



California Fish and Game Wardens' Association The Thin Green Line

September 21, 2010

PRESS RELEASE * PRESS RELEASE *** PRESS RELEASE**

California Game Warden Association Opposes Marijuana Initiative

The Department of Fish and Game Law Enforcement Division mission is to protect the habitat, water, wildlife and fisheries of California while providing public safety and maintaining a highly trained and professional workforce to continue that protection into the future. This service benefits every person. The California Fish and Game Wardens' Association (CFGWA) works to protect wildlife resources and Wardens. Proposition 19, the Marijuana Legalization Initiative, will place this mission in peril.

We have stated repeatedly our environment is under siege and cultivation of marijuana will make things worse, having a direct negative impact upon all fish and wildlife, natural landscapes, the quality of our water, and our ability of only a handful of Game Wardens to provide natural resources protection and public safety.

Members of the CFGWA oppose the initiative to legalize marijuana in California. Wardens are on the front line of the fight against International Drug Trafficking Organizations and their illegal marijuana grows in California's remote locations. Wardens are confident that legalization of marijuana will provide a cover for drug trafficking organizations to grow even more marijuana in California's wild.

California is the 3rd largest state in the U.S. and one of only five geographical areas globally with a Mediterranean climate of hot, dry summers and cool wet winters. California has millions of remote acres prime for marijuana cultivation. If marijuana cultivation is legalized in California the Mexican drug cartels will continue to grow on our lands; we can expect the violence in California to continue and increase in the outdoors. Also, they are the origin of numerous forest fires.

"Marijuana growers threaten public safety, poach our wildlife, pollute the land, and destroy habitat - all in the name of drug profits," stated Jerry Karnow, President of the CFGWA. Wardens have seen first-hand the dangers growers pose. Wardens have been involved in five Officer Involved Shootings in marijuana grow sites in the last five years; the latest violent confrontation was in August 2010.

The CFGWA estimates at least 1,000 illegal large-scale marijuana grows (1,000+ plants each) exist in California's remote places. These are the places where citizens hike, fish and hunt, and are the patrol districts of a Game Warden. While the threat to public safety from armed marijuana growers is the most serious problem, the environmental damage associated with marijuana grows of this magnitude is staggering. Animal carcasses of illegally killed wildlife, killing of deer herds, using peanut butter mixed with poison to kill bears, filthy camps of trash and human waste, copious quantities of fertilizers, pesticides, plant hormones, and rodent killers are the norm in these grow sites. Creeks are sometimes completely drained to provide water for the marijuana, depriving fish and wildlife of their most basic need. And habitat is destroyed to make way for the marijuana. For every acre of land used for marijuana cultivation it adversely effects 10 acres of land and natural resources around that site.

Wardens regularly contact growers while on patrol. Legalization of marijuana will make it much more difficult for Wardens to keep violent drug traffickers from our remote wild places.

Contact: Jerry Karnow, Jr., President, CFGWA (530) 575-5974