

**For Immediate Release**

July 27, 2021

**Contact:** George Khalaf

[george@theresolute.group](mailto:george@theresolute.group)

480-560-5917

## **More Than Double The Signatures Necessary Submitted To Put Unwanted And Unneeded Bonita Marijuana Facility On The Ballot.**

*Group Asks Supervisors To Rescind Approval, As Law Allows.*

### **Group Says It will Now Turn Attention To Helping Put Marijuana Tax On Ballot Too.**

**(Safford, Ariz.)** Opponents of a massive marijuana operation planned for Bonita have filed 2,288 petition signatures, more than double the amount required, seeking to put the unpopular and unneeded facility to a public vote.

On June 21st, the Graham County Board of Supervisors approved the facility. County Supervisor Danny Smith, whose district includes Bonita, voted no. Dozens of residents, many of whom live near the site, have spoken in opposition to the pot facility at the June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and in previous meetings. Indeed, the Graham County Planning and Zoning Commission **twice rejected** the facility; in December 2020 with a vote of 7 to 1, and in June 2021 with a vote of 5 to 1.

Last year voters in Graham County rejected Proposition 207, the legalization of recreational marijuana, by the largest margin in Arizona, 57% to 43%. It failed in Bonita by nearly three-to-one.

Given the overwhelming opposition to recreational marijuana and the controversial Bonita facility, a referendum petition drive was launched to put the issue to a public vote, as Arizona state law permits.

On Tuesday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2,288 signatures were handed in to the Graham County Clerk. 1,064 valid signatures are required. The large number of signatures were collected in just 13 days and well in advance of the time period deadline set by Graham County of August 5<sup>th</sup>.

This petition is only concerned with preventing an unwanted and unneeded giant marijuana grow operation from opening in Graham County. It seeks to carry out the will of the voters, which was ignored by two of the three Graham County Supervisors. Graham County residents do not want their community to become the marijuana capital of Arizona, as evidenced by the number of people who signed the petition and the growing number of people opposed to the giant Bonita pot facility.

The overwhelming number of signatures was achieved despite harassment and bizarre tactics from the pot facility's hired guns.

The Chairman of the PAC leading the effort, George Khalaf said, "Graham County's substantial opposition to Prop 207 should have sent a clear message to all Graham County elected leaders to respect the will of the people. That didn't happen when two of the three County Supervisors voted in favor of the pot facility. This referendum seeks to right that wrong." Khalaf was involved in the campaign to defeat Proposition 207 last year.

Because of its prolific ability to collect signatures, Khalaf said the group will now aim to assist an effort getting an initiative to the ballot to impose additional taxes on marijuana within Graham County. “They clearly need the help, and our group is happy to do so,” Khalaf said. Those efforts will start soon.

Unlike the referendum petitions which must be submitted within 30 days, the effort to qualify for an initiative for the 2022 ballot has many months.

“We think that group has an interesting idea and Graham County voters should have a chance to vote on it during next year’s election,” Khalaf said.

As noted, the Supervisors could reverse their June approval as a matter of law rather than put the voters through the acrimony, especially since they already voted against recreational marijuana less than a year ago. Khalaf said the Scottsdale City Council undertook similar action when faced with a referendum in 2020.