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# California State Senate

COMMITTEES  
GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATION  
TRANSPORTATION

SENATOR  
**SCOTT WILK**  
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER  
TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



June 18, 2021

The Honorable Rob Bonta  
Attorney General, State of California  
California Department of Justice  
1300 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Attorney General Bonta,

As you are undoubtedly aware, illegal marijuana grows across the state are becoming increasingly problematic for law enforcement, legal marijuana growers, and residents of the communities where these illicit operations are based. The impact these grows have on the legal marijuana market and the abhorrent human rights violations that regularly occur at the behest of growers cannot be overstated.

Just last week in and around our respective districts, the largest raid in Los Angeles County history occurred with over 400 officers involved in confiscating more than 74 tons of illegally cultivated marijuana. Though these grows are happening throughout the state, the areas we represent, which are in the rural portions of both Los Angeles & San Bernardino counties, have experienced a tremendous increase in this type of illegal activity. In light of this, we would like to personally request the following:

- First, that you increase the amount of resources allocated to the “Campaign Against Marijuana Planting” task force in order to better support local law enforcement efforts throughout the state to eliminate illegal grows.
- Second, we want to reiterate our invitation for you to visit the High Desert region, so that you can see firsthand the problems described above, and have a dialogue with our local law enforcement agencies on how your office and local enforcement can work together to keep our communities safe. This will provide our enforcement agencies with a statewide perspective, and the opportunity to interface directly with you to see what resources can be utilized to aid their efforts.

You are uniquely positioned to provide much-needed financial and technical support to enforcement efforts in our community, and we look forward to working with you towards this end.

Your assistance is needed now more than ever. There is substantial data, jurisprudence, and anecdotal evidence to suggest that the illegal marijuana market impacts legal producers. In fact, while legal cannabis sales in California will grow to \$7.2 billion by 2024, illegal sales will still hit \$6.4 billion that year. To put it simply, law-abiding, regulated growers simply cannot compete in a market flooded with illegal product. This devastates not only the families of these farmers but also their communities which rely on these small businesses for tax revenue and employment opportunities.

Some areas of California have experienced a 300 percent increase in the number of criminal cannabis operations. In recent months, high-profile incidents have occurred at several illegal marijuana operations across Southern California. In the rural areas of California, these grows are often guarded by heavily armed cartels who intimidate local residents into giving up land and water. As law enforcement officials have busted more of these rings, they have also discovered that these operations take advantage of minors and undocumented immigrants by forcing them to work the grows under threat of death or injury.

We appreciate your attention to this request. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by emailing me at [Senator.Wilk@senate.ca.gov](mailto:Senator.Wilk@senate.ca.gov) or calling my office at (916) 651-4021.

Sincerely,



Senate Republican Leader Scott Wilk  
21<sup>st</sup> Senate District



Assemblyman Thurston "Smitty" Smith  
33<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District



Assemblyman Tom Lackey  
36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District