

New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission
Public In-Writing Comments
Public Meeting: May 4th, 2021

Sender	Date	Comment/Question
Rebecca Osborn	4/30/2021	<p>Anyway, this is why I am writing/speaking to you. At this time both Government & Private companies who bid or get loans/grants from the government must get participation from minority and women owned businesses. This is a load of crap! I don't mean to offend, but the current model for helping our less fortunate community members does not work. It is simply a flashy band aid for a wound that needs some serious stitches. I have a solution.</p> <p>I also believe we can take Politics out of the Cannabis Regulation and replace it with people, real people, community leaders, and Marijuana Entrepreneurs. Members of the Community who will truly represent the people. I have a solution.</p> <p>It is a fact, google it, that people tend to give more when the desire to give is both willing and/or something they are passionate about. I mean take the Christian Church Model – I again kindly ask you to not take offense to my next point. The structure used by the Christian Church is based on people's willingness to give to a cause that they are passionate about in return for a sense of purpose. What I am proposing is a system that lets the people willingly decide to contribute to lifting the people of their communities – with the help of a new lucrative and helpful industry. I have a solution.</p> <p>So here are my Solutions aka my pitch...</p>
Steve Taska	4/30/2021	<p>Please discuss home grow for medical patients. It's not truly legalized without a home grow option. New Jersey would be one of the only states that doesn't allow this as an option. It is very expensive at the dispensaries, and growing at home would alleviate some of the demand at current and future dispensaries.</p> <p>Do the right thing!</p> <p>Signed, Steve, a NJ medical patient</p>
Justin Escher Alpert	5/3/2021	<p>Dear Honorable Members of The Cannabis Regulatory Commission:</p> <p>Thank you for welcoming a few thoughts about tomorrow's meeting topics for submission as part of the written testimony record.</p> <p>The CRC asks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What standards should the CRC be adopting to help create an inclusive market? Recognize that Free Citizens of The Garden State already responsibly exercise the economic liberty. The market itself is naturally inclusive, and local proprietors are naturally accountable to the customers whom they serve. 2. What barriers and problems need to be addressed? The Scutari Model is fundamentally flawed. The rake going to Impact Zones has no accountability protocols and undermines a proper accounting for healthy local commerce and culture in the communities from which it is sourced. The shortcoming of the entire problem is that we pin all of the sins of humanity on cannabis policy, while there are fundamental socioeconomic policies from banking to taxation to credit to land ownership to development that need to be responsibly addressed. Look, we're not gonna smoke our way to Prosperity. We're just not.

Cannabis policy can be a conduit for positive societal change, but it can't be an endgame. The Administration needs a mission much broader than that of this honorable Commission. Opportunity for real in-depth Policy leadership from a fully-engaged CRC.

In a well-to-do community, entrepreneurs should be able to make their own way. If they are fully-invested in their community and are paying real living wages, there is really no good reason to be pulling a rake for the Impact Zones. For folks who live in the Impact Zones, the State really needs to go in and restructure locally-accountable banking. The problem has nothing to do with cannabis per se. Could pick a couple of dozen of different types of diverse businesses that could fill vacant storefronts and get non-recourse credit flowing to support real living wages in healthy local commerce and culture. Welcome opportunity to reflect upon how the proliferation of big box stores works against the development of everything we value on Main Street. When we restructure, rents and mortgages should be deposited in locally-accountable banking as appurtenant to the land. Can intelligently excise purely institutional interests in real property to support healthy community growth generally. Cannabis should be but a small part of a broader socioeconomic revitalization. Track the cash flows that pour out of the community and use smart tax and banking policy to turn them back inwards for healthy local reinvestment and expenditure. Careful that local retailers are going to be subject to an oligopoly of corporate wholesale cannabis. Want to ensure an underlying systemic accountability to keep Cost of Goods Sold to a minimum and keep dollars in the pockets of responsible cannabis consumers. To the extent that there are shortages of product in the beginning, entrepreneurs can be indemnified for the expenses they carry. Locally-accountable non-recourse credit can go a long way for keeping a check on development of healthy local cash flow dynamics.

3. What are your recommendations for making the industry reflective of New Jersey – diverse, competitive and equitable? Keep it open. The CRC shouldn't bite-off more than it can chew. Unfortunately, the CRC's mission is kind of warped to draw-out funds to support its own proposed bureaucracy. Don't give-in to the limitations. Start small and encourage responsible local innovation. We are going to need a forensic accounting of the debt held by the medical ATCs and the interest rates and to whom. The CRC has to force those amounts down over the course of time to keep things equitable. There will have to be co-ops for folks who are not interested in making money, but take reward in merely serving the needs of People with pride in their craft. Nobody is asking for permission. The State has an obligation to secure the Blessings of Liberty for responsible members of the Cannabis Community who already responsibly exercise the natural right. Equal protection of the law with responsible members of the craft brewing community. If locally-accountable banking is moving in with robust non-recourse credit secured by the appreciated value of real property in an emerging economic system, can develop a tremendous amount of control over cash flows.

Definitely want to talk to folks at the EDA, who have run capitalization programs for decades. Opportunity to learn from them and actually improve upon their model. Also want to be reaching out to the economics departments of our public universities, because they'll be tremendously helpful in solving a number of long-standing micro-economic problems. Non-competes should be voided as a matter of public policy.

4. How do we ensure individuals that have been harmed by unjust drug laws have a place in this industry? Don't discriminate against them. We'll find that true Power is derived from Mercy. Every idea counts. How the CRC creatively engages to flush out ideas is vitally important. Some of these folks may have spent a lifetime being ignored or rejected. Welcome really-deep reflection and empathy from the CRC. Ultimately, will want to ensure that everybody has a firm real stake in a vibrant, healthy, attractive, affordable, sustainable, growing entrepreneurial Garden State community. Opportunity for real leadership. The State

		<p>Legislature exists as a sounding board and is there to help. The law can be changed in any way that makes a common sense for the Public Good. Welcome smarter approaches to healthy regulated commerce generally. Give folks a job to do that they are excited about, pay them a real living wage, and permit them to take pride in their work.</p> <p>Anyway, that is all. Good luck with your meeting tomorrow night. Thank you so much to each of you for all of the work that you are doing. The goal is not to regulate People, but to create a framework where People can thrive while setting new standards of excellence for regulated commerce generally in vibrant, healthy, growing Garden State communities.</p> <p>Please let me know how I may help structure any due diligence process.</p>
Sharnay Tokley	5/3/2021	<p>Cannabis Regulatory Commission</p> <p>I, Sharnay Tokley, an african american woman who is a cannabis enthusiast here in New Jersey am writing this comment to demand that a Social Justice Equity application status be added in place of a person who meets qualified status. This verbiage of 41B1 needs to replace qualified people with social equity applicants so that those persons who are from those communities who were disportionately targeted within cannabis prohibition can have the opportunity to benefit from tax deductions and benefits associated with having a social equity status. Please consider these changes so that New Jersey can remain in the forefront of a successful equitable cannabis industry lead,</p>
John Wanless	5/3/2021	<p>If it were only Blacks that got arrested for marijuana and made second-class citizens for life, maybe it would be a good idea to just look at Black communities. - But, of course, that is not the case. FBI statistics show that 40 percent of all arrests for marijuana are of white people. While 60 percent are of Blacks, how can this massive injustice for white victims be ignored?</p> <p>Isn't discrimination against smaller group numbers a bad thing?</p> <p>Further, these "social equity" programs don't even help a significant number of Black victims of the war on marijuana consumers. Just a very few, lucky (well connected?) Blacks will benefit.</p> <p>What we should do instead is simply compensate ALL the victims of this insane witch-hunt. Younger victims should get paid job training and placement. Older victims should just get a pension.</p>
Eli Scheiman	5/3/2021	<p>Will clinical registrant license applications be released by the CRC on May 23, 2021?</p>
Mollie Hartman Lustig	5/3/2021	<p>On the topic of Barriers and Problems (issue Number 2) I am wondering how a Cultivator holding a Class 1 License gets their product to market (i.e. to the Class 5 Retailer) during the first 18-24 months after implementation, if they are not permitted to hold a concurrent Retailer License? The rules seem to also preclude any type of agreement to be entered into between those individuals holding different license types, so how can a Cultivator ensure there will be a place for their product to go to market?</p> <p>There are myriad concerns here that need to be addressed during rules making.</p> <p>My contact information is below. I represent a Nevada based cultivator, who owns several Cannabis brands.</p>
Ian	5/3/2021	<p>When will you push legislators to legalize home growing? This is the biggest barrier to anything marijuana related in NJ right now.</p> <p>The large corporate cannabis companies have been given instant access to dominate the market, it should instead be given out as micro licenses, much like craft breweries, so anyone can grow, hone the craft, start a small marijuana business, and provide a</p>

		quality product to their local area. It should not be designed for massive exploitation. NY has a great example of how to do this, with collectives and home growing.
Daniel Ramos	5/3/2021	How are you going to make the business licensing program fair so people can start a business in the industry without being a millionaire, or being financed by a millionaire, first?
Kevin Cleary	5/3/2021	<p>What barriers and problems need to be addressed?</p> <p>A Barrier would be the requirement (pg 91 31 - 35) that 51% of the employees or owners Work or live in the Municipality or the municipality next to the location the business would be for Micro businesses. If your Municipality and the ones around you decide not to allow Cultivation, Dispensaries etc your only recourse would be to move. But, that is not feasible for most of the people Micro Business are supposed to be targeting. How are the people who are scraping together the capital to try and invest and start their own business supposed to also afford the ability to move as well.</p> <p>How do we ensure individuals that have been harmed by unjust drug laws have a place in this industry?</p> <p>Have a fund or loan program for people who have been charged or convicted under those laws that offers an easier way to get access to capital since the only option currently is private funding and the few banks that offer loans for cannabis companies will probably look unfavorably on convictions like that.</p>
Max Thompson	5/4/2021	<p>(1) What standards should the CRC be adopting to help create an inclusive market?</p> <p>As a regulator the CRC has a responsibility to both its consumers and to the market it regulates. To facilitate the diverse market that the State has envisioned, we believe the CRC should adopt standards that are "capability-based." By this we mean that the CRC should not apply the same specific standards and scrutiny to all sizes of applicants. A Mom & Pop dispensary will not have the same financial means nor access to resources as a multi-state, billion dollar corporation, but may be more than capable of assembling an adequately safe and profitable business. We are not suggesting that the Mom & Pop dispensary should operate at a lower standard than it's wealthier peers, but rather that the CRC should adopt standards that are flexible and allow for leniency, discretion, and iteration during the review of applications, and even a "counseling" approach to application reviews, rather than one that is opaque and critical.</p> <p>(2) What barriers and problems need to be addressed?</p> <p>In our view financial barriers are crucial and must be lowered wherever possible. For example, the CRC should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Not impose capital requirements for applicants; b) Impose low/minimal application fees; c) Avoid onerous minimums for purchases of wholesale products; d) Opt for safes instead of vault rooms for product storage; e) Allow applicants to prove location control through a letter of intent rather than a fully executed lease agreement. <p>These are just a few potential considerations that we believe will help reduce the upfront costs of opening a cannabis business.</p> <p>(3) What are your recommendations for making the industry reflective of New Jersey – diverse, competitive and equitable?</p> <p>We implore the CRC: please do not impose caps on the number of licenses in the non-cultivation classes, but instead allow a "check-the-box" process such that if an applicant meets the requirements for a license, they are issued one. This is in line with Executive Director Jeff Brown's recent comments wherein he stated that "[i]f we want to get to where we want to be on equity</p>

then we need a licensing system where if somebody comes to us with a fully put together business plan ... we don't want to be the ones standing in the way of them opening up that business.”

(4) How do we ensure individuals that have been harmed by unjust drug laws have a place in this industry?
We believe that mentorship is absolutely key. The CRC should establish a program to connect social equity applicants to experienced professionals in the industry, whether in New Jersey or in other states. We believe that creating a network of professionals for social equity applicants to speak with, learn from, and eventually partner with, could be a very impactful benefit for those who are willing and passionate enough to learn.

<p>Darrin Chandler Jr.</p>	<p>5/4/2021</p>	<p>What standards should the CRC be adopting to help create an inclusive market? -Research every state's “social equity plans” and take the best elements of each to implement here in NJ. Based on this research we should be able to create the criteria for NJ’s ‘Social Equity Applicant” and the benefits this applicant should receive. Some states we should research are Illinois, Massachusetts and Colorado. -For example, let's look closely at Denver Mayor, Michael Hancock’s recent bills, Marijuana Omnibus Bill and Marijuana Hospitality Bill. These new laws make significant changes to Denver’s current cannabis laws. One important item in these bills related to creating an inclusive market is: Requiring every licensee to submit a Social Impact Plan, which identifies the licensee’s plans to promote diversity and inclusion in its workforce, foster participation in the cannabis industry by people who have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis enforcement, and implement environmental sustainability practices. Here are the benefits of Illinois Social Equity Applicant: Receive technical assistance and support provided through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to Social Equity Applicants Receive 50 points (out of a possible total of 250 from IDFPR on their dispensary license application score or Receive 200 points (out of possible total 1000) from Illinois Department of Agriculture on their craft grower, infuser, or transporter license application score. Pay reduced license and application fees. Access to low-interest loans provided through DCEO for starting and operating a cannabis-related business What barriers and problems need to be addressed? -2019 RFA should be awarded immediately. Awarding new applicants will be the start to creating diversity in the market, as there are currently no minority operators in the state. -For the non-winners of the 2019 RFA, some form of restitution should be in play for the 145+ applicants (non-winners) that were negatively affected by the 2019 RFA lawsuit. 2019 applicants have had to carry an enormous amount of unneeded real estate expenses. -Expand the number of medical licenses going to be awarded for the 2019 RFA. We need to jump start the industry and no better pool to pick from than the additional qualified applicants from the 2019 RFA. -For the 2019 RFA winners, they should be able to expand immediately due to already waiting for 20+ months. The existing operators have acquired an unfair competitive advantage due to the 2019 RFA lawsuit. We must level the playing field. -For future RFA’s – Social Equity Applicants should not have to acquire real estate prior to being awarded a Cannabis Operator License. As seen with the 2019 RFA, applicants have had to absorb hundreds of thousands of Real Estate expenses at no fault of their own, for a license that’s not guaranteed. This requirement is putting potential social equity applicants in a financial hardship before they even get into the industry.</p>
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Adam Umansky	5/4/2021	<p>Now that cannabis is legal in NJ to possess, use, burn, smoke, eat and give away; it is also necessarily legal to use cannabis for religious purposes and to congregate to do so.</p> <p>Some religions that use cannabis: Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Rastafarianism.</p> <p>Regulations intended to govern the cannabis business space MUST NOT in anyway criminalize or otherwise burden the sincere religious use of cannabis.</p> <p>This "hands off" approach must be analogous to the exempt use of alcohol by Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran and Episcopalian houses of worship. These synagogues, churches and ministries take in membership fees and other revenue and give away sacramental wine, and no one accuses these churches of being wine businesses because they are not selling wine. They are not engaging in commerce in relation to alcohol. The same view must be taken about the use of cannabis for religious purposes. Federal laws RFRA and RLUIPA, as well as many federal court precedents affirm the paramount importance of protecting religious freedoms. In the past, the universal prohibition against cannabis was used as the justification for denying religious cannabis practitioners their rights. With the legalization of cannabis in NJ, those arguments used by the state are no longer valid. The state cannot articulate a compelling interest to treat cannabis in religion any different from alcohol in religion, without violating the rights of practitioners, and triggering liability under RLUIPA and federal religious rights court precedents. In order to ensure the preservation of religious rights, the state, in crafting its regulations for the cannabis business space, must either explicitly carve out an exemption from business licensure requirements for individuals and religious associations and organizations which use cannabis; or explicitly and intentionally omit religious cannabis use from regulations because they do not apply, with a declaration stating as much. Anything less would appear to be evidence of discrimination based on religious affiliation.</p>

Laurie McHugh	5/4/2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Can you give an estimated date of when you expect to accept license applications?2. Will there be a regulation of distance between schools/churches and a dispensary?
Cindy Ortiz	5/4/2021	<p>How can you expect small minority owned businesses to succeed when the 2019 RFA did everything BUT help or promote those types of businesses?</p> <p>Aside from the percentage of licenses set aside for minority owned companies, what else will the CRC do differently to ensure that minority owned businesses are not excluded from partaking and succeeding in this industry, especially when small teams with less funding aren't able to catch technicalities or deal with unclear or ambiguous application instructions?</p> <p>How will the CRC protect and promote us?</p>