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STATEMENT TO THE NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Tuesday October 25, 2016

**NEVADA COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

EACH SUPERVISOR RECEIVED.

The Nevada County Cannabis Alliance is requesting the Board of Supervisors to amend section thirteen of this agenda item pertaining to Asset Forfeiture Distribution.

The section calls for all asset forfeiture to be distributed among the Nevada County Sheriff's Office, the District's Attorney, the Probation Department and the Grass Valley Police Department, with 80 percent of those funds going to the Sheriff's Office.

Although we support the mission of this new task force to diminish the issues caused by dangerous illegal substances such as heroin, opiates and methamphetamine, we disagree with the current distribution of any asset forfeitures....And believe that some of those funds should be distributed among county departments and local organizations that do amazing work to alleviate drug use and abuse in our county.

There are currently several drug programs in the county that are severely underfunded. Our own county's drug education trust receives a meager \$17,284 a year, while the alcohol education program receives \$211,062. The Coalition for a Drug-Free Nevada County and programs like C.O.R.R. could also benefit from the funds to carry out their mission.

The drug control strategy in our county has been approached primarily as a law enforcement issue. The Sheriff has done his job with arrests, drug seizures and incarceration of drug offenders yet drug problems in our county have not gone away. Heroin and Meth are currently destroying families in our community and fueling violent crime.

Yet the focus has been primarily on cannabis gardens, and compliance issues, which are issues that should be addressed by our zoning department. Not the Sheriff's Office.

Half of drug arrests in our country are for cannabis offenses. Non-violent drug-using offenders dominate police time, waste the time of courts and fill US prisons. The drug war has resulted in record-breaking prison populations.

Our county officials need to understand that this law enforcement paradigm has not worked, and that a shift in the way we treat the county's drug problems needs to happen now.

We need to be treating drug abuse as a health problem with social and economic implications.

The Alliance believes public health approaches, which focus on addicts and abusers, as well as social services will reduce many of the root causes of abuse. Making treatment services widely available undermines black markets and reduces the harms from drug abuse. And that can only be achieved if these programs are properly funded.

Drug offenders, particularly cannabis, should be the lowest law enforcement priority while violent criminals should be priority number one.

We hope the Task Force recognizes the threats of dangerous drugs on our streets, and that county officials recognize the need to fund programs that can tackle this issue from all sides.

Thank you.

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Director, Nevada County Cannabis Alliance

Jonathan Collier
Executive Board, Nevada County Cannabis Alliance
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