

# California: Plans to Address Carpinteria's Odor Issue Discussed

## County Plan to Address “Skunky” Cannabis Smell in Carpinteria Valley Presented Amid Resident Concerns

A plan aimed at reducing the pervasive “skunky” smell of cannabis in the Carpinteria Valley was presented to the Planning Commission this week, but residents voiced their concerns, claiming the proposal did not go far enough.

### Tackling Odor Complaints

The proposal, developed by the **County Planning & Development Department**, introduces a system where inspectors equipped with “trained noses” would investigate odor complaints near the cannabis greenhouses in the valley. The region has become a hub for cannabis cultivation in greenhouses, but the strong odor associated with cannabis has sparked ongoing complaints from locals.

To address these complaints, inspectors would measure the intensity of the smell at the greenhouse property lines using **Nasal Rangers**, handheld devices resembling oversized hair dryers. If the odor of cannabis is rated by an inspector as stronger than “noticeable” and persists for at least three minutes, the growers would be required to take immediate action. This could involve adjusting their odor control systems, performing diagnostic testing, or installing more advanced technology to contain the smell.

### Inspections and Enforcement

Under the plan, county inspectors would continue conducting **quarterly inspections** of the greenhouses during the first year of operation, as they currently do, but these visits would drop to annual, unannounced inspections in subsequent years.

A key addition to the new regulations is the installation of **run-time meters** by the cannabis growers. These devices would monitor when odor control systems are functioning, helping ensure compliance with the county’s guidelines and making it easier for inspectors to determine if the technology was effectively mitigating odors at any given time.

### Objective Standards for Odor Control

The proposed amendments to the county’s **2018 cannabis ordinance** are intended to create “an objective standard or threshold that is measurable and enforceable,” according to a staff report presented to the Planning Commission. This would allow the Planning & Development Department to better evaluate and enforce cannabis-related nuisance odors in the valley, a frequent source of complaints from residents and neighboring businesses.

For the changes to be implemented, the odor control measures would first require a **recommendation from the Planning Commission**, followed by a **majority vote from the County Board of Supervisors**, and finally approval from the **State Coastal Commission**. This regulatory process could take more than a year to complete.

### **Resident Reactions: Not Far Enough**

While the county's proposal attempts to address ongoing odor issues, it has not been well-received by all residents. A flurry of letters to the Planning Commission expressed dissatisfaction, with many arguing that the plan doesn't go far enough to tackle the pungent smell that regularly affects the valley.

Some residents are concerned that the three-minute threshold is too lenient and that allowing odors to persist for this length of time could continue to disrupt daily life in Carpinteria. Others question whether the existing technology is sufficient to effectively control the odor, and some have called for more stringent measures, such as reducing the number of greenhouses or limiting cannabis cultivation altogether.

### **Next Steps**

The county's [proposed amendments](#) reflect a growing effort to balance the booming cannabis industry with the quality of life for residents in the valley. As the plan moves through the necessary approvals, both growers and residents will likely continue to weigh in on what constitutes a fair and effective approach to cannabis odor management. While the plan is seen as a step in the right direction by some, others are pushing for stricter rules to mitigate the smell more comprehensively.

The final decision on the plan's implementation could take months, if not longer, as it moves through multiple levels of review and public scrutiny.

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