths in 2018 and at least one similar death during 2019; and

WHEREAS, Siskiyou County is already overwhelmed with methamphetamine, heroin, prescription drugs, cocaine, and other illicit drugs; and a rising suicide and drug overdose rate, multiplying the impact the illicit cannabis drug trade exacts against our adults and children and the illegal customers in other states; and

WHEREAS, 1,500 to 2,000+ illicit cannabis cultivation sites in private property areas have established encampments where hundreds of people are living in unpermitted and illegally constructed dwellings without permitted sewage disposal systems or potable water supplies. Additionally, solid waste is not properly removed from the site and is either illegally burned on-site, accumulated on-site causing a vector attraction, buried on-site or left to blow into neighboring properties, all constitute maintenance of a public nuisance in violation of existing codes; and

WHEREAS, during 2019, SIMIT and NSMIT seizures of illegal marijuana plants and processed products totaled 61,599 plants, 17,763.5 pounds of processed product, and included the confiscation of 18 firearms, with total East Coast retail values ranging from \$369,594,000.00 to \$554,391,000.00 for the average 3-pound yield per plant for marijuana and values ranging from \$35,527,000.00 to \$53,290,500.00 for the processed marijuana, thus illustrating the fact Siskiyou County has become a major drug trafficking organization hub for the state and national; and,

WHEREAS, During 2019, on-highway seizures of illicit marijuana by SCSO totaled 63 illegal marijuana plants, 2,074.4 pounds of processed or partly-processed product ranging from \$4.2M to \$6.2M value; and

WHEREAS, the County Fire Warden has documented multiple fires starts that have been initiated in these encampments and at least two fires, in recent years, that have escaped and threatened life and property; and

WHEREAS, the emergency responders are not able to locate 911 callers living in encampments to render emergency services further risking the life and safety of occupants; and

WHEREAS, public land cannabis grow sites (mostly USFS), operated mostly by drug trafficking organizations in 2016 resulted in the seizure of 101,255 illicit plants, 2,850 pounds of processed product, and sadly led to the

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detection of dangerous conditions and illicit chemicals like "Carbofuran," a condition that still exists today, presenting a severe threat to citizens and the environment; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 3,000,000 gallons of water is being expended daily by illicit cannabis producers, depleting precious groundwater and surface water resources and these losses jeopardize the lawful agricultural, recreational, private and environmental use of water for thousands of residents; and

WHEREAS, site grading in excess of one acre, illegal timber conversion, illegal water diversions or unauthorized use of surface water without proper permits/authorization is occurring on a significant number of properties. The volume of properties and number of violations exceeds the capacity of local resources to effectively enforce provision to prevent further environmental damage and impacts to watercourses and fish populations; and

WHEREAS, during 2019, Siskiyou County has experienced an unprecedented level of violence associated with the marijuana industry, including a murder that occurred on February 7, 2019 (Hunter Sims), a double homicide that occurred on March 20, 2019 (Ms. Mor Hang, 81, and Ms. Rosey Vang, 49), and an attempted murder at a marijuana cultivation site, the murder of a man running a marijuana business (link not known), and, during a recent search warrant operation Sacramento County authorities arrested a murder suspect wanted in their jurisdiction for a marijuana-related homicide; and,

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors declares a "Local State of Emergency" due to the catastrophic impact illicit cannabis cultivation sites have had on public health, safety, and quality of life issues in the county. SCSO, local and regional resources have been exhausted and the "State of Emergency" can only be mitigated with additional assistance from federal, state, and/or regional resources due to the organized crime, interstate characteristics, nature, magnitude, and multi-billion dollar funding mechanisms that supports cannabis crime networks in the county.

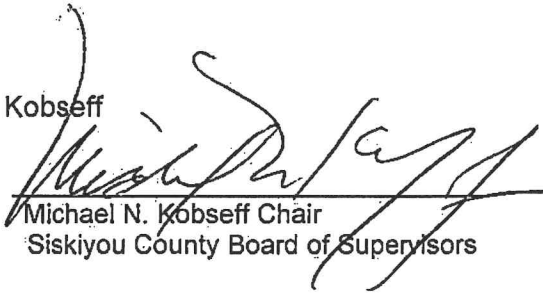
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors, pursuant to Government Code Section 8260(c) shall continue to review the need for continuing the local emergency at least once every 30-days until its termination is proclaimed by the Board of Supervisors; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors hereby Proclaims and Orders that during the existence of this local emergency, the powers, functions and duties of the Director of Emergency Services and the emergency organizations of this county shall be those prescribed by state law, ordinances, and resolutions of this county approved by the Board of Supervisors, and by the Siskiyou Operational Emergency Area Operations Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this declaration shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CAL OES) and that appropriate public safety-related resources be released to assist in recovery from this on-going disaster.

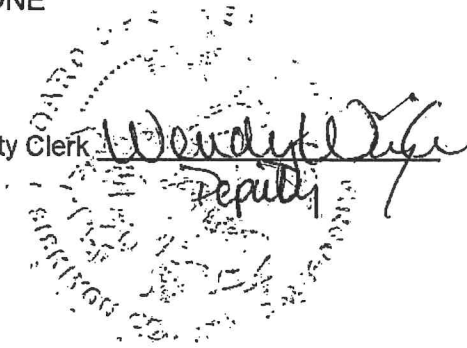
Passed and adopted this 21st day of January, 2020:

Ayes: Supervisors Haupt, Valenzuela, Nixon and Kobseff
Noes: NONE
Abstain: Supervisor Criss
Absent: NONE


Michael N. Kobseff Chair
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

Laura Bynum, County Clerk


Wendy L. Tige
Deputy