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**SYRCL to Nevada County:
'Prioritize Yuba Watershed Protections in Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance'**

Nevada City, CA – On February 25, 2019, the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) submitted a 15-page comment letter to Nevada County analyzing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on its proposed Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance (NCCO). The comments focused on the potential impacts to the health of the Yuba River watershed as commercial cannabis cultivation regulations and permitting are determined. “As the Yuba River is an economic driver, recreational treasure, and ecological stronghold within our community, SYRCL took our obligation to protect the Yuba River seriously and spoke on behalf of this resource in these comments,” said Melinda Booth, SYRCL’s Executive Director.

Overall, SYRCL had concerns that the NCCO fails to encourage legalization, which could have the unintended consequence of furthering the illegal market. The DEIR assumed one hundred percent utilization of eligible parcels by zoning—meaning that any parcel that *could* legally commercially cultivate cannabis per the NCCO *would* commercially cultivate. SYRCL found this assumption unrealistic and had concerns about the overarching implications of that assumption throughout the document. Further, the DEIR had limited mitigation measures overall, and the proposed “No Groundwater Cultivation” project alternative to the NCCO was infeasible. SYRCL’s full comments can be found online at <https://yubariver.org/issues/cannabis/cannabis-cultivation-in-nevada-county/>

“SYRCL urges the County to take this opportunity to formulate new policies regarding groundwater monitoring and extraction, to not only understand the impacts of commercial cannabis cultivation, but for the health of our community and the Yuba River watershed,” said Booth. “SYRCL appreciates the County’s time and dedication to the environmental review process of the NCCO, but our community and the Yuba River watershed need an accurate analysis of environmental impacts from existing, potential, and most likely commercial cannabis cultivation.”

On January 11, 2019, the County opened the public comment period for its Draft Environmental Impact Report for its proposed Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance. The public had 45 days to respond to this 1,400-page document. To assist community members wishing to understand the document and submit comments, SYRCL held a “DEIR Public Comment” workshop on February 12, 2019. SYRCL anticipates holding another workshop as additional documents such as the Final EIR and final version of the ordinance are released for public review. More information at <https://yubariver.org/issues/cannabis/>

About SYRCL

The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) is the leading voice for the protection and restoration of the Yuba River watershed. Founded in 1983 through a rural, grassroots campaign to defend the South Yuba River from proposed hydropower dams, SYRCL has developed into a vibrant community organization with more than 3,500 members and volunteers. See: www.yubariver.org.

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