

NEW JERSEY CANNABIS REGULATOR COMMISSION
SOUTHERN JERSEY REGIONAL SEEF HEARING

June 21, 2023

Hearing was taken in the above-captioned matter via YouTube recording on the above date, commencing at 11:02 a.m., there being present:

JEFF BROWN - Executive Director

CHARLES BARKER - Commissioner

KRISTA NASH - Commissioner

DIANNA HOUENOU - Chair

SAMUEL DELGADO - Vice Chair

CHRISTOPHER RIGGS, Legal Counsel

1 MS. HOUENOU: Good morning, everyone, and
2 welcome to this virtual meeting of the New Jersey
3 Cannabis Regulatory Commission. By my watch, the time
4 is now 11:02. And I call this meeting to order.

5 Mr. Said (phonetic), can you please read the
6 notice of the public meeting?

7 MR. SAID: Good morning, Chairwoman. This
8 is a special meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis
9 Regulatory Commission. Adequate notice of this
10 meeting has been provided in accordance with the
11 Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act.

12 Notice of the meeting was provided to the
13 Asbury Park Press, Atlantic City Express, Bergen
14 Record, Courier Post, Star Ledger, and The Trenton
15 Times on June 14th, 2023.

16 The agenda and the information regarding the
17 virtual nature of the meeting was also posted on the
18 CRC website. The meeting time and location has also
19 been posted on the website of the New Jersey Cannabis
20 Regulatory Commission and with the Office of the
21 Secretary of the State.

22 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you, Mr. Said. Can
23 please take roll call?

24 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

25 MR. BARKER: Present.

1 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

2 MS. HOUENOU: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso is
3 absent.

4 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

5 MS. NASH: Present.

6 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

7 MR. DELGADO: Present.

8 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

9 MS. HOUENOU: Present.

10 I believe we now have a quorum.

11 Mr. Said, can you please announce the first
12 agenda item?

13 MR. SAID: The first order of business is
14 for the Commission to go into Executive Session to
15 discuss legal matters and litigation updates. These
16 are discussions that are not shared with the public.
17 We believe the Executive Session should take about 30
18 minutes.

19 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you. Do I have a motion
20 to go into Executive Session?

21 MR. DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I move that
22 we adjourn to Executive Session.

23 MS. NASH: Second.

24 MS. HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado
25 and seconded by Commissioner Nash.

1 Is there any discussion on this motion to go
2 into Executive Session? Hearing none, all those in
3 favor say aye.

4 (All say aye)

5 MS. HOUENOU: I only heard two voices, so
6 I'll just repeat.

7 All those in favor say aye.

8 (All say aye)

9 MS. HOUENOU: Okay. All those opposed say
10 nay. Are there any abstentions? All right. Hearing
11 none, the motion passes.

12 The Commission will now go into Executive
13 Session. We expect the Executive Session to last
14 approximately 30 minutes. We will leave the live-
15 stream running during that time. We can expect to
16 resume the open public session at about 11:35 a.m.

17 Thank you for your patience, everyone.

18 (Pause)

19 MS. HOUENOU: All right. We are back. The
20 time is 11:32 and we will resume the public session of
21 today's meeting.

22 Mr. Said, can you please announce the next
23 agenda item?

24 MR. SAID: Next on the agenda is the Chair's
25 report.

1 MS. HOUENOU: All right. This will be
2 incredibly short. The only thing that I want to note
3 for folks is that the Commission's July 18 board
4 meeting will not be -- it will be held in person, but
5 it will not be held in our regular meeting space. So
6 I encourage everyone to stay tuned to our website
7 where details on the new location for the July 18th
8 board meeting will be posted. And we hope to get
9 those details up soon for everyone. But they will not
10 -- it will not be held at our regular meeting place on
11 South Clinton Avenue in Trenton. So please make sure
12 that you stay up-to-date on the location for the next
13 board meeting.

14 That is all I have for a Chair's report for
15 today.

16 MR. SAID: Next on the agenda is the
17 Executive Director's report.

18 MS. HOUENOU: Executive Director Brown, I
19 turn the floor over to you.

20 MR. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank
21 you, members of the Commission.

22 So I'm also going to keep it somewhat short
23 and sweet today. Just two agenda items. We now have
24 numbers on sales -- totals sales for Q1 of 2023 as
25 well as tax revenue collected. So I'm going to share

1 those and then just provide a licensing update. And
2 then we'll move on to the rest of today's business.

3 So to start off, looking at sales numbers
4 from Q1 of 2023, we continue to see recreational sales
5 increase in the state of New Jersey. They grew from
6 \$80 million in one quarter, in Q2 of 2022, which was
7 the first quarter of recreational sales, to nearly 146
8 million in total sales in the first quarter of this
9 year. This shows the market continues to grow
10 quarter-over-quarter.

11 And, additionally, we still see sales of
12 medicinal cannabis. We did see a significant drop in
13 this last quarter. Previously, they've remained
14 pretty strong. But we did see about a fifteen-
15 million-dollar decrease in medicinal sales from Q1
16 2023 versus Q4 2022.

17 Nonetheless, the total market continues to
18 grow. If we look at total recreational cannabis sales
19 for the first year of recreational cannabis in the
20 state of New Jersey, they were just under half a
21 billion dollars. And if we look at total cannabis
22 sales across both markets, they were just under \$700
23 million total in cannabis sales in the last year.

24 So the market continues to grow. Sales
25 continue to be strong. And we look forward to future

1 growth here as we continue to see new businesses open
2 up and serve the growing consumer base here in New
3 Jersey.

4 when we look at tax revenue, the sales tax
5 specifically, and you can go to the next slide,
6 please, for the first quarter, we collected close to
7 \$9.5 million in sales tax based on the recreational
8 cannabis sales. And the next slide, looking at the
9 social equity excise fee, we're -- we closed in on
10 about half a million dollars collected on that.

11 As a reminder, that is set relatively low
12 for the first, you know, year or more of recreational
13 cannabis sales. But once there's some trigger points
14 that occur, it will be able to be raised in accordance
15 with the Commission's regulations. But right now,
16 that continues to grow as well, and we saw close to
17 \$500,000 in receipts on that money.

18 And I did want to note just to thank the
19 work of the Public Education and Engagement Committee
20 and the Audit Committee in putting together
21 recommendations that went to the Governor and
22 Legislature on how to invest the social equity excise
23 fee as well as other priorities that should be
24 considered for funding with tax revenue.

25 So next slide, please.

1 Looking at overall licensing, we've now
2 eclipsed 2,000 applications submitted and under review
3 by the CRC. Out of those 2,000, 1,300 applications
4 have been approved. There's only 66 applications that
5 haven't made it to our completeness review stage,
6 which is really the first comprehensive stage of
7 review in our applications.

8 Right now, we have about 400 applications
9 under review in the Office of Licensing. I'd say most
10 of those are conditionals, but there are a fair amount
11 of annuals and conversions. And then we have 140
12 applications currently under review in the Office of
13 Compliance and Investigations.

14 We are seeing more conditionals applying to
15 convert to annual which is a great sign. And right
16 now, 315 conditional conversions have been submitted.
17 We really saw that start to increase at the end of
18 last year, and that increase has continued into this
19 year.

20 I'll note, you know, one of the things that
21 we hear from applicants as far as questions all the
22 time is, you know, once the investigation is
23 completed, you know, can I get on a board meeting the
24 next day. And I did want to note that when we look at
25 our process and when we get to the applications under

1 consideration today, there are things that happen
2 after they leave the Office of Compliance and
3 Investigations, like quality control, preparation for
4 board consideration, and so, you know, there is time
5 after the investigation phase before they can get to
6 the board level and ultimately be considered and
7 approved.

8 But our team is doing tremendous work to get
9 these applications reviewed, processed and brought to
10 the board for consideration. And we expect these
11 numbers to grow, particularly as we get to July and
12 onward.

13 So, next slide, please.

14 For today's board meeting, we only have
15 seven applications given the tight turnaround from the
16 last board meeting. But, again, we do expect that
17 number to continue up, again, at the next board
18 meeting and those thereafter. And we don't have any
19 conditionals today, but we do have four conditional-
20 to-annual conversion applications, as well as three
21 annual applications. And we'll cover exactly what
22 those are when we get to that agenda item.

23 So with that, thank you, Madam Chair. I'll
24 turn it back to you.

25 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you, Director Brown.

1 Are there any questions from the board for
2 Director Brown regarding his report? All right.
3 Hearing none, thank you, Director Brown.

4 And, Mr. Said, if you can, please announce
5 the next agenda item.

6 MR. SAID: Next on the agenda is the
7 consideration of a rule proposal for clinical
8 registrant permits.

9 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you, Mr. Said.

10 Director Brown, can you please provide a
11 summary of the need for this proposal and staff's
12 recommendations?

13 MR. BROWN: Absolutely. Thank you, Madam
14 Chair.

15 And I'm going to hand it over to Chief
16 Counsel Riggs in a moment to just cover the process
17 here and sort of high level where we are.

18 But clinical registrants were included in
19 the 2019 (indiscernible). They are a permit type of
20 alternative treatment centers that incentivize and
21 actually require clinical research as a condition of
22 receiving a permit to operate in the medicinal space.
23 They require a partnership with an academic medical
24 center, either an academic medical center in New
25 Jersey or academic institutions out of state under

1 certain conditions. And aside from being able to
2 serve the medicinal population, their -- again, their
3 core focus is meant to be on clinical research.

4 And before I turn it over to Chief Counsel
5 Riggs, I did want to note that there's another state,
6 our neighboring state Pennsylvania, that has a similar
7 model to this. And I've seen -- I was -- a
8 stakeholder shared with me some clinical research that
9 came out of one of their entities recently that's
10 looking at the effect of cannabis on stress and
11 anxiety in Alzheimer's patients, and some really
12 promising research being conducted looking at
13 specifically, like, different chemo types of cannabis
14 and how they might affect different types of stress
15 and anxiety.

16 So this is happening in Pennsylvania right
17 now. This rule proposal will enable New Jersey to
18 have similar types of research happening here and
19 coordination/collaboration between the cannabis
20 industry, the medicinal cannabis industry and our
21 academic institutions that are focused on finding the,
22 you know, next cures and treatments for diseases.

23 So I'm going to turn it over to Chief
24 Counsel Riggs now to walk through the proposal.

25 MR. RIGGS: Thank you, Executive Director

1 Brown and Madam Chairwoman.

2 AS Executive Director Brown mentioned, this
3 is a new medical permit type that is authorized by
4 statute. The rule proposal will include a process for
5 how the Commission is going to accept These types of
6 applications and how they're going to review them and
7 process them and get them ready for board approval.

8 Clinical research is a huge focus for these
9 types of businesses. Clinical research is important.
10 I know that for the Commission it's important and, you
11 know, it stands on (indiscernible) safety and equity
12 that we have as a Commission. The application process
13 in this (indiscernible) is going to look very similar
14 to the adult-use licensure process. There's going to
15 be a permitting review, financial review, criminal
16 history background check and, obviously, fees will be
17 required.

18 As far as next steps, this rule proposal, if
19 approved, will be filed with the Office of
20 Administrative Law in accordance with the Office of
21 Administrative Law publication schedule. The next
22 publication date available will be August 7, which
23 will then open up a sixty-day comment period that will
24 close on October 6th of 2023. Obviously, once that
25 proposal is filed with the Office of Administrative

1 Law and published, we will have that available on our
2 website and make that available to the public. And,
3 you know, we encourage all the stakeholders out there
4 in the public to comment on the rules and provide
5 their feedback so that we can get this -- this
6 important license type correct and ready and have this
7 -- the appropriate clinical research done in the
8 cannabis space.

9 That's all I have, so I will give the floor
10 back to Executive Director Brown and the Chairwoman.
11 Thank you.

12 MR. BROWN: Thank you, Chief Counsel Riggs.
13 And back over to you, Madam Chair.

14 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you both.

15 Chief Counsel Riggs, if you don't mind just
16 reiterating the dates of the publication of this rule
17 proposal in the New Jersey Register and the date for
18 the -- marking the end of the public comment period.

19 MR. RIGGS: No problem, Chairwoman.

20 The next available publication date, if
21 filed today, is August 7th of 2023. That is when it
22 will be published in the Register in accordance with
23 the Office of Administrative Law's publication
24 schedule. The comment period will then open for 60
25 days, and that will close on October 6 of 2023. And

1 then we will collect those comments and provide an
2 adoption document to this board so they can look at
3 those comments and ultimately adopt the rules and
4 (indiscernible) set in place and file with the Office
5 of Administrative Law. Thanks.

6 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you.

7 Are there any other questions from the board
8 for Director Brown or Counsel Riggs? All right.
9 Seeing and hearing none, do I hear a motion on this
10 matter?

11 I'll make one more call for a motion on this
12 matter related to clinical registrants.

13 MR. DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I move that
14 we approve notice of both for the amendments and new
15 rules in clinical registered permits.

16 MS. HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair.

17 Is there a second?

18 I will second the motion.

19 Is there any discussion on this motion?

20 Hearing none, Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

21 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

22 MR. BARKER: Nay.

23 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

24 MS. NASH: Yes.

25 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

1 MR. DELGADO: Yes.

2 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

3 MS. HOUENOU: Yes.

4 MR. SAID: The resolution passes.

5 Next item for consideration are applications
6 to convert conditional licenses and annual licenses.

7 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you.

8 Director Brown, can you please provide a
9 summary of the applications reviewed by staff?

10 MR. BROWN: Yes. Thank you, Chairwoman
11 Houenou.

12 Next slide, please.

13 So, first up for consideration are the
14 conditional-to-annual license conversions. There are
15 four conversion licenses up for consideration here,
16 one cultivator, two manufacturers and one retailer.

17 Just to review the process, first,
18 applicants are assigned a priority based on what they
19 qualify for, whether it's a social equity business,
20 diversely owned business or impact-zone business.

21 Then that priority is verified.

22 Applications are reviewed for completeness to make
23 sure they have all the necessary documents required by
24 regulation. They are then scored in accordance with
25 the notice of application acceptance and made sure

1 that they are -- they score sufficiently high to move
2 forward in the process.

3 Those that score sufficiently high are then
4 reviewed for qualifications, limitations, as well as
5 financial and management agreement review. There's an
6 investigations and qualification review which includes
7 a criminal history background check as well as
8 financial probity.

9 Once they leave investigations, they are
10 given quality control to make sure that all the
11 determinations made by both Office of Licensing and
12 Office of Compliance and Investigations are correct
13 and in accordance with our authorizing statutes and
14 regulations. And then they are recommended to the
15 board.

16 So here we have these four conversion
17 licenses that have completed that process and are
18 recommended for approval by the CRC Board of
19 Commissioners.

20 And back to you, Madam Chair.

21 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you.

22 Are there any questions from the board
23 concerning the recommendations for applications to
24 convert their conditional license to an annual
25 license?

1 I know we have the list of applications
2 under consideration that is hyperlinked on our
3 website. Do we have it ready for sharing here? Oh,
4 yes. Great. Excellent.

5 So there are no questions for Director
6 Brown.

7 Do I hear a motion on this matter?

8 MR. DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I move the
9 resolution to consideration of applications to convert
10 from conditional to annual Class 1 cannabis
11 cultivator, Class 2 cannabis manufacturer and Class 5
12 cannabis retail licenses.

13 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you, Vice Chair.

14 Is there a second?

15 MS. NASH: Second.

16 MS. HOUENOU: Seconded by Commissioner Nash.
17 Thank you.

18 Is there any discussion on this motion?
19 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Said, can you please call
20 the vote?

21 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

22 MR. BARKER: Abstain.

23 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

24 MS. NASH: Yes.

25 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

1 MR. DELGADO: Yes.

2 MR. SAID: And Chairwoman Houenou?

3 MS. HOUENOU: Yes.

4 MR. SAID: The resolution passes.

5 Next item for consideration is the annual
6 license applications.

7 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you.

8 Director Brown, can you please provide a
9 summary of the staff's recommendations with respect to
10 the applications going directly to an annual license?

11 MR. BROWN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

12 So you have -- the Commission has before it
13 three annual licenses for consideration, one
14 cultivator, one manufacturer and one retail -- on
15 retailer.

16 Similarly to the conversions, these
17 applications followed a similar process. They were
18 reviewed for priority assignment. They were assigned
19 priority based on their qualification, whether that be
20 social equity business, diversely owned business,
21 impact zone or otherwise. That priority designation
22 was verified. They were reviewed for completeness and
23 deemed complete.

24 They were scored and they all have scored
25 sufficiently high in accordance with the notice of

1 application acceptance to be moved forward. They've
2 been reviewed for qualification limitations, financial
3 management agreement review, including criminal
4 history background checks and financial probity.
5 They've undergone quality control and now they are
6 recommended for approval by the CRC Board of
7 Commissioners.

8 Madam Chair, back to you. And I think
9 you're muted.

10 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you.

11 Are there any questions from the board for
12 Director Brown?

13 All right. Then we'll move forward. I
14 believe here we are actually breaking up these
15 applications and will consider two applications first,
16 and then the last application separately.

17 So as it pertains to -- do we have a list of
18 those two? Great. Thank you.

19 As it pertains to these two applications,
20 Application Number 1216 and 1222, do I hear a motion?

21 MS. NASH: Madam Chair, I move to approve
22 the annual license applications for these two
23 applicants.

24 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you.

25 Is there a second?

1 MR. DELGADO: I second the motion.

2 MR. BARKER: Defer to Vice Chair Delgado,
3 Madam Chair.

4 MS. HOUENOU: All right. Seconded by Vice
5 Chair Delgado.

6 Is there any discussion on this motion as it
7 relates to these two applications?

8 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Said, can you
9 please call the vote?

10 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

11 MR. BARKER: Aye.

12 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

13 MS. NASH: Yes.

14 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

15 MR. DELGADO: Yes.

16 MR. SAID: And Chairwoman Houenou?

17 MS. HOUENOU: Yes.

18 MR. SAID: The resolution passes.

19 Next item for consideration is the annual
20 license Application Number 1745.

21 Commissioner Nash has recused herself from
22 Application 1745 from AACCTPro. On account of her
23 recusal, she will remove herself from the Zoom meeting
24 while the board considers this particular application.
25 Afterward, Commissioner Nash will come back in and

1 will take up the next order of business.

2 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you.

3 Director Brown, will you please either
4 provide a new summary or refresh the board's
5 recollection on staff's processing of this
6 application?

7 MR. BROWN: Absolutely. This application
8 followed the same process I outlined for the previous
9 application. It has been reviewed for priority,
10 deemed complete. It scored sufficiently high to be
11 considered by our Office of Investigations. It's
12 undergone qualification limitations and financial
13 management and agreement review. We recommend they be
14 deemed qualified to hold a license. They've been --
15 undergone quality control, and they are now
16 recommended for approval by the CRC Board of
17 Commissioners.

18 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you.

19 Are there any questions from the board for
20 Director Brown regarding this application?

21 All right. Hearing and seeing none, is
22 there a motion as it relates to Application Number
23 1745?

24 MR. DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I move that
25 we move the resolution before us, consideration of

1 annual license application for a Class 5 cannabis
2 retail license.

3 MS. HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado.

4 Is there a second?

5 MR. BARKER: Madam Chair, I second that.

6 MS. HOUENOU: Seconded by Commissioner

7 Barker.

8 Is there any discussion on this motion?

9 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Said, can you
10 please call the vote?

11 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

12 MR. BARKER: Aye.

13 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

14 MR. DELGADO: Yes.

15 MR. SAID: And Chairwoman Houenou?

16 MS. HOUENOU: Yes.

17 MR. SAID: The resolution passes.

18 Next on the agenda we have the open public
19 comment period.

20 MS. HOUENOU: All right. Thank you, all.

21 For today's public comment period, we'll go
22 back to the early days of the Commission and Mr. Said
23 will call out those individuals who are registered to
24 speak. If you are -- if you hear your name called,
25 please make sure that you have your name as it appears

1 on the Zoom that matches the name that you registered
2 to speak with. I believe I see a few -- I've seen a
3 few Jessies, a few Michaels and, unfortunately, we
4 here at the CRC are not mind readers. So please make
5 sure that your name as it appears on Zoom matches what
6 you used to register.

7 If you are not sure what your name -- how
8 your name appears, please take a moment to log off of
9 the Zoom meeting and try coming back in, and you
10 should be prompted to enter your name.

11 If you're working with an older version of
12 Zoom, it is possible that that function is not
13 equipped on older versions of Zoom. But we need to
14 make sure that your name is -- matches what you've
15 used to register to speak.

16 Members of the public can always submit
17 written comments to the Commission during this meeting
18 or after the meeting by going to our website,
19 NJ.Gov/meeting/cannabis/meetings. And the deadline to
20 submit written comments for today's meeting is five
21 o'clock tomorrow, Thursday, June 2nd.

22 Speakers will be limited to three minutes.
23 So we'll have a timer on the screen. Please be
24 mindful of the time. And note that the public comment
25 period is really meant to give members of the public

1 an opportunity to address the Commission about matters
2 that the Commission should be aware of. This is
3 really not a space for people to simply market or
4 advertise private businesses. So please keep your
5 remarks focused on matters that pertain to the
6 Commission's work or items that the Commission should
7 be aware of.

8 With that, I will turn it over to Mr. Said
9 to call out the names of our speakers. When it is
10 your turn to speak, you'll be directed to unmute
11 yourself and then you'll be allowed to proceed.

12 MR. SAID: Thank you, Chairwoman. As a
13 reminder, public speakers during this afternoon's
14 public comment period will be limited to three
15 minutes. Please be respectful and concise during your
16 comments.

17 I'm going to call out the names three at a
18 time:

19 Buddy Greenberg;

20 Cassara Grasso;

21 And Chief Vincent Mann.

22 If you are attending, please raise your hand
23 so I can see you. I don't see any of those three
24 people, so I'll move on to the next.

25 David Feder;

1 Diana McElroy;
2 And Dylan Youngclaus.
3 Please raise your hand if you are in
4 attendance. Okay. On to the next three.

5 Ed Lee;
6 Eric Wudtke;
7 And John Dockery.

8 Okay. I see -- okay. Thank you for raising
9 your hands. I'll just go to Ed Lee.

10 MR. LEE: Can you hear me okay?

11 MR. SAID: Yes.

12 MR. LEE: Okay. I will start now.

13 MR. SAID: Okay.

14 MR. LEE: Good afternoon, members of the
15 Cannabis Regulatory Commission. My name is Ed Lee and
16 I'm the Director of Human Resources, People and
17 Culture for Peerless Beverage Company (phonetic).
18 Peerless is based in Union County, New Jersey, and it
19 is in its fourth generation of distributing beer,
20 wines, beers and progressive adult beverages
21 throughout northern New Jersey.

22 The community of the more than 275 people
23 who work for Peerless is as diverse as the state of
24 New Jersey, and that diversity is one of the keys to
25 our success.

1 Our workplace culture is thoughtful,
2 authentic and respectful. We have employment policies
3 that make it easier for people who work with us to
4 have careers and raise their families. Peerless is a
5 great place to work.

6 Several years ago, the leadership of
7 Peerless began to take steps to expand its businesses
8 into the cannabis wholesaling and distribution in New
9 Jersey and those proposed operations are the Green
10 Lane Distribution Company.

11 The founding principles of Green Lane are
12 consistent with the ethos of Peerless, and also align
13 with the CRC's own goals related to promoting social
14 equity and restorative justice.

15 Green Lane intends to operate as an impact
16 zone business. Notably, if Peerless were evaluated
17 according to the criteria, it would also qualify as an
18 impact zone business. Forty-one percent of our
19 current workforce resides in designated impact zones,
20 far exceeding the required 25 percent, and 28 percent
21 of those employees reside in the nearest impact zone.

22 Our employees from impact zones work
23 throughout the company in all departments and at all
24 levels. We offer competitive salaries and excellent
25 benefit packages. Our operations, delivery and sales

1 jobs are union jobs and compromise [sic] a large
2 majority of our workforce.

3 Employment with Peerless, and hopefully
4 someday with Green Lane, is a true avenue to economic
5 empowerment.

6 Green Lane was discouraged by the actions of
7 the board at its June 1st meeting which restricted
8 applicants for Classes 3, 4 and 6 licenses to social
9 equity applicants only for a period of one year,
10 followed by another period of exclusivity of three
11 months to diversely owned businesses. This prohibits
12 Green Lane from even applying for its licences until
13 the very last days of next year, and we have already
14 been waiting for over 18 months since Classes 1 and 2
15 licenses began to be accepted.

16 Quite frankly, the business is not viable
17 according to this time line. We believe that the
18 board adopted these restrictions to promote social
19 equity and we are committed to the same principles.
20 The impact zone designation is a meaningful one in the
21 pursuit of restorative justice. Ownership of cannabis
22 businesses is not the only way to achieve social
23 justice. Employment of people from economically
24 disadvantaged communities creates opportunities and
25 changes lives. We have seen it in our existing

1 business.

2 Further, the law requires that 25 percent of
3 businesses in each class be impact zone businesses,
4 and we believe that a period of exclusivity is not
5 compliant with the law.

6 we respectfully ask that the board
7 reconsider this restriction and to allow for all
8 businesses to apply accordingly to the priorities
9 assigned to the other classes of licensure.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. SAID: Thank you, Ed.

12 Next I'll go to the next person with their
13 hand raised, John Dockery.

14 MR. DOCKERY: Good afternoon, Council. And
15 thank you for your time today. My name is John
16 Dockery. I'm the CEO/owner of Simply Pure Downtown
17 Trenton Class 5 micro-dispensary.

18 I'm a little disappointed today because I
19 was hoping to be on the agenda due to the fact that I
20 submitted my conversion license March 14th. Even
21 though I'm a little disappointed, I'm very pleased
22 with the work the council is doing.

23 I was born and raised and still live in
24 Trenton, New Jersey today. Not the best of places,
25 but it's home to me, and these are my people.

1 Most people in this industry don't come from
2 places like Trenton. I've sold cannabis for over 20
3 years on the legal market and when the State of New
4 Jersey offered me this opportunity and made me a
5 priority, it was a no-brainer to me.

6 To my friends, it took a little more
7 convincing. The things that they said were like this
8 is a setup and you're going to jail. Needless to say,
9 some of them have different feelings today, and I
10 thank the board for that. We come from a place that
11 sometimes is very hopeless.

12 In my journey through this process, I
13 started May 26, 2022 with me receiving my conditional
14 license, one of the first in 11 -- one of the first 11
15 in the state. That's given my people hope.

16 My journey has been a wild one, to say the
17 least. But it's made me a better person. I'm giving
18 back hope to my city and I thank the council for that.

19 I walk into rooms that I have to represent
20 the true legacy people. I carry that with honor, not
21 with shame or guilt. We deserve to be here just like
22 everyone else.

23 I thank the CRC Board and the State of New
24 Jersey for this opportunity because where I'm from,
25 this doesn't happen often. Thank you for your time

1 today.

2 MR. SAID: Thank you, John.

3 Next I have Eric Wudtke.

4 MR. WUDTKE: Thank you.

5 Good afternoon, members of the Commission.

6 My name is Eric Wudtke. I'm speaking today on behalf
7 of Zacate LLC, a Class 5 conditional license holder
8 who has applied for conversion to annual licensure.

9 Zacate is a social equity business seeking
10 to open a retail dispensary in Delran, New Jersey.
11 And to prepare for that opening, real estate was
12 secured, vendors have been selected, local approvals
13 granted, permits issued and a general manager has been
14 hired.

15 Zacate, like so many others in this same
16 position, is ready to move forward once this
17 Commission acts on its conversion application. But
18 the focus on social equity and the CREAMM Act, the
19 rules, and the notice of application acceptance, we
20 were hopeful that Zacate would have received its
21 annual license by now, 161 days after submitting its
22 conversion application on January 11th.

23 Zacate is in Category 1C of the
24 Commissioner's priority categories and still hopes to
25 be approved before non-social-equity businesses.

1 I'll just say please, please provide updates
2 to license applicants or respond to the numerous
3 inquiries sent by Zacate's owner to employees at the
4 Commission and the Executive Director. This is an
5 expensive business with people's livelihoods on the
6 line. And the lack of responsiveness is frustrating.

7 Let's talk social equity more generally. At
8 the Commission's March meeting, we saw that 25 percent
9 of recreational license applications were from social
10 equity businesses through February 13th. Where is the
11 updated data on approval of social equity annual and
12 conversion applications? The Commission has this data
13 and people want to see it. Please put that data out
14 there on a more regular basis so that everyone can see
15 the Commission's progress and approving businesses in
16 the highest priority category, those most harmed by
17 the war on drugs.

18 New Jersey still has a chance to be a
19 guidepost for new adult-use cannabis markets, but most
20 do better in communicating with license applicants
21 during the application process, working with
22 applicants, and not leaving emails and phone calls
23 unanswered. The Commission must approve annual
24 licenses for social equity businesses and more
25 regularly report that data to the public.

1 Thank you for your time.

2 MR. SAID: Thank you, Eric.

3 Next on the list of speakers is the next

4 three:

5 Nicholas Scarpulla;

6 Paul Josephson;

7 And Pleshette Rose.

8 Please raise your hands if you are in

9 attendance.

10 Okay. I don't see those people.

11 Next on the list of speakers is Rejane

12 Ferreira and Wadeha Jackson.

13 Okay. I see Rejane.

14 MS. FERREIRA: Hi. This is Rejane. Can you

15 hear me?

16 MR. SAID: Yes.

17 MS. FERREIRA: Okay. So I am Rejane

18 Ferreira. I am the CEO and Chief Compliance Officer

19 for Valerie's Garden, LLC.

20 We currently have our conditional license

21 from the CRC which was granted to us almost a year

22 ago, and we've been working relentlessly to, you know,

23 get our SOPs in order and the CRC kindly did provide

24 us with an extension.

25 However, at this time, we're applying with

1 the City of Elizabeth, and it has been a little bit
2 difficult.

3 And my questions are, how much guidance is
4 the CRC giving the local municipalities and how much
5 discretion is given to the local council? At this
6 time, our application is about to be -- about to go in
7 front of the council members in Elizabeth next week.
8 But I have received phone calls from a council member
9 stating his dislike or non-approval of our application
10 ahead of the actual meeting, which, you know, brings a
11 lot of questions into my mind in terms of their
12 discretion in the matter because we have met all
13 regulatory requirements. Our application -- we have
14 crossed all the Ts, dotted all the Is, and everything
15 is in order.

16 And he expressed some dislike in our
17 location. However, we are zoned in the correct place
18 and everything is there.

19 So I really urge the Council to speak to the
20 local council members and really give them some
21 guidance into how the process should go moving forward
22 and, hopefully, we'll have a approval on our hands
23 soon. We are a one-hundred-percent minority business,
24 one-hundred-percent woman owned. And we are not a big
25 MSL. So our money, my life savings pretty much, has

1 been gone into this business. And I would really
2 appreciate any guidance from the CRC on this matter.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. SAID: Thank you, Rejane.

5 I'm going to go over the names that have not
6 spoken just one more time.

7 Buddy Greenberg;

8 Cassara Grasso;

9 And Chief Vincent Mann.

10 If you're in attendance, please raise your
11 hands.

12 David Feder;

13 Diana McElroy;

14 And Dylan Youngclaus.

15 Nicholas Scarpulla;

16 Paul Josephson;

17 Pleshette Rose;

18 And Wadeha Jackson.

19 Chairwoman Houenou, this looks like this
20 will conclude the registered speakers we have for
21 today's public meeting.

22 MS. HOUENOU: Thank you. And thank you to
23 all of our registered speakers for sharing your
24 thoughts.

25 This concludes the business that we have

1 before us today.

2 Is there any new business for the board to
3 consider? All right.

4 Hearing no new business, is there a motion
5 to adjourn?

6 MR. DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I move that
7 we adjourn.

8 MS. HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado.
9 Is there a second?

10 MR. BARKER: Second, Madam Chair.

11 MS. HOUENOU: Seconded by Commissioner
12 Barker.

13 Is there any discussion on this motion to
14 adjourn?

15 Hearing no discussion, all those in favor of
16 adjourning say aye.

17 (All say aye)

18 MS. HOUENOU: All those opposed, say nay.

19 Are there any abstentions?

20 Okay. Then the motion passes.

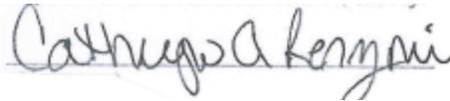
21 Thank you all for joining today's meeting.

22 Again, you can submit written comments to the
23 Commission via our website until tomorrow at five
24 o'clock p.m. The written comments submitted to the
25 Commission will be made public.

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CERTIFICATION

I, Cathryn Renzoni, the assigned transcriber, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of meeting of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission on June 21, 2023, is prepared in full compliance with the current Transcription Format for Judicial Proceedings and is a true and accurate transcript of the proceedings, as recorded, to the best of my ability.



Cathryn Renzoni

6/28/2023

Cathryn Renzoni	NJ CERT 565	Date
DEGNAN & BATEMAN, INC.		

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