

**We are  
the Drug  
Policy  
Alliance.**



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A MEDICINAL AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE



July 8, 2016

The Honorable Herb Wesson  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring St., Room 430  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Wesson,

We, the undersigned, write to bring to your attention to our urgent concerns with the direction the City of Los Angeles is moving related to marijuana industry regulations and practices. Los Angeles is the largest marijuana market in the world, and yet, it remains one of the most chaotic and worst regulated jurisdictions in the state, poorly serving all the stakeholders—the general public, medical marijuana patients, cannabis industry professionals, law enforcement, tax payers, and those of us concerned primarily about racial, social and economic justice. With the passage of statewide medical marijuana regulations in 2015, and the likely passage of the Adult Use of Marijuana Act in November (Proposition 64), California’s most populous city can no longer afford to lag behind in its approach to marijuana reforms and industry standards.

We welcome the opportunity to talk to you about this in person, but to summarize, our primary priorities and concerns are as follows:

- Increasing transparency and inclusion in the “workgroup” process that appears to be related to the May 18<sup>th</sup> Wesson motion;
- Ensuring the provisions of 2013’s Proposition D that codified racial discrimination and inequality through arbitrary and exclusionary licensing caps, are not carried into any successor initiative;
- Enabling people with drug related criminal records to access employment and ownership opportunities in a legal, regulated marijuana industry in the City;
- Addressing public safety concerns and challenges related to eliminating the illegal marijuana industry;
- Organizing a licensing system that enables new compliant cannabis businesses in all licensing categories (dispensaries, delivery services, cultivators, processors, manufacturers, etc.) to enter the City’s legal marijuana industry without unnecessarily lengthy, costly or overly burdensome delays;

- Working to establish appropriate zoning for marijuana businesses that meet the needs of medical patients while also protecting public safety and preventing underage access;
- Developing a tax and community reinvestment model to support the City's public safety, public health and youth education initiatives, while keeping retail prices low enough to phase out illegal market activity;
- Developing a smart approach to considering public consumption, which is allowable as an "opt-in" for localities under the Adult Use of Marijuana Act, Proposition 64.

There are a number of municipalities in California and other states with legal medical and recreational marijuana markets that have already done the hard work of developing and implementing best practices and successful regulatory models for the new cannabis industry that the City should review before advancing new legal industry guidelines. One of the most common frameworks adopted by these jurisdictions is utilization of an oversight committee, advisory commission or task force to take on the intricacies of developing and carrying out cannabis regulation.

These oversight committees prove most successful when staffed with a diverse array of stakeholders, including community advocates, cannabis professionals, public health officials, which helps provide a balance between the varying interests. We hope the City will consider employing a similar model that productively engages all stakeholders, and we look forward to working with you to develop flexible and comprehensive policy to guide the safe and responsible growth of the marijuana industry in Los Angeles. Thank you for your consideration of our priorities and concerns.

We look forward to meeting with you to further discuss these issues.

Sincerely,

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