



State of New Jersey
CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION

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KRISTA NASH, *Commissioner*
MARIA DEL CID-KOSSO, *Commissioner*
SAMUEL DELGADO, *Commissioner*
CHARLES BARKER, *Commissioner*
JEFF BROWN, *Executive Director*

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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NEW JERSEY CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024
COMMENCING AT 11:00 A.M.

1 APPEARANCES :

2

3 DIANNA HOUENOU, Commissioner, Chair

4 SAMUEL DELGADO, Commissioner, Co-Chair

5 KRISTA NASH, Commissioner

6 CHARLES BARKER, Commissioner

7 MARIA DEL CID-KOSSO, Commissioner

8 JEFF BROWN, Executive Director

9 DANIEL SAID, Board Secretary

10 WESLEY MCWHITE, Director of Diversity & Inclusion CHRIS

11 RIGGS, Chief Counsel 12

13 PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

14 JOHN DE LOS SANTOS, Royal Roll L.L.C

15 MATHA FIGARO, CannPowerment

16 SARAH AHRENS, NJCBA Laboratory Testing Committee

17 KRISTEN GOEDDE, Trichome Analytical

18 MARGARITA TSALYUK, Yuma Way

19 TRINA RAGSDALE, Jane's Joint LLC

20 DAB RIGA, TLEHL

21 JEREMY WATSON, Budtenderz.org

22 UNAH SON, Representing the consumers.

23 ZIGGY CHAU

24 ERIN GORE, Garden Society NJ LLC

25 SAVION BRYANT

- 1 PUBLIC SPEAKERS:
- 2 SAMUEL REICHBART
- 3 MOLLIE HARTMAN LUSTIG, McLaughlin & Stern
- 4 THOMAS GINEFRA, TerpTaxi
- 5 CARLOS ALMANZAR, Riverside genetics
- 6 JERIT SCIORRA
- 7 ROBERT SOUDERS, Elevated Herb LLC
- 8 MICHAEL BAJUZ, Green Knight Cannabis
- 9 DAVID LITTLE, Inclusion Gourmet, LLC NJ CRC License
- 10 Holder M000192
- 11 JEREMY WATSON, Budtenderz.org
- 12 DAVID FEDER, Weed Law
- 13 RYAN SUSSKIND
- 14 BRUCE D ROACH, ECS Health Systems 15
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1 CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. The time
2 is 11:05 and I call this meeting to order. Mr. Said,
3 can you please read the notice of the public meeting?

4 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman, this is a
5 regularly scheduled meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis
6 Regulatory Commission's 2024 annual meeting schedule.
7 Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in
8 accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public
9 Meetings Act. Notice of the meeting was provided to
10 the Asbury Park Press, Bergen record, Courier post,
11 Star ledger and the Trenton Times on December 12th,
12 2023.

13 The agenda and information regarding the
14 virtual nature of the meeting was also posted on the
15 CRC website. The meeting time and location has also
16 been posted on the website of the New Jersey Cannabis
17 Regulatory Commission, and with the office of the
18 Secretary of the State.

19 CHAIR: Thank you. Can you please take
20 roll call?

21 THE SECRETARY: Yes. Commissioner Barker?

22 MR. CHARLES BARKER: Present.

23 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
24 Kosso?

25 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Present.

1 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

2 MS. KRISTA NASH: Present.

3 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado is
4 absent. Chairwoman Houenou?

5 CHAIR: Present.

6 THE SECRETARY: We now have a quorum. The
7 first order of business is for the commission to go
8 into executive session to discuss legal matters and
9 litigation updates. These are discussions that are not
10 shared with the public. We believe the executive
11 session should take about 30 minutes.

12 CHAIR: Thank you. Do I have a motion?

13 MR. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move that we
14 go into executive session.

15 CHAIR: Is there a second?

16 MS. CID-KOSSO: Second.

17 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Barker,
18 seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso. Is there any
19 discussion on this motion to go into executive session?

20 Hearing none. All those in favor of going into
21 executive session say aye?

22 ALL: Aye.

23 CHAIR: Aye. All those opposed, say nay.

24 Any abstentions? Motion passes. As Mr. Said

25 mentioned, we expect the executive session to last

1 approximately 30 minutes. We will leave the live
2 stream rolling during that time so we can expect the
3 public session to resume at about 11:00 -- 11:37.

4 (Break)

5 Good afternoon, and welcome back. Thank
6 you for your patience, everyone. The time is 12:38,
7 and we will resume the public portion of this meeting.
8 Apologies for the executive session, going along a
9 little -- going a little long. As we do, we try to
10 anticipate the time it takes to thoroughly discuss
11 anything that we need to discuss in executive session.
12 Sometimes we underestimate that time that's needed, but
13 we try to -- to give some -- give our best estimated
14 time for -- for folks. Mr. Said, can you please
15 announce the next agenda item?

16 THE SECRETARY: Next up on the agenda is
17 approving the minutes of both the commissions open and
18 executive sessions held on December 7th. The minutes
19 have been shared with the members of the commission
20 prior to this meeting.

21 CHAIR: Thank you. I believe there was
22 one request to make a slight change or slight
23 correction to the meeting minutes for executive
24 session. Counsel Riggs, I just want to confirm whether
25 that correction has been made.

1 COUNSEL CHRIS RIGGS: Yes, Madam Chair,
2 that correction was made.

3 CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. Are there any
4 other corrections or changes needed? If none, I will
5 ask for a motion.

6 MS. CID-KOSSO: So I move Madam Chair.

7 MS. NASH: Second.

8 CHAIR: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso moves
9 to adopt the meeting minutes for the last public
10 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Nash. Is there any
11 discussion on this motion? Hearing none. All those in
12 favor of adopting the meeting minutes, say aye.

13 MS. CID-KOSSO: Aye.

14 MS. NASH: Aye.

15 MR. BARKER: Aye.

16 CHAIR: All those opposed say nay. Any
17 abstentions? Motion passes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Next item on the agenda is
19 the Chair's report.

20 CHAIR: Today's Chair's report is going to
21 be very, very brief. Happy New Year to -- to everyone.
22 I -- at the end of 2023 I shared a brief recap of some
23 of the work that we had accomplished in that year, and
24 in 2024 we'll continue to build on our successes thus
25 far.

1 Chiefly we'll look to increase
2 transparency and accountability as these are vital to
3 the successful implementation of the NJCRCs rules, and
4 ultimately to realizing the -- the vision for Cannabis
5 industry that is safe and responsible. So more details
6 including the specific goals and projects will be
7 shared at the next board meeting. That is all that I
8 have today for the Chair's report.

9 THE SECRETARY: Next item on the agenda is
10 the Executive Director's report.

11 CHAIR: Director Brown, the floor is
12 yours.

13 MR. JEFF BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair.
14 Similarly, I'm going to keep my comments brief here.
15 Just provide a licensing update overview of what's on
16 the agenda and preview some of the -- what may be
17 coming in either February or March. But -- and then,
18 you know, really want to save time mostly for our
19 Director of the Office of Diversity Inclusion, Wesley
20 McWhite, who's going to provide our quarterly data
21 update. So we'll move forward here. Next slide,
22 please.

23 So looking at licensing update, we now
24 have just shy of 2,500 applications have been submitted
25 to the CRC since we started accepting applications at

1 the end of 2021. Of those nearly 1700 have been
2 approved. We have about 160 applications still under
3 review, mostly more recent submissions in the office of
4 licensing.

5 307 -- there are 311 applications pending
6 resubmission following a cure. Those are applicant --
7 applications that need to be amended before they can be
8 resubmitted. And then there are currently 187
9 applications under review in the Office of Compliance
10 and Investigations.

11 Generally, with application timelines
12 we're, you know, just under 90 days for conditionals
13 and probably about six months for annuals and
14 conversions when everything is all ready to go and --
15 and ready to be moved forward.

16 Next slide, please. We continue to see a
17 lot of new openings. And I love the extent of this
18 list, new recreational only dispensaries opening all
19 over the state. We eclipsed 90 dispensaries in total
20 between medicinal and recreational, and we're now
21 covering 20 out of 21 counties -- counties in the state
22 of New Jersey. And this is a list of a lot of the
23 openings.

24 One of the things that we're gonna see in
25 -- in 2024 here is a lot more openings from cultivators

1 registration fees to \$10. And then we do anticipate
2 that a digital card will be released in the near future
3 which will be free to anyone who wishes to sign up.
4 Next slide. And last but not least for me, I wanna
5 make sure that everybody knows to use the Find A
6 License dispensary function on the NJCRCs website. It
7 can -- it's linked right on the menu bar.

8 This is a great resource and shout out to
9 our communications team and office of Information
10 Technology for helping to put this together. You know,
11 depending whether you're recreational or medicinal
12 consumer, this gives you every licensed dispensary
13 where they're located and -- and, you know, can help
14 you find licensed legal, safe regulated cannabis in --
15 in your community. And with that, thank you Madam
16 Chair. I'm gonna turn it over to Director McWhite to
17 run through our quarterly data report.

18 MR. WESLEY MCWHITE: Good afternoon, Madam
19 Chair, to the board. And really all of you that are
20 watching, really excited to -- to be with you all to
21 share some really promising and exciting data. Before
22 we get started, I want to thank our Director of Data,
23 Lynn (ph), LT, I'm gonna start calling him, for the
24 tremendous work he does pouring himself into these
25 numbers. It just -- it's just really appreciated and

1 he has a great passion for doing this.

2 Also want to thank our compliance
3 investigations team and also our licensing team, just
4 making sure that folks are getting across the finish
5 line and then getting operational. So we're gonna go
6 over a few things today. We're gonna go over awardee
7 application data as we do previously, as we've done
8 previous readouts, municipal awardee license
9 distribution, quarterly data benchmarks. And a new set
10 of slides will be information about operational
11 businesses.

12 And so, as you look at these numbers just
13 keep in mind that these are -- these are human beings.
14 These are individuals who have a dream of opening up a
15 cannabis business. And we're gonna continue to do
16 everything that we can to get people up and running and
17 expand this industry as quickly as possible.

18 Almost at next slide, and I am doing the
19 slide. So, first up, awardee application data. So as
20 you can see so far, as Jeff was saying earlier, we're
21 seeing a large amount of cultivators in manufacturers
22 so far that are approved annual and approved conversion
23 to annual. As always, we're going to see a large
24 number of retailers looking to get into this space with
25 a total of 1600, over 16, almost 1700 approved annuals,

1 approved conversion to annuals, and approved
2 conditionals.

3 We're pleased to see this large number of
4 approved cultivators be -- and manufacturers because
5 many are diversely owned. And they will be the
6 cornerstone that improves the quantity and variety of
7 the -- of cannabis products in our market. We're also
8 encouraged by the number of retailers that you see that
9 will eventually see more diversity and availability of
10 product on those shelves across the state as well.

11 Love this slide. This is my favorite. So
12 far we have approved 374 license awardees that are
13 social equity and diversely owned businesses. These
14 include conditional to annual conversions as last
15 quarter, quarter three, there were 49 social equity
16 businesses awarded, and we now have 65. And then last
17 quarter we had two -- 109, a hundred and nine newly
18 awarded diversely owned businesses since last quarter.
19 And so you can see we are going from 109 to 266, and we
20 can send you to see a rise in our social equity
21 businesses and diversely owned businesses with more in
22 the queue.

23 Key population data. Our rate of
24 submission to rates of approval remain at pace.
25 Applicants are making it through the process

1 successfully. And CRC staff are continuing --
2 continuously working diligent, and make sure that we
3 keep this up. And doing everything in our power to
4 ensure that business owners make it smoothly through
5 our process.

6 Annual awards by social equity status. So
7 four social equity awardees are -- have been approved -
8 - I'm sorry, yes, three have been approved social
9 equity as of last quarter, 48 or 62, I'm sorry, have
10 been approved a conversion to annual and 343 have been
11 approved conditional. We continue to see an uptick in
12 the number of awarded social equity businesses.

13 And so we wanna continue to see that go up
14 again next quarter for individuals that are filling out
15 or completing their conversion application and seeing a
16 continual dip in the number of approved conditionals,
17 because it's a indication to us that folks are
18 submitting their conversions to annuals.

19 Majority owners with prior marijuana
20 convictions. Here we go. I have my slides mixed up.
21 So, previously there were 31 approved conversion to
22 annuals for folks who are -- have prior marijuana
23 convictions that's gone from 31 to 48, four annuals so
24 far. And that 246 was a lot lower than it is here on
25 the slide.

1 Diversely-owned business awardees. These
2 -- we also see a steady incline in the number of
3 approved annuals and approved conversion to annuals and
4 approved conditionals, which is letting us know that
5 diversely owned businesses are still choosing to go
6 through our conditional track, where you don't need
7 annual approval just yet and you don't need site
8 control.

9 It's a really good sign that the industry
10 is taking advantage of some of those social equity
11 rules that are baked into just the lifeblood of our
12 agency. So last quarter, quarter three, we had 62
13 approved annuals that were diversely owned. As you can
14 see here, that is uptick to 95 as of quarter four.
15 Quarter three, we had 95 approved conversion to annuals
16 that are diversely owned businesses. We now have 169.
17 And then we have gone from 888 to 954. As I was saying
18 earlier, an indication that new conditionals are
19 applying for licensure.

20 Impact zone businesses. Another great
21 sign that impact zone businesses. Another priority
22 designation is making it all the way through our
23 process. Same as social equity businesses and
24 diversely owned businesses. We continue to see a
25 steady incline with the number of impact zone

1 businesses making it through. Quarter three, there
2 were 42 annual approved, 63 approved conversions to
3 annual. Here we have 107, and then last quarter we've
4 gone from 506 to 553 approved conditionals.

5 These are one of Vice Chair Sam Delgado's
6 favorites, I hope he is watching. And -- and annual
7 license awardees distribution by county. And as
8 always, we want continue to monitor where these
9 businesses are looking to set up shop. And so right at
10 the top leading the pack for these folks are Burlington
11 Atlantic in Camden County, shout out to South Jersey.

12 And we are -- continue to see retailers
13 leading across the board in all counties, which is
14 natural and encouraged to see representation of all
15 license classes across the board in certain counties,
16 or all annual license awardees across the board in
17 certain counties. And those counties stand a better
18 opportunity to see more tax growth and revenue and
19 cannabis tourism, you know, folks like to find the
20 right dispensary even if they have to travel for it.

21 And condition -- conditional to annual
22 conversions. I really like this slide. Leading the
23 pack here is Atlantic, Essex and Burlington County. So
24 again, shout out to South Jersey, and Essex County. We
25 see more conversions than we do straight to annuals in

1 counties which indicates that the conditional to
2 conversion route to licensure is still being embraced
3 and understood and valued at the local level.

4 The quarterly benchmark datas, I'm gonna
5 give you a spoiler alert, we are still surpassing our
6 statutory benchmarks. So far, well, I do wanna start
7 with approved licensed persons of Hispanic or Latino of
8 any race. So last quarter, quarter three, we saw 24
9 approved annuals. That is uptick in just one quarter
10 to 40. Quarter three of last year, we saw 48 approved
11 conversion to annuals for persons of Hispanic or Latino
12 descent. That is now 69. And then last quarter,
13 again, we saw 361 that is uptick to 399 with some
14 individuals that have applied for their conversion so
15 far.

16 So our Hispanic population is continuous -
17 - continuing to see a steady pace in their
18 participation and awardees as well. Diversely-owned
19 benchmarks, one of my favorite slides. We are at 46%
20 minority owned and 46% women and disabled veteran owned
21 surpassing our 15% statutory benchmarks by over 30%.
22 Also, very important for us to factor in diversity
23 certifications through the Department of Treasury with
24 expanded ATCs. And so, as you can see here, there are
25 five expanded ATCs that are minority and women business

1 owned, and three that are women business owned.

2 And in this next slide, you'll see if you
3 factor in those expanded ATCs, we're gonna continue to
4 monitor this. We are still surpassing our benchmarks
5 by -- at 20% and over 20%. When you reconcile race and
6 ethnicity for annual awardees, this is a breakdown of
7 where we are so far. Quarter three 70 -- 49, were
8 majority Asian owned, 41 were Black owned in quarter
9 three that has gone up to 67. And then 22 were
10 Hispanic or Latino owned, and that has gone up to 35.

11 We are still surpassing Asian and Black
12 New Jersey census populations. We still have some more
13 work to do with our Hispanic population and our
14 outreach efforts there. And we are also surpassing and
15 meeting federal ownership, census ownership across the
16 country for both black and Asian owned businesses
17 across multiple industries. And this is just a graph.
18 Lynn loves his graphs. It's a graph of the previous
19 slide.

20 So here we go. The meat and potatoes.
21 Who is open thus far? So, thus far, we have 59 open
22 businesses, operational businesses. So that's 17 women
23 business enterprises, 12 minority business enterprises,
24 nine minority and women business enterprises. And then
25 one disabled veteran-owned business.

1 So here you can see broken down by race
2 and ethnicity, something that we know that the board
3 was interested in seeing. We did some preliminary
4 outreach just this past week to understand why some of
5 these businesses are not operational just yet. And so,
6 immediately following this meeting in the coming days
7 and weeks, we're going to do some more fact finding
8 around some of the issues that folks are running into
9 at the local level or that -- and mostly that are
10 external to the CRC.

11 So -- so far, what we are hearing,
12 particularly from majority owned Black businesses,
13 Asian and Hispanic owned businesses and disabled
14 veteran owned businesses, we are seeing that they are
15 running into local planning and zoning board issues,
16 administrative turnover at the local level, funding and
17 keeping their -- their businesses, keeping their
18 investors educated about the changes in market and the
19 pace of when they are able to open, property shortage
20 across the state. Making sure that an available
21 property that is suitable for that business is
22 available in that county, has been particularly
23 difficult for some applicants. Rising construction
24 costs due to inflation has tripped some folks up.

25 And then lastly, yes, even cannabis stigma

1 still can -- still is a problem or a hiccup that some
2 folks are dealing with at the local level. And so we
3 want to continue to work diligently to reach out to
4 individuals who have been awarded a license who are not
5 yet operational. We wanna continue to remind
6 individuals that have been awarded, that are running up
7 against their one-year operational deadline, that you
8 can fill out an extension request as soon as you can.

9 If you -- if you even think that you're
10 going to now miss that deadline, you should communicate
11 with the CRC as soon as you have enough information to
12 provide to us. We want to continue to remind folks to
13 e-mail us at crc.info@crc.nj.gov where we are
14 responding to hundreds of e-mails a week, and
15 processing those e-mails and getting people the
16 information that they need to make the right decisions
17 for themselves a part of this process.

18 And so, while people juggle these external
19 barriers like financing, municipal approval, local
20 zoning, and yes, even cannabis stigma still, hiccups
21 still happen at through the CRC process. And so we're
22 still finding that some awardees are not understanding
23 the full process from start to -- from start to finish.

24 So -- so for example filling out the
25 necessary forms and paperwork, staying in constant

1 communication, which are compliance officer and
2 responding to e-mails and phone calls, making sure that
3 you're responding to any cure letters, making sure that
4 the contact information, the primary contact
5 information that is in your application portal is up to
6 date.

7 If you change the phone number, if you
8 want someone else to handle that part on your team to
9 handle that part for you, please, please, please make
10 sure that all of that information is correct and that
11 your e-mail is spelled correctly as well. So you can
12 find all of the information about our full process as
13 always, and our rules on our website.

14 If you are unsure, again, please e-mail us
15 at crc.info@crc.nj.gov. And please don't forget to
16 complete your extension request if you know that your
17 deadline is going to fall -- you're going to run up
18 against your deadline and trying to get operational.

19 And lastly, we have a breakdown of where
20 these licenses are. What type of class licenses are.
21 We have five open cultivators and four manufacturers.
22 And as we saw, many, many more to come in much more
23 variety and quality of -- of product entering into our
24 market soon. Many class five retailers that are open
25 and testing laboratories as well.

1 38% of these businesses are impact zone
2 businesses, statutory counties and zip codes that have
3 been identified as -- impacted by the war on drugs.
4 11% are owned by individuals with previous marijuana
5 convictions, 15% are social equity business, and 67%,
6 67% of our annual awardee so far are diversely owned
7 businesses.

8 And so, again just in closing, we wanna
9 continue to work with individuals, not just at the
10 application process, but all the way through the
11 process until they become operational. And -- and just
12 before I turn this back over to Executive Director
13 Brown and the Chair, the phone calls that I've made
14 personally to individuals who are not yet operational
15 encouraged me.

16 I wanna let you all know to continue to
17 keep working at it. I hear your determination, I hear
18 your resolve and your excitement, and we are excited --
19 excited too. And we'll continue to do everything that
20 we can to get you operational. And that is it for me,
21 and I'm turning it back over to you all.

22 CHAIR: Thank you, Director McWhite.
23 Great work from by the -- by the ODI. Director Brown,
24 is there anything?

25 MR. BROWN: Yeah, thank you, Director

1 McWhite. I just did wanna note on the operational
2 business slides. The -- those are new recreational
3 only awardees. Our ATC data -- data is mostly on a
4 legacy system. And so, you know, we'll have ATCs
5 included on all this soon. But until we get them into
6 -- fully into our licensing system some of the data we
7 pull is not, you know, is not comprehensive.

8 But great work Director McWhite, you know,
9 really appreciate what you and your office do
10 particularly around outreach. And you know, really
11 appreciate that, that you all are turning a focus to
12 the awardees and trying to figure out what the barriers
13 are and -- and helping them to get operational 'cause -
14 - 'cause that's critical. And thankfully we have some
15 good state partners to help us with that now with
16 Business Action Center and -- and NJEDA. So with that
17 back to you, Madam Chair.

18 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Brown. And
19 thank, again, great work by the Office of Diversity
20 Inclusion. Thank you for the -- the detailed update on
21 the data. Before we move on to the next agenda item, I
22 forgot to mention when we resumed the public session
23 that there is a slight change to the agenda. So when
24 it comes to our adult use cannabis business
25 applications for the expanded ATC certifications, there

1 is one business that is being post -- consideration of
2 their application is being postponed. About that is
3 Harmony Foundation.

4 The board is going to be waiting to get
5 some additional information from -- from staff that
6 they're diligently working on. So that item is going
7 to be postponed and be considered at the next regular
8 board meeting of the commission. But that is the only
9 agenda tape -- agenda change that we have today. Mr.
10 Said, can you please announce the next agenda?

11 MR. BARKER: Madam Chair, can we just have
12 brief comments on the data that was shared?

13 CHAIR: Oh, sure. Commissioner Barker.

14 MR. BARKER: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
15 just thank you, executive Director Brown, thank you,
16 Director McWhite, LT and the group, thank you
17 everybody. Definitely something that we as a board
18 have been asking for, and so to receive this data
19 especially this voluminous definitely gonna go through
20 it may follow up more in depth over the next few days
21 and weeks before the next meeting.

22 But what I do wanna ask just preliminarily
23 if we can continue to really break down the data. Some
24 of the slides are very specific to majority Black and
25 indigenous and Hispanic ownership. And I'll be happy

1 to relate this in the e-mail, but if we can continue to
2 unpack specifically like social equity businesses,
3 previous marijuana convictions, diversity owned
4 businesses. Can we start to unpack those to see what
5 the majority Black, majority Hispanic, majority
6 indigenous ownership is?

7 I think that would help also tell the --
8 paint the picture of what the New Jersey cannabis
9 industry looks like. Motivated by the operational
10 business license under cream slide, I mean, I think
11 that definitely shows that we gotta continue to
12 increase the number of black and Hispanic and
13 indigenous cannabis businesses in the industry.

14 And -- and I'll just say, you know, even
15 right now we're at the -- we're in a new month in 2024,
16 we're a few years into this, you know, I believe the
17 proposed annuals, we may have one majority black-owned
18 business being proposed to us today. And so we
19 definitely need to understand this data. We definitely
20 need to see it more.

21 I'm -- I'm encouraged, and motivated and -
22 - and -- and -- and ecstatic that we're blowing our
23 statutory requirements out the water. But the
24 statutory requirements don't necessarily paint the
25 picture of whether black and indigenous and Hispanic

1 people, those most harmed that we're trying to
2 prioritize if they're getting in the game and if
3 they're receiving a licenses and awards. And so
4 definitely encouraged by the information, but I'm gonna
5 ask that we continue to layer in the specific
6 representation of majority Black, majority indigenous,
7 and majority Hispanic ownership. Thank you, Madam
8 Chairman.

9 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Barker.
10 Director Brown, do you care to respond to the -- to the
11 request?

12 MR. BROWN: No, I was just gonna say, you
13 know, we've -- we've been doing so, and we'll continue
14 to do so.

15 MR. BARKER: Thank you, Director Brown.

16 MR. BROWN: Yep.

17 CHAIR: Thank you. And thank you
18 Commissioner Barker for -- for your acknowledgement,
19 you know, that the -- I think it is important for --
20 for us to -- to remember that analysis of this data
21 helps us assess whether or not the regulations and the
22 processes that we're putting in place are working in
23 achieving the goals that we have set out for ourselves.
24 So we'll continue to -- to see how we can best
25 interpret the data that we've gotten. Are there any

1 other questions from the board for Director Brown?

2 MS. CID-KOSSO: Madam Chair, it's more of
3 a comment.

4 CHAIR: Yes.

5 MS. CID-KOSSO: I would like to, you know,
6 thank the staff for all of their hard work put in this
7 report together. We've been asking for this
8 information, so thank you for being very transparent
9 about the numbers and, you know, painting a good
10 picture of where we are in terms of who's got a license
11 and -- and those priorities that we have in place. So
12 thank you again for that information.

13 Thank you, Wesley, for your report. I --
14 I did see and notice that majority owned Latino numbers
15 were 15% and Black and African American was 7%. I know
16 we have a lot of work to do, and those are -- those are
17 great numbers, but I think we can definitely, you know,
18 once we see more of those businesses become operational
19 hopefully (inaudible) that those numbers will increase.

20 And again, for the record Wesley, you need
21 anything from the commission, I think a lot of us have
22 a lot of grassroots connections and also the expertise
23 to communicate with, you know, Latino or a Latino
24 community or a Black community, we're happy, we're
25 happy to help you in any way that we can. So thank

1 you.

2

CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Del Cid.
3 Anything else for Director Brown? All right. Hearing
4 none, Mr. Said, please announce the next agenda item.

5 THE SECRETARY: Next item on the agenda
6 are publications to the New Jersey Register.

7 CHAIR: Thank you. Here we have one item
8 for publication in the New Jersey's register, and that
9 is rule adoption. So I will turn it over to Director
10 Brown and Chief Counsel Riggs.

11 MR. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
12 you know, really exciting that we have this rule
13 adoption on consumption lounges. I think it adheres to
14 both of our core values of safety and equity. And I'm
15 gonna pass it over to Chief Counsel, Chris Riggs to
16 kind of walk through what's -- what's in it. And so
17 take it away, Chris.

18 COUNSEL RIGGS: Thank you, Executive
19 Director Brown and Chairwoman Houenou. The good news
20 is that I'm gonna be brief because there aren't many
21 changes of the -- from the proposal that we filed, and
22 that was approved by the board that was published in --
23 in the register in January of '23. These new
24 consumption area rules allow for the operation of the
25 consumption area at a class five retailer. It must be

1 attached to that retail space.

2 It requires both CRC approval and
3 municipal approval. There's the operation of one
4 cannabis consumption area for each entity, regardless
5 of the number of class five retailers that they have
6 open or dispensary ATC permits. You cannot sell any
7 tobacco products or alcohol or food at these
8 consumption areas, but remember that food can be
9 delivered or you can bring food with you as a consumer
10 to the consumption area if the business allows so.

11 Patrons must be 21 years or older to enter
12 the consumption area, and medicinal patients are
13 allowed to bring in their own cannabis items so long as
14 they're purchased from legal dispensaries or legal ATCs
15 in -- in the state of New Jersey.

16 Next slide, please. The fees associated
17 with the cannabis consumption areas, lower fees for the
18 micro businesses, a thousand dollars for the initial
19 fee and the renewal, standard businesses for their
20 initial fee and renewal will pay \$5,000. These
21 consumption area endorsements are valid for one year.
22 As far as the rule adoption document goes. We had
23 approximately 230 commenters on the rule proposal.
24 We've responded to all the comments. These comments
25 are in the adoption document that you've received.

1 The -- we will be filing this rule
2 adoption document with the Office of Administrative Law
3 today on January 17th of '24, soon after this meeting,
4 assuming that it's approved by the board. That will
5 set us up for publication date in the register of
6 February 20th of '24. That's February 20th of this
7 year. That's when it'll be published in the register
8 and when the rules will become effective. And, you
9 know, this is an endorsement, so there'll be more to
10 come from the CRC to -- to show specified retailers how
11 they can submit an application to receive an
12 endorsement for consumption areas. So stay tuned for
13 that information.

14 And at this point, I'm recommending that
15 the board approves the -- the rule adoption document
16 for cannabis consumption areas. Thank you, Madam
17 Chair.

18 MR. BROWN: And Madam Chair, just one, one
19 piece there. I -- I just wanted to reiterate Chief
20 Counsel's last point. So if approved they have to go
21 into the register, and once they're in the New Jersey
22 register, then the -- the rules would be effective.
23 And then we will be releasing information on how to
24 apply for a consumption area. So that's a, that's
25 another piece that will have to happen before folks can

1 start to actually submit applications for consumption
2 areas.

3 So a couple more steps that need to happen
4 here. But this is a big, you know, big milestone and -
5 - and, you know, great job to our legal team who --
6 who, you know, worked to help draft these commissioners
7 who provided feedback. And yeah, I concur. Recommend
8 these -- these get approved.

9 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Brown, and
10 thank you Chief Counsel Riggs. Quick question
11 regarding, Director Brown, the -- the -- what you just
12 shared about next steps, I just wanna clarify the next
13 step. If a -- if this item is approved, the next step
14 would be for issuance of or updating the notice of
15 application acceptance for applications for this
16 endorsement, is that correct? Okay. Nodding your
17 head, yes. Okay, great.

18 MR. BROWN: That is correct, yeah. And,
19 you know, potentially via addendum but yeah, that's --
20 that's the vehicle that would announce the, you know,
21 the process for accepting applications.

22 CHAIR: Okay, great. Thank you. Are
23 there any other questions from board members?

24 MR. BARKER: Just a -- just a brief
25 thought for consideration, Madam Chair?

1 CHAIR: Commissioner Barker, go ahead.

2 MR. BARKER: I just wanna humbly ask all
3 of my fellow board members, my -- my team, my family to
4 strongly consider an exclusivity period for social
5 equity businesses, for diversity owned businesses.
6 Specifically, the retailers that are gonna be looking
7 to obtain cannabis consumption area endorsement. It's
8 critical. It's a critical component to establishing
9 and maintaining equity and leveling the playing field.
10 And I do know other states and municipalities have
11 implemented exclusivity periods in the name of social
12 justice.

13 And so I think it's at least appropriate
14 that we consider it. So, I -- I know you mentioned the
15 notice of application acceptance, and I think it may be
16 more appropriate for that, but I did just want to
17 highlight that and get ahead of it as we continue to
18 move this forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Barker.
20 And -- and yes, that -- that is certainly a
21 consideration for us when we get to the notice of
22 application acceptance. So your -- your proposal or
23 your suggestion for us to consider an exclusivity
24 period for certain businesses is certainly taken under
25 advisement and will be addressed when we get to the

1 notice of application acceptance phase.

2 MR. BARKER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 CHAIR: If there are no additional
4 questions for Director Brown and Counsel Riggs, I'll
5 ask for a motion on this matter.

6 MR. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move that we
7 approve the proposed rules for cannabis consumption
8 areas.

9 CHAIR: Is there a second?

10 MS. CID-KOSSO: Second.

11 CHAIR: I'm sorry, who was that? Was that
12 Commissioner Del Cid?

13 MS. CID-KOSSO: Yes.

14 CHAIR: Okay, great. Thank you. Seconded
15 by Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso to approve the final rule
16 adoption for cannabis consumption areas. Is there any
17 discussion on this motion to approve the rules?
18 Hearing none, Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

19 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

20 MR. BARKER: Aye.

21 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
22 Kosso?

23 MS. CID-KOSSO: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

25 MS. NASH: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

2 CHAIR: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY: The -- the motion passes.

4 Next item -- next item on the agenda is the
5 consideration of applications for name changes.

6 CHAIR: Thank you. Director Brown, I'll
7 turn it over to you for a summary of the permit and
8 license change requests.

9 MR. BROWN: We have two name change
10 requests, one from Yuma Way, New Jersey to Garfield
11 Gardens dispensary, LLC and one from Cannabis NJ. And
12 you can go to the next slide, they're -- they're listed
13 on here. Cannabis NJ, LLC to Green Oasis Dispensary
14 NJ, LLC. Both have, you know, submitted the relevant
15 documentation filed with doors filed with the Secretary
16 of State. And so both are recommended for approval.

17 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Brown. Are
18 there any questions from the board? Hearing none, is
19 there a motion on this matter?

20 MS. CID-KOSSO: Madam Chair, move to adopt
21 this resolution concerning the adoption of approval
22 applications to change the business name of adult use
23 license awardees.

24 MS. NASH: Second.

25 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Del Cid-

1 Kosso to adopt the resolution. Seconded by
2 Commissioner Nash. Is there any discussion on this
3 motion? Hearing no discussion, Mr. Said, can you
4 please call the vote?

5 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

6 MR. BARKER: Aye.

7 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
8 Kosso?

9 MS. CID-KOSSO: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

11 MS. NASH: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

13 CHAIR: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. Next
15 item for consideration are the adult use cannabis
16 business conditional license applications.

17 CHAIR: Thank you. And Director Brown, I
18 will turn it back over to you to provide a summary of
19 the conditional license applications received.

20 MR. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
21 I'm gonna, for all the license applications, just run
22 through the -- the overall process at the outset and
23 then run through the -- the numbers for each specific
24 application type. So when we receive a license
25 application, it's assigned a priority based on what

1 type of application it is with social equity business
2 being highest. And you know, an application that has
3 no priority designation being lowest diversely owned
4 businesses a second then impacts on business then bonus
5 points.

6 That priority is verified. Our staff then
7 conducts completeness review to make sure everything's
8 there in the application. They are then scored.
9 Applications that score sufficiently high, move forward
10 to -- in the case of -- well all applications move
11 forward to a review of qualification limitations and
12 financial and management services agreement review.

13 Then for conditional conversion and annual
14 applications, they undergo a full qualification review.
15 So that's a criminal history background check,
16 financial investigations -- financial investigations,
17 conditionals do not undergo that until they apply for a
18 conversion. Our staff conducts quality control and
19 then we make a recommendation to the board.

20 And so all the applications that are
21 recommended for approval here have gone through that
22 whole process and are recommended for approval. We'll
23 start with 22 conditional licenses applications broken
24 down as -- as noted on the slide there. Thank you.

25 CHAIR: Thank you. Are there any

1 questions from the board regarding the information
2 provided by Director Brown? Hearing none, is there a
3 motion on this matter?

4 MR. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move that we
5 approve the (inaudible) use conditional applications.

6 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Barker. Is
7 there a second?

8 MS. NASH: Second.

9 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Is
10 there any discussion on this motion? Hearing no
11 discussion, Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

12 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker.

13 MR. BARKER: Aye.

14 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
15 Kosso?

16 MS. CID-KOSSO: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

18 MS. NASH: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

20 CHAIR: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. Next
22 item for consideration are the adult-use cannabis
23 business conversion license applications.

24 CHAIR: Thank you. Director Brown, back
25 over to you.

1 MR. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair. So
2 here we have 36 conversion applications that have gone
3 through the full process and are recommended for
4 approval by the the CRC Board.

5 CHAIR: Thank you. And we have the list
6 of -- there we are. Thank you. Are there any
7 questions from the board regarding information provided
8 for these applications? Hearing none, is there a
9 motion on this matter?

10 MS. NASH: Madam Chair, I move to approve
11 the resolution for conversion application, AU
12 conversion applications.

13 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Nash to
14 approve the applications. Is there a second?

15 MS. CID-KOSSO: Second.

16 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
17 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion?
18 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Said, can you please call
19 the vote?

20 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

21 M MR. BARKER: Abstain.

22 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
23 Kosso?

24 MS. CID-KOSSO: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

1 MS. NASH: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

3 CHAIR: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. Next
5 item for consideration are the adult-use cannabis
6 business annual license applications.

7 CHAIR: Thank you. Director Brown, over
8 to you.

9 MR. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Here
10 we have I believe 11. Go to the next slide, please.
11 Sorry, 12 annual license applications. They've all
12 gone through the process that I outlined at the
13 beginning of the license application section and are
14 recommended for approval today by the CRC Board.

15 CHAIR: Thank you. Are there any
16 questions from the board regarding the annual license
17 applications? Hearing no questions, is there a motion
18 on this matter?

19 MR. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move that we
20 approve the adult use annual license applications.

21 CHAIR: Is there a second?

22 MS. CID-KOSSO: Second.

23 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
24 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion?

25 MR. BARKER: Brief discussion -- brief

1 matter point of discussion.

2 CHAIR: Yes.

3 MR. BARKER: I just wanna -- to -- to the
4 businesses on this list that truly represent equity in
5 our -- in our -- represent the war on drugs. Thank
6 you. And -- and I hope that all of you are great
7 actors in our industry.

8 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Barker.
9 Is there any other discussion on this motion? Hearing
10 no further discussion, Mr. Said, can you please call
11 the vote?

12 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker.

13 MR. BARKER: Aye.

14 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
15 Kosso?

16 MS. CID-KOSSO: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

18 MS. NASH: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

20 CHAIR: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. Next
22 item for consideration are the expanded ATC
23 certifications.

24 CHAIR: All right. And here again we have
25 one -- one expanded ATC certification that is being

1 postponed until we can get some of additional
2 information from staff. And that'll just be considered
3 at the next regular meeting of the board. But with
4 respect to the one remaining expanded ATC
5 certification, Director Brown, I'll turn it to you to
6 provide a summary.

7 MR. BROWN: Thank you. So this is for
8 Sanctuary Cannabis, LLC. The expanded ATCs need to
9 submit a number of certifications to the CRC one that
10 they have adequate supply, adequate operational
11 capacity to -- to serve patients and AU consumers
12 municipal approval. And, you know, some other
13 information. We look at their ability to continue to
14 service the medical market and their plans going
15 forward.

16 And Sanctuary Cannabis has -- has met all
17 those statutory requirements and -- and regulatory
18 requirements, and therefore is recommended for approval
19 here for expansion into the adult use market.

20 CHAIR: Thank you. Is there any -- are
21 there any questions for -- from the board regarding the
22 information provided by Director Brown specifically
23 with respect to a Sanctuary Cannabis, LLC as that is
24 the only item currently up for consideration? All
25 right. Hearing no questions from the board, is there a

1 motion with respect to Sanctuary Cannabis, LLC?

2 MS. NASH: Madam Chair, I move to accept
3 the certification of Sanctuary Cannabis to expand,
4 operate -- to expand operations to use cannabis market.

5 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Nash to
6 accept the certification. Is there a second?

7 MS. CID-KOSSO: Second.

8 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
9 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion with
10 respect to Sanctuary Cannabis, LLC? Hearing no
11 discussion, Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

12 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

13 MR. BARKER: Abstain.

14 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
15 Kosso?

16 MS. CID-KOSSO: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

18 MS. NASH: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

20 CHAIR: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. Next
22 item for consideration is the consideration of annual
23 license renewals. Sorry.

24 CHAIR: Yes. We do not have any annual
25 license renewals, but I believe we've got cases, claims

1 and petitions for the ATC identification cards.

2 THE SECRETARY: Yes, I -- I'm sorry.

3 CHAIR: That's all right. So with that, I
4 will turn it over to Director Brown for any information
5 on the ATC identification cards.

6 MR. BROWN: And I'm gonna pass it. Thank
7 you, Madam Chair. I'll pass it over to Chief Counsel
8 Riggs.

9 COUNSEL RIGGS: Thank you, Director Brown
10 and Chairwoman Houenou. Similar to the last meeting,
11 we have employees, ATC employees that have followed the
12 process to get background checked and fingerprinted.
13 Through that process, they -- it was uncovered that
14 they had a disqualifying conviction. They were
15 notified and have requested that they be considered
16 rehabilitated under the statute and the accompanying
17 regulations.

18 There are five employees. These -- they
19 have all challenged -- they -- they have the ability to
20 challenge the accuracy of their conviction and submit
21 information to show that they were rehabilitated. All
22 of them have submitted sufficient information to meet
23 the standard under the statute of the company and
24 regulations. And therefore, staff is recommending that
25 all five of these employees be considered

1 rehabilitated. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

2 CHAIR: Thank you, Counsel Riggs. Are
3 there any questions from the board or Counsel Riggs or
4 Director Brown? Hearing no questions. Is there a
5 motion on this matter?

6 MR. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move that we
7 approve the request for determination of rehabilitation
8 by ATC employees.

9 MS. CID-KOSSO: Second.

10 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Barker,
11 seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso to approve the
12 request for rehabilitation. Is there any discussion on
13 this motion? Hearing no discussion, Mr. Said, can you
14 please call the vote?

15 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker.

16 MR. BARKER: Aye.

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
18 Kosso?

19 MS. CID-KOSSO: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

21 MS. NASH: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

23 CHAIR: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. Next
25 item on the agenda is the open public comment period.

1 CHAIR: Thank you. As we begin the open
2 public comment period, I want to remind members of the
3 public that they can submit their comments to the
4 commission during or after this board meeting by going
5 to our website, nj.gov/cannabis/meetings and submitting
6 written comments. The deadline for providing written
7 comments for today's -- in response to today's meeting
8 is five o'clock tomorrow, Thursday, January 18th.

9 Written comments will be shared with
10 commission members and will be made public. Speakers
11 today will be limited to three minutes each. And so --
12 I believe it's either Mr. Said or Mr. Director, McWhite
13 will call out the names of those individuals who have
14 registered to speak. When it is your -- when you hear
15 your name called, I believe raising your hand in the
16 Zoom feature will help our staff identify you and
17 unmute you.

18 I believe we don't have anyone joining us
19 by phone, so great. If you -- if we see -- if we -- if
20 you hear your name called but your name does not appear
21 on Zoom as the name you registered to speak, then we're
22 gonna be limited in being able to confirm that it is
23 indeed you who wishes to provide some -- some comments.

24 So take a moment if you can, to make sure
25 that your name as it appears on Zoom is -- is correct

1 and is the same name that you used to register to
2 speak. I see we have several people joining us with
3 just their first names. And so those individuals are
4 gonna be hard for us to identify if you are a
5 registered speaker. So if that is the case, if that's
6 you take a moment to log out of Zoom, come back in,
7 that should prompt you to confirm your name and your e-
8 mail address.

9 If you're working with an older version of
10 Zoom, this feature might not work very well for you.
11 But even if that is the case, you can always submit
12 written comments to us at the commission by going to
13 our website before tomorrow -- five o'clock tomorrow.
14 With that, Mr. Said and Director McWhite, you can call
15 out the names of our first speakers.

16 THE SECRETARY: Thank you, Chairwoman. As
17 a reminder, public speakers during this afternoon's
18 public comment period will be limited to three minutes.
19 Please be respectful and concise during your comments.
20 I'm gonna call out the names. If you're -- if you hear
21 your name called, please raise your hand so that we're
22 able to find you and unmute you. John De Los Santos,
23 Matha Figaro, and Sarah Ahrens. Okay. I think Matha,
24 you -- you can go.

25 MS. MATHA FIGARO: Oh, okay. Good

1 afternoon, commissioners. My name is Matha Figaro. I
2 am the CEO of CannPowerment, contract manufacturing,
3 and also of butter cake and edibles brand. And
4 honestly, I really -- I -- I didn't want to be the
5 person that had to come up here and air my grievances
6 publicly. There have been so many times in which I've
7 tried to reach out to you guys so we could have private
8 conversations, e-mails have been sent, things of that
9 nature.

10 And it's just been a really difficult
11 process trying to put product on shelves and be someone
12 that can show everybody that it is possible to be a
13 legacy operator that's come from the unregulated market
14 and successfully landed into New Jersey's regulated
15 market. But at this rate, while I would love to be,
16 you know, somebody that's here to provide accolades,
17 I'm really more frustrated with how the -- the clerical
18 side of things are going for product approvals to be
19 taking over a hundred days is, is pretty -- it's, it's
20 a sounding to me honestly.

21 And I really just hope that we could have
22 a conversation in private so that I could go into the
23 details of what it is that is truly making this process
24 even more difficult than it's already been.
25 I've done everything in my power to adhere to every

1 single rule that you've put in front of me. I applied
2 through the conditional process, got it all in. I
3 never needed an extension. I never had problems
4 raising the little bit of money that I needed to get
5 this done.

6 And I just feel like every single week you
7 guys are saying the same things over and over again
8 when I am literally here proving that this can be done.
9 And so, with a little bit of assistance, and honestly
10 just some courtesy in timely fashion, answering e-mails
11 and stuff like that would make this that much easier
12 and would honestly be able to allow all of my retail
13 partners that you guys are, you know, giving licenses
14 to so quickly, it would allow them to also better
15 capitalize on this opportunity.

16 So I'm just hoping that you guys could fix
17 some of the administrative and clerical issues, timely
18 issues that you have to help this process move forward.
19 And I would love to be able to have a conversation in
20 private regarding these matters. Thank you.

21 THE SECRETARY: I -- I see Sarah Ahrens,
22 so I'm going to allow you to -- to -- okay.

23 MS. SARAH AHRENS: Good afternoon. Thank
24 you for the opportunity to address you today. I'm
25 Sarah Ahrens, I'm the founder and CEO of True Labs for

1 Cannabis. And I come before you as the chair of the
2 New Jersey Cannabis Business Association's Laboratory
3 Testing Committee. We're a group of scientists and
4 laboratory testing professionals, most of whom have
5 master's or PhD degrees in natural sciences with over a
6 hundred years of combined cannabis experience, we
7 advocate and serve as a resource for the enhancement of
8 cannabis testing standards, scientific integrity and
9 safety for cannabis consumers in the state of New
10 Jersey.

11 First, we applaud the commission staff and
12 Executive Director Brown for the modification made last
13 week to adjust the usable cannabis microbial test for
14 total yeast and mold from a limit of 10,000 CFU per
15 gram to a limit of a hundred thousand CFU per gram.
16 This is a great first step towards appropriate testing
17 standards for New Jersey.

18 Second, we understand the commission is
19 taking steps to move forward with the establishment of
20 New Jersey's own comprehensive testing guidance for
21 cannabis. We appreciate the movement forward on this
22 testing guidance, and the ability to serve as a
23 scientific resource to the commission. And we're
24 eagerly anticipating New Jersey's own standards for a
25 safe and effective marketplace.

1 And last but not least, we again draw your
2 attention to one of the largest problems in cannabis
3 markets, questionable laboratory practices and data
4 spurred by lab shopping. This issue is wreaking havoc
5 on legal markets in the US, New jersey's not immune to
6 this problem, and it is posing a serious threat to the
7 integrity of the cannabis industry in our state.

8 Without trusted and accurate testing data,
9 how will the CRC be able to stand behind the bi-legal
10 it's safe campaign, how will the legal market pull more
11 consumers away from the illicit market? We must
12 address this issue with effective lab governance to
13 create a transparent and accountable system. The
14 efficacy of this governance will make or break our
15 market.

16 The commission should explore measures to
17 enhance monitoring, reporting, and auditing processes
18 within lab -- testing laboratories to ensure the
19 reliability and accuracy of the data generated. Our
20 laboratory testing committee worked diligently on a set
21 of recommendations for a robust lab governance program.

22 We pulled best practices from cannabis
23 markets across the country and have outlined a
24 comprehensive plan that can be implemented swiftly to
25 address the current gaps in the system. By taking

1 immediate action on these recommendations, the CRC can
2 demonstrate its commitment to upholding the highest
3 standards in cannabis testing, ensure patient and
4 consumer safety, and ensure the long-term success of
5 the regulated market in New Jersey.

6 So in conclusion, we at the Laboratory
7 Testing Committee urge the commission to continue to
8 focus on the establishment of New Jersey's own testing,
9 guidance, and to address questionable laboratory data
10 through the implementation of an effective lab
11 governance program without delay. The citizens of New
12 Jersey deserve a well-governed, and safe cannabis
13 industry, and your leadership is pivotal in achieving
14 this goal. Thank you for your time and dedication to
15 the betterment of our community.

16 THE SECRETARY: The -- the next three on
17 the list are Andrea Rebel, Margarita Tsalyuk, and Trina
18 Ragsdale.

19 MS. ANDREA REBEL: Hello.

20 THE SECRETARY: Okay. Hi.

21 MS. REBEL: My name is Andrea Rebel. I am
22 a medical patient in this state. I have epilepsy and
23 permanent and progressive brain damage. I've been off
24 all pharmaceuticals for roughly six years. Cannabis is
25 my only option, and it's helped me avoid catastrophic

1 brain surgery so far. But I would like to address how
2 difficult it is to survive as a patient in this state.

3 The J. Koenig Compassionate Use Medical
4 Cannabis Act was passed in 2019. It accomplished a
5 variety of things, but it was also supposed to provide
6 for institutional caregivers. They're supposed to be a
7 dedicated employee at every hospital and hospice
8 capable of everything from obtaining to administering
9 cannabis medicine. Yet patients are still forced to
10 choose between medical supervision and their
11 (inaudible) in itself.

12 People are still dying without the support
13 and access five years later. It's cruel and it can be
14 deadly to deny this for patients like me.
15 Every seizure can be fatal yet hospitals deny my
16 epilepsy medicine. I have strained specific non-
17 combustible formulations that can stop an active
18 seizure yet if I were to be admitted, they would have
19 no choice but to watch me remain in a status seizure
20 until I expire.

21 It's tragic and unacceptable that half a
22 decade after passing legislation, there's no relief.
23 It's disheartening and quite frankly alarming the lack
24 of urgency and education demonstrated by the CRC in
25 regards to patient needs compared to financial

1 interests. The members of the CRC are spread too thin,
2 regulating too many areas, making it impossible to keep
3 up on current research.

4 I implore you to listen to the lab testing
5 committee who spoke earlier, and please instate a
6 scientific advisor in the CRC. You need specific
7 scientific support to understand how crucial minor
8 differences can be for patients. Finding the right
9 strain and formulation for a critically ill patient is
10 as unique as their fingerprint, but patients have no
11 support in institutions and no stable options at home.

12 Until testing improves, dispensary
13 medications are questionable and specific medical
14 strains are often unpopular commercially. They have
15 low yield, longer harvest times and are as rare as the
16 disorders we're treating. They sometimes require
17 multi-generation custom breeding projects. It's not
18 currently the responsibility of ATCs and dispensaries,
19 and nor should they be responsible to sacrifice the
20 greater good to serve select individuals.

21 But at the same time, it's inhumane to
22 deny patients the medicine they need based on a
23 popularity contest or profit margins. I understand
24 it's outside of the jurisdiction of the CRC, but I beg
25 members and especially industry members listening to

1 personally speak up to legislation for homegrown now.
2 Homegrown can be a life-saving intervention for these
3 injustices and it can help buy time for patients like
4 me while we wait for programs like the institutional
5 caregivers to finally be addressed.

6 I beg the CRC to listen to scientific and
7 medical advice and please prioritize protecting and
8 providing for patients. Thank you for your time.

9 THE SECRETARY: Next on the list I see
10 Rita -- Margarita Tsalyuk. Rita if you can -- if
11 that's you, can you please change your name or -- or --
12 Rita if you're able to please log off and change your
13 name to the full name that you registered with. And
14 then we can and log back in. In the meantime, I'm
15 going to go with Trina Ragsdale, please.

16 MS. TRINA RAGSDALE: Good afternoon,
17 everyone. Thank you to the board. My name is Trina
18 Ragsdale. I am the founder and CEO of Jane's Joint
19 Dispensary. I want to thank the CRC for your
20 commitment to ensuring equitable opportunities for
21 diverse businesses to enter the market.

22 We all understand that there is still work
23 to be done, but thanks to the responsiveness of the
24 CRC, the clearly outlined process, along with my own
25 education and acumen as a two-time cancer survivor,

1 full-time employed single mother of two, I have
2 independently been able to successfully navigate the
3 path to licensure. That said, my doors are not yet
4 open, but I'm steps closer. And seeing the successes
5 of my canna-colleagues, attending their grand openings
6 and seeing consumers get access to care is encouraging.

7 I'm ecstatic Jane's Joint was approved to
8 move to annual license today. Huge thanks to the board
9 as a black woman with nothing but passion for
10 education, a desire for others to have the same
11 privilege of access to medicinal alternatives and with
12 the inspiration for my brilliantly ambitious --
13 ambitious twins, anything is possible. Thank you again
14 for the time today. Thank you again to the board. I -
15 - I appreciate being able to move through the process.
16 Thanks again.

17 THE SECRETARY: The next three on the list
18 are Dab Riga, Jeremy Watson, and Unah Son. If -- if
19 you're in the meeting, please raise your hands. Okay.
20 I see Jeremy Watson.

21 MR. JEREMY WATSON: Hello. How you doing
22 today? My name is Jeremy Watson. I'm actually a
23 person that has been affected by the war on drugs. I
24 have a criminal past and I'm having a hard time
25 navigating into the legal industry. As -- as just

1 trying to find a job, I've only interviewed with one
2 dispensary, and their main issue was a background
3 check. And that -- that's kind of baffling to me
4 because that defeats the purpose.

5 And they, they were very concerned that I
6 wouldn't be able to pass a background check. And I --
7 and I would -- I would think that that was the --
8 that's the whole point of the commission saying that
9 the -- that, that it was an opportunity for people that
10 was most affected by the war on drugs, that they would
11 be business would -- businesses would be encouraging
12 people with criminal pasts to try -- to try to join
13 their workforce.

14 But I live in New Brunswick, New Jersey,
15 where there are two dispensaries open at the time and I
16 don't recognize any of the people that work there. And
17 they don't -- and I'm -- as far as I know, there's no
18 one there that actually has a criminal -- criminal
19 background.

20 I've applied for several different
21 dispensaries and the only dispensary that I've was able
22 to have an interview with was A21. And that was on the
23 strength of another speaker that spoke at the
24 beginning. And that was because of my relationship
25 with -- with Matha Figaro. That was the only reason

1 changed her name. So can we go with Margarita?

2 MS. MARGARITA TSALYUK: Hi. Thank you,
3 guys for letting me speak. I appreciate the committee.
4 Thank you so much. so I have a couple things that I
5 wanted to comment on. And the biggest one that hurts
6 us right now, we are expanded ATC Garfield Gardens, and
7 we have medical only hours.

8 The reason we put them in, because we were
9 very passionate to serve medical patients and give them
10 our first priority, but right now it's only two a day
11 that's coming, but we closed for two hours and they're
12 not necessarily coming during those two hours, but it's
13 affecting all the adult use customers. And we just had
14 recently one veteran came and he was recreational
15 customer and we couldn't serve him and tell him to come
16 back. So we have bad reviews and kind of feeling
17 really bad about this.

18 If there is any chance, please, I know you
19 guys busy, but if you can please look into it and see
20 if you can address it, we would really appreciate it,
21 because that will really help us to serve the
22 community. And Google business does not allow us to
23 post separately for medical and for -- for
24 recreational. So people very, very confused. And then
25 they come in and they see nobody and they're still not

1 able to serve them.

2 And when medical patients come in, we
3 certainly serve them first. We have a dedicated
4 register for them. We treat them very special. We
5 have education for them but all of -- all of that, just
6 please, if you can do that, that would really
7 appreciate -- we will really appreciate it. And I want
8 to just comment quickly on couple other things. One of
9 them is consumption launches.

10 We are as a company, (inaudible) ways that
11 has the first license consumption lounge in the world.
12 That's why if you are interested to read about us, you
13 can search. It's going to -- you're going to find like
14 30 pages about us, and we know pretty much everything
15 about it. And the problem with giving that to social
16 equity, there's just no money to it. And that's what
17 city of Denver did, I encourage you to look into it
18 because they said that social -- moratorialsocial
19 equity only, but everybody who would open it, they
20 would just go bankrupt.

21 So it feels bad for me to tell social
22 equity people who have their last savings to invest in
23 it when there's no money in it. And we still have our
24 lounge and we are very proud of it. But it's not a
25 moneymaker thing. This is our nonprofit initiative.

1 So just keep it in mind please when you offer it to
2 social equity. And if you need anything from us,
3 please let us know.

4 And one more comment. I think I'm
5 counting days. It's probably going to be summer of
6 this year June, July, when we're going to have more
7 cultivators in the state and then price is going to go
8 down and it's become more affordable. So, because
9 right now it's very hard to compete with illegal market
10 and very hard to -- that we have to put such high
11 prices on the product, the dispensary level, just not
12 enough cultivation. Thank you so much. I appreciate
13 you.

14 THE SECRETARY: The next three on the
15 list, Ziggy Chau, Erin Gore and Savion Bryant. I -- I
16 see Ziggy Neil, but I don't know if it's the same
17 person. If -- if that -- this person is Ziggy Chau,
18 please log off and change your name to the name that
19 you registered with so that we can call on you. So,
20 Erin Gore?

21 MS. ERIN GORE: Hello there today. My
22 name is Erin Gore and I am the founder and CEO of
23 Garden Society, NJ, LLC, located in the city of
24 Passaic. We are women-owned impact zone located class
25 two manufacturer. Commissioners thank you for your

1 approval today on our conversion license as a women-
2 owned class two manufacturer.

3 We are thrilled to move forward with this
4 final approval process with the CRC. I am here today
5 to ask for your support to help ensure we move towards
6 opening our doors as quickly as possible. It has taken
7 us over seven months from when we filed our conversion
8 license in the portal to being approved here today.
9 Our application had no cures and no concerns by any
10 agent during the approval process and it took far
11 greater than the statutory 90 days.

12 We are relieved to now be approved here
13 today and ready to move forward. The city of Passaic
14 and Mayor Laura have been tremendous advocates and
15 supporters of our business. During this time, we have
16 completed construction, completed all inspections with
17 the city of Passaic, received all city approvals for
18 zoning, construction, and cannabis use. As far as the
19 city is concerned, we are ready to operate now. We
20 have worked with the Workforce Development Board and
21 received the support of two labor unions, the Teamsters
22 and the United Food and Commercial Workers, with whom
23 we have signed Labor Peace Agreements.

24 Through the Workforce Development Board
25 and Economic Development Center in both the city of

1 Passaic and County of Passaic, we have hosted a job
2 fair and posted our positions for 13 roles. We have
3 received over 110 qualified applicants, a truly
4 overwhelming response.

5 In addition, we have worked with the city
6 and county of Passaic to receive grants for our
7 employees we hire from the city that are impacted
8 employees or on unemployment, which will cover 50% of
9 their salaries if we can employ them in the next 60
10 days. Finally, as Garden Society, NJ, LLC, we have
11 over \$4 million in open purchase orders for our
12 products by retailers and customers ready to purchase
13 as soon as we are able to open and begin operations.

14 If we cannot move forward towards opening
15 timely, we will lose this business. I am begging,
16 actually pleading for your support today. We are
17 running out of financial resources if we cannot begin
18 operations timely. Garden Society NJ is a women
19 founded women run business with our leadership team
20 being half black and veterans. This program was
21 designed to help support individuals and companies like
22 us.

23 I'm here today to ask for your support as
24 we move through the final compliance phases towards
25 opening, and I would welcome any discussion from the

1 CRC to help accelerate ensure we can move forward in a
2 timely manner. Thank you very much. You have a really
3 hard job and I appreciate all that you do for the
4 industry, and I really appreciate your support to move
5 forward.

6 THE SECRETARY: Savion Bryant. Savion,
7 you -- you can speak.

8 MR. SAVION BRYANT: What's going on, boss?
9 Good afternoon -- good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.
10 My name is Savion Bryant. I'm in Jersey City, New
11 Jersey. I'm currently a business owner in the state of
12 New Jersey and I was told by one of your associates,
13 because my business has to do with vending machines and
14 I know that you guys don't regulate vending machines in
15 the state of New Jersey as of now. So I was told by
16 one of your associates to come to the board meeting
17 express my idea or voice my opinion, and my idea to try
18 to get my business plan off the ground and the medical
19 -- I mean the recreational cannabis industry.

20 I have -- I have one to two concerns. I
21 just wanted to know why aren't vending machines
22 considered to be retail if they're in the retail
23 department? And my other question is, why would I
24 need retail space for a vending machine? Because
25 that's what I was told. They told I would need actual

1 retail space just to put the vending machine in. But
2 my question was why would I need retail space for a
3 vending machine if I can put that anywhere in like a
4 shopping center or a pharmacy or any place of that
5 nature that has to do with recreational cannabis and to
6 the public as well.

7 So I was just trying to get in contact
8 with you guys so you guys can show some consideration
9 as to helping me perform these -- these difficult tasks
10 that I'm trying to do all by myself just to pick my
11 business up off the floor. And I'm trying to -- I'm
12 trying very, very hard because all of this information
13 that I'm going through and I'm obtaining is all by
14 myself. I don't have any help.

15 So I'm just reaching out to you guys to
16 try to make my life and my process to improving my
17 business a little bit easier in the cannabis industry.
18 So I hope you guys find -- find a way to help me obtain
19 my retail license so I can get my business started.
20 Thank you. That's -- that's just about it.

21 THE SECRETARY: Thank you. I see Ziggy
22 Chau changed his name. Can we go to him please?

23 MS. ZIGGY CHAU: Hello. Hi.

24 THE SECRETARY: Hi.

25 MS. CHAU: Hi. Can you hear me? I'm

1 sorry, my Zoom was not operating.

2 THE SECRETARY: It's okay. We can hear
3 you.

4 MS. CHAU: Okay. Thank you. Members of
5 the New Jersey Cannabis Commission, thank you for this
6 opportunity to speak with you. I'm writing to express
7 my concerns as a resident investor in Atlantic City
8 regarding this recent surge in applications for adult
9 use cannabis dispensaries. I appreciate the
10 opportunity to submit the statement on the disparate
11 impact within our predominantly black and brown
12 community.

13 As you know, as Atlantic City has an
14 estimated population of 38,000, predominantly comprised
15 of hardworking individuals from black and brown
16 communities, immigrant communities. Based on the
17 latest census 30.4% are African American, 33.4% Latino
18 and as you probably all know.

19 In my neighborhood of block of Ducktown,
20 I've observed with deep concern that three dispensaries
21 are conditionally approved. So that's three within a
22 block. This rapid proliferation coupled with our
23 city's socio-economic vulnerabilities raises questions
24 about the disparate impact on our communities.
25 While my intent is to bring attention to these

1 concerns, I recognize the importance of acknowledging
2 diverse perspectives on cannabis approval and its
3 impact of quality of life.

4 It's crucial to convey that this is not an
5 opposition to the cannabis industry, but a plea for
6 empathy and understanding. Our city's challenges are
7 multifaceted, and I believe it's essential to respect
8 the views of those who support cannabis businesses by
9 advocating for the wellbeing of our community. This
10 potential disparate impact becomes even more
11 significant when considering that other cities may not
12 share the same demographic composition and socio-
13 economic challenges faced by Atlantic City.

14 I understand the cannabis, the CRCs
15 mandate to regulate and approve licenses for New Jersey
16 cannabis industry. However, I implore the commission
17 to carefully consider the disparate impact on our
18 communities in Atlantic City. While the economic
19 opportunities associated with cannabis may be
20 attractive, we cannot ignore the potential
21 extrapolation of existing challenges and the disparate
22 effects on a city predominantly made of minority
23 populations.

24 In conclusion, I respectfully urged the
25 commission to reconsider conditional approvals and

1 further approvals, taking into account the disparate
2 impact of our communities in Atlantic City and to work
3 together with the community to safeguard the integrity
4 of our community, prioritize the wellbeing of our
5 residents and really many who cannot really speak and
6 take time out of work because most of us work in
7 casinos during the day, don't have time to spend two
8 hours on a Zoom or go to the actual in-person meeting.
9 So I speak on behalf of those people and ensure that
10 Atlantic City continues to be a treasure destination
11 for generations to come. Thank you so much for your...

12 THE SECRETARY: Thank you. The next three
13 on the list are Samuel Reichbart, Mollie Hartman Lustig
14 and Thomas Ginefra. Okay, I see Samuel Reichbart.

15 MR. SAMUEL REICHBART: Hi, how are you
16 guys doing today? I had a couple of comments to make.
17 I apologize if this is a little bit long-winded. So I
18 understand it's not your guys' jurisdiction to regulate
19 (inaudible) in New Jersey. We've been working really
20 hard and making really significant progress on that.

21 I urge anyone in New Jersey that stands
22 with patients to contact Nicholas (ph) about that
23 homegrown bill, especially if you're in District 22.
24 To piggyback on that issue, we believe in another key
25 aspect to providing for medical patients is a caregiver

1 license or some kind of nano license, so that we can
2 ensure patients with highly specific needs and an
3 inability to cultivate, to cultivate their own medicine
4 to be able to access the lifesaving medicine they
5 require.

6 They would not only provide much needed
7 access to -- to medical varieties for patients, but
8 also a path for people who would like to enter the weed
9 industry, but lack the funds to begin a 2,500 square
10 foot facility, which by the way is not a small space
11 allowing for nano caregiver licenses and facilities
12 that range from 100 to a thousand square feet to be
13 licensed to grow would close a current gap in access to
14 medicine for patients as well as access to the market
15 for those with an entrepreneurial spirit and lack of
16 the millions needed to grow cannabis under the current
17 regulations.

18 On top of that, I would really like to see
19 you guys work a little bit quicker on, or maybe just
20 prioritizing the applicants that are in the social
21 equity that were social equity applicants, going off of
22 what Charles Barker said. We've seen them get
23 conditional licenses but not be moved forward to the
24 annual category. So any data that we currently have is
25 a misrepresentation of where the current industry is

1 at.

2

I would really like to see those people
3 prioritized in the application process because I
4 remember, I don't know how many other people do, and I
5 don't know if you guys do, but I remember when we first
6 legalized and we were told that the social equity
7 people would be the first ones to adult use. And now
8 here we are three years later and the first people
9 licensed to adult use were the same MSOs that have been
10 putting poison into patients for years now with moldy
11 medicine and subpar quality products.

12

It's really, really upsetting to watch
13 these people continue to be brushed to the side and for
14 the regulations to be taking as long as they do,
15 putting people like Butter cake (ph) who has been very
16 supportive of patients putting her business and her
17 life in a worse position than they could simply by,
18 these things taking a little less time than they had
19 been. Yeah. Thank you, guys, for your time. I hope
20 you have a great day.

21

THE SECRETARY: Mollie Hartman Lustig.

22

MS. MOLLIE HARTMAN LUSTIG: Good
23 afternoon, commissioners. My name is Molly Hartman
24 Lustig. I'm a partner at McLaughlin & Stern. I thank
25 you for all the information provided today and some of

1 the approvals are very much appreciated as they waited
2 a long time. Just a few things I'd like to run down a
3 list. Number one, we are really looking for
4 administrative rules for A4151 or commonly referred to
5 as the 35% ownership bill which was passed earlier last
6 year.

7 This has -- this has extensive impact for
8 how minority retail licenses are held and the interplay
9 for management services contractors who are providing
10 significant technical assistance. That dovetails into
11 the implications for a vertically integrated held
12 license as well. So we'd really like to see some
13 rulemaking there to clarify that relationship. And
14 then building on that, there is a proliferation of
15 management services operators who are skirting the
16 rules regarding ownership of licenses. And I implore
17 the CRC to really look into this during the probity
18 review and investigation processes.

19 I would also ask the CRC to the extent
20 that it has enforcement powers to crack down on the
21 illicit market. This is having a great effect on those
22 operators who have recently opened. And we're not
23 talking about those who are making the legacy to legal
24 jump, we are talking about those who have not been
25 licensed and taking as much of a stance and

1 intercession as, if you will, into the local zoning
2 schemes.

3 I know we have New Jersey -- we have home
4 rule here in New Jersey, but as many others who have
5 come before me have said this, these restrictive zoning
6 schemes do not make these businesses profitable and
7 sustainability is a secondary consideration when
8 businesses are forced to be on top of one another, or
9 they're competing with illicit businesses that are not
10 being cracked down upon.

11 Investigations, it would be helpful and I
12 understand that there are confidentiality rules that
13 would be helpful for the outcome of an investigation to
14 be provided to not only the complainant but the subject
15 of the complaint so that they know an investigation has
16 occurred and closed as a means of closure. And
17 finally, I would love to see -- the social equity data
18 was great, but I'd love to see a breakdown between
19 geographically socio-economic versus justice touched
20 individuals. Thank you so much.

21 THE SECRETARY: The next three on the list
22 are Carlos Almanzar, Jerit Sciorra and Robert Souders.
23 I see Carlos Almanzar.

24 MR. CARLOS ALMANZAR: Good afternoon.

25 THE SECRETARY: Carlos.

1 MR. ALMANZAR: Yes, sir.

2 THE SECRETARY: We -- we can barely hear
3 you.

4 MR. ALMANZAR: Yes, sir. Can you hear me
5 now?

6 THE SECRETARY: It's -- it's very low.
7 It's like almost non-existent.

8 MR. ALMANZAR: So my name is Carlos
9 Almanzar. I live in Jersey Shore (inaudible) New
10 Jersey. My family and I, we apply in our hometown of
11 South Towns River to be the first female minority-owned
12 dispensary. I have called everyone and their mother
13 from the FBI to the district attorney, to the governor
14 to explain the corruption and the backdoor deal that
15 was done in my hometown, why my family and I now are
16 affected to where I have lost everything businesses,
17 family member, to this tragedy where backdoor deals
18 were done from the previous administration.

19 Now we have all these dispensary approved
20 and these manufacturer approved in my hometown, where -
21 - where none of them live in my hometown. All of them
22 never done anything for my community. I have the
23 support of pastors, the support of some of the most
24 important people in our community and no one is
25 investigating these people.

1 I don't know what to do no more. I've
2 been trying my best to, you know, way -- do everything
3 the right way. But it's like these people are not
4 getting stopped. I put my life on the line when I was
5 a youth to -- to make this. And now everything is
6 getting robbed from my family and I can't even do
7 anything about it. And no one is standing up to this
8 corruption.

9 Look at my friend Denny from Buhub (ph).
10 He got five years while at the same time in his case,
11 there was a young lady selling their kids, they got
12 five years' probation. When Danny takes the medication
13 to all these old people, then picks the home -- stuff
14 from my hometown from Buhub. So people like Danny,
15 like I -- we are getting discriminated, we getting back
16 of the line, and all these guys, all these MSOs are
17 coming with a golden spoon.

18 Please look what happened in South Town
19 River. Look what happened to my family, the first
20 female minority in Ocean County. We need to start
21 investigating all these dispensaries to see all the
22 corruption as well. And please look at my case because
23 it's been a year and I've been calling everyone, you
24 guys, the governor, everyone. And everybody's getting
25 rich while my family's suffering.

1 So I beg you guys, please allow me to sit
2 down and point out all the backdoor deals. I have
3 witnesses, I have proof of paper works, I have
4 everything you guys need to close all these dispensary
5 that are illegally open, that broke every rule of New
6 Jersey and discrimination. So please guys, help me.
7 I'm in town, South of New Jersey, South Towns River New
8 Jersey in New Jersey Shore. Thank you and have a
9 wonderful day, guys.

10 THE SECRETARY: Carlos just -- we, we
11 heard most we heard everything. Just if you can please
12 submit your comments in writing just because it was so
13 low. So we don't -- we just didn't want anything to
14 get missed. So please submit your comments in writing
15 when you can. Thank you. The next three are Michael
16 Bajuz, David Little, and David Feder. Okay. I see
17 Michael Bajuz. I hope I'm pronouncing that properly.

18 MR. MICHAEL BAJUZ: Bajuz.

19 THE SECRETARY: Bajuz.

20 MR. BAJUZ: Yes, sir. Good afternoon,
21 members of the CRC, I hope you're doing well today. My
22 name is Michael Bajuz. I am the CEO and Co-founder of
23 Green Knight Cannabis, LLC. We are based in Franklin
24 Township -- Franklin Township in Somerset, by Rutgers
25 New Brunswick. We were awarded an annual license last

1 April and I'm already working with Director McWhite
2 since I'm a disabled veteran. And we just been
3 encountering roadblock after roadblock after roadblock
4 with our township.

5 When we -- since we got the annual
6 license, we already had all the permits, resolutions,
7 et cetera. We're just trying to make our place a
8 little bit more (inaudible) compliant, extend our
9 building by a few feet, nothing big, not -- no major
10 renovations. Each time we resubmitted a plan to our
11 township, they took a couple weeks to get back to us.
12 We could -- we corrected their mistake, we resubmitted
13 a couple more weeks, another mistake, a different
14 mistake.

15 So each time we resubmitted something,
16 another mistake popped up. Instead of having all the
17 mistakes presented at once, we were delayed by, what is
18 it now? Seven months, eight months? And we still
19 have not received all our building permits, even though
20 it's been almost a year. We hope that we'll receive
21 all the final permits in the next two or three weeks so
22 we can begin construction and we can start serving our
23 community.

24 Second point that I would like to mention
25 is, I know that as a disabled veteran and as an

1 immigrant, we're all from New Jersey. My entire team
2 is New Jersey based. None of us are from Colorado,
3 none of us are from New York, California. We're all
4 local. I just want to ask if the CRC can also clarify
5 on the amount of disabled veteran-owned businesses.

6 I know one of the presentations today, it
7 included that women and disabled veteran-owned
8 businesses, there were like 3 -- 250 or something like
9 that. But on another slide, they said that disabled
10 owned vet -- disabled owned business, there's only one
11 or two open. So if you can also, Director Barker,
12 whoever ask, I'd like the clarification. If you can
13 also clarify (inaudible) don't couple this -- women and
14 disabled owned businesses together. If you could do it
15 separately, that'd be awesome.

16 And I can't wait to work with Director
17 McWhite on better inclusion of disabled owned
18 businesses, disabled veteran owned businesses. And of
19 course, if you guys, anyone that can follow our
20 journey, Sir Michael Green on Instagram, TikTok,
21 LinkedIn and Facebook, we'll keep you up with our
22 journey and hopefully we can get these permits locked
23 in so we can start building. I wish the CRC a great
24 day and be -- stay warm, it's freezing outside.

25 THE SECRETARY: Next I see David Little.

1 MR. DAVID LITTLE: Good afternoon. Can
2 you hear me now?

3 THE SECRETARY: Yes, I can hear you.

4 MR. LITTLE: Okay. Okay. It's very
5 coincidental you heard from Matha Figaro and you also
6 just heard from Erin Gore and myself from three
7 different directions, but have the same problem with
8 the CRC. So I'll be the third one ladies, but I won't
9 be the charm. Thank you for the opportunity to speak
10 directly to the commissioners and the directors.

11 I represent Inclusion Gourmet a class two
12 that was awarded licensed M192 six months ago, I was
13 passed by your group. Inclusion Gourmet is an
14 experienced affiliate of a confectionary design,
15 production and fulfillment company operating in the
16 same facility since 1998. Our specialty is in infusing
17 nutraceuticals into confectionary delivery systems, as
18 we have done that for multiple leading nutraceutical
19 companies around the world.

20 Our facility is FDA, FSMA registered, GMP
21 certified, which is a term you guys talk about a lot.
22 And for 30 years we've been inspected by the New Jersey
23 Health Department on behalf of the FDA, never having
24 received anything but a passing grade.
25 My main reason for my discussion today is I'm showing

1 my frustrations as my previous two lady friends have
2 done. I've now run out six months since I was
3 approved. Unlike what Commissioner Brown said before,
4 I could have operated the next day.

5 I've been in business for 25 years. I
6 make products here. I don't need to do a lot of crazy
7 things and fill out a facility. During our multiple
8 contacts with the CRC and after our October 24th
9 product submissions, we brought to the attention that
10 our packaging was half approved and half not approved.
11 Since October, we have also had no feedback on our
12 formulations submitted from multiple products, except a
13 request from our inspector to resubmit a different
14 format, which was quite frankly ridiculous.

15 After a total period of almost 90 days,
16 it's extremely frustrating to have a license in hand
17 and then still not have the ability to manufacture
18 because our product and packaging waivers have been
19 under review. Meanwhile, another large operator was
20 given permission by the CRC to sell edible products
21 within weeks of submitting waivers when their period
22 opened in September of '23.

23 Additionally, they've been given two more.
24 I'd like to know how I can get their inspector on my
25 team and why they're giving special preferences.

1 They're much larger, they're not a micro. We are a
2 micro. We're born and bred New Jersey. But we feel
3 our type of business is not being given the share of
4 mind that larger ones are, nor are the communications
5 or actions showing a clear resolve to help small
6 businesses like ours.

7 Executive Director Brown, you may recall
8 our in-person conversation on December 7th. Please
9 follow up and give us permission as soon as possible.
10 Thank you.

11 THE SECRETARY: The -- the next group is
12 Ryan Susskind and Bruce Roach. If you're in the
13 meeting, please raise your hand so I can call on you.
14 I'm also going to go over the names of people that I
15 called that weren't -- didn't get a chance. John De
16 Los Santos, Dab Riga. I see Dab Riga.

17 MR. DAB RIGA: Hello everyone. My name is
18 Dab Riga and I am the CEO and founder of TLEHL
19 Incorporated. Our conversion to annual was approved
20 today, so thank you very much to the commission for
21 that. We just wanted to take a moment here to say that
22 TLEHL is in support of the home grow provisions that
23 are currently being proposed in the assembly. And just
24 want to say that honestly, we're just happy that we
25 have what we have now. And that's all. Thank you.

1 THE SECRETARY: Thank you. Next is if
2 you're in the room, Unah Son, Thomas Ginefra, Jerit
3 Sciorra, Robert Souders, David Feder, Ryan Susskind,
4 and Bruce Roach. I -- I -- I don't see anyone else in
5 -- on the list. So Chair Houenou, this will conclude
6 the registered speakers we have for today's meeting.

7 CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Said. And thank
8 you to all of those who spoke to share their -- their
9 thoughts, their suggestions, their requests and -- and
10 provide additional information for the CRC to -- to
11 look into. Again, if you didn't get a chance to -- to
12 speak today you can provide written comments to the
13 commission by going to our website
14 nj.gov/cannabis/meetings by 5:00 PM tomorrow, January
15 18th.

16 This concludes the business that we have
17 before us today. Is there any new business for the
18 board to consider at this time? If there is none,
19 then I'll ask for a motion to adjourn.

20 MR. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move that we
21 adjourn today's meeting.

22 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Barker. Is
23 there a second?

24 MS. CID-KOSSO: Second.

25 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-

1 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this Motion to
2 adjourn? Hearing no discussion, all those in favor of
3 adjourning say aye.

4 All: Aye.

5 CHAIR: Aye.

6 MR. BARKER: Aye.

7 CHAIR: All those opposed say nay. Any
8 abstentions? Hearing none, the motion passes. The
9 time is 2:22 PM and we are adjourned. Thank you
10 everyone for your time and have a great evening.

11 (Meeting concluded at 2:22 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes represent a true and complete summary of the public meeting held by the Cannabis Regulatory Commission on **January 17, 2024**.



Christopher Riggs
Chief Counsel

Date: January 22, 2024



Daniel Said
Board Secretary

Date: January 22, 2024