



State of New Jersey
CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION

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

NEW JERSEY CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION
44 South Clinton Avenue Trenton, NJ 08626

February 15, 2024

Appearances for the Board:

Dianna Houenou, Chair
Samuel Delgado, Vice Chair
Charles Barker, Commissioner
Krista G. Nash, Commissioner
Maria Del Cid-Kosso, Commissioner

Appearances for the Administration:

Jeff Brown, Executive Director
Kelly Anderson-Thomas,
Deputy Executive Director
Toni-Anne Blake,
Director of Communications
Christopher Riggs, Chief Counsel
Daniel Said, Board Secretary

1 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Good morning, everyone.
2 Welcome to today's meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis
3 Regulatory Commission board. The time is 11:13 and I
4 call this meeting to order.

5 Mr. Said, can you please read the notice of
6 the public meeting.

7 MR. SAID: Chairwoman, this is a regularly
8 scheduled meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis
9 Regulatory Commission's 2024 annual meeting schedule.

10 Adequate notice of this meeting has been
11 provided in accordance with the Senator Bryon M. Baer
12 Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of the meeting was
13 provided to the Asbury Park Press, Bergen Record,
14 Courier Post, Star Ledger, and the Trenton Times on
15 December 12, 2023. The agenda and information
16 regarding the in-person meeting and the ability to
17 livestream was also posted to CRC website. The
18 meeting time and location has also been posted on the
19 website of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory
20 Commission and with the office of the secretary of the
21 state.

22 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Can you
23 please take roll call?

24 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

25 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Present.

1 MR. SAID: Commission Del Cid-Kosso.

2 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Present.

3 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

4 COMMISSIONER NASH: Present.

5 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

6 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Present.

7 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

8 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Present.

9 MR. SAID: We now have a quorum. The first
10 order of the business is for the commission to go into
11 executive session to discuss legal matters and
12 litigation updates. These are discussions that are
13 not shared with the public. We believe the executive
14 session should take about 60 minutes.

15 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Is there a
16 motion to go into executive session?

17 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I
18 move that we go into executive session.

19 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

20 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair
21 Delgado and seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso.
22 Is there any discussion on this motion? Hearing none,
23 all those in favor of going into executive session say
24 aye.

25 (Board responds aye.)

1 the approval of prior meeting minutes.

2 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. The meeting
3 minutes have been shared with all the board members
4 and there was one change to executive session meeting
5 minutes. But if there are no additional edits or
6 changes needed to the meeting minutes, I'll ask for a
7 motion on the matter.

8 COMMISSIONER NASH: Motioned.

9 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: I second.

10 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: So Commissioner Nash

11 moves to approve the meeting minutes from the
12 January 17th meeting. Seconded by Vice Chair Delgado.

13 Is there any discussion on this motion? Hearing none,
14 all those in favor say aye.

15 (Board responds aye.)

16 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: All those opposed say
17 nay. Are there any abstentions? All right. Motion
18 passes.

19 MR. SAID: Next item on the agenda is the
20 chair's report.

21 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. So first I
22 want to -- oh, Happy Black History Month to everyone.
23 And I want to make a couple quick notes before I dive
24 into some of the priorities for the board. Next slide
25 please. Thank you.

1 So I want to remind folks of the application
2 review process and the time that it takes to get
3 through the application review. So in total, we're
4 looking at approximately 21 weeks for our annual
5 license applications. Conditional license
6 applications, as Director Brown has previously said
7 many times before, it tends to go much faster.

8 But I want to reiterate this timeline for
9 folks so that everybody understands that all of your
10 information needs to be submitted and reviewed by
11 staff before you get to step four there. Before the
12 staff engages in review of the qualification for your
13 licensure, all of the information required for by
14 applicants needs to be provided. That includes
15 fingerprints. But not just submitting your
16 fingerprints, but also getting the background check
17 results.

18 So I know that there are some folks who were
19 under the impression that submitting the information
20 before a board meeting inherently means that you can
21 be added to the agenda for a board meeting, but we
22 actually do need a lot more time in advance so that
23 all of our investigators and board members have the
24 time to review your application. So please, make sure
25 that you submit all of the information that you need

1 to submit to maximize your chances of getting your
2 application heard soon.

3 Also I want to note that at the board's
4 request, the commission is updating the disclosure
5 forms that are part of the application to clarify the
6 information that needs to be provided, including
7 information on all owners and their ownership
8 interest, and any past or pending civil lawsuits. See
9 these updated forms are meant to take the guesswork
10 out of the applications and help streamline review of
11 the forms that are submitted. So be on the lookout
12 for those updated forms. They will be posted to our
13 website. Next slide please.

14 Last month, I did note that this year, in
15 2024, the board will continue building on our
16 successes thus far, and so I wanted to take some time
17 to highlight for you all the priorities for the board.
18 And I think in some of the theme of the commission's
19 priorities this year can be summed up as transparency
20 and accountability both for the agency and for the
21 industry.

22 So these are vital to the successful
23 implementation of the NJ CRC's rules and ultimately to
24 realizing the vision for the cannabis industry of safe
25 and responsible operators.

1 So among our priorities, enhancing agency
2 monitoring of cannabis activities and enforcement of
3 rules to prevent illegal activity and protect public
4 health. We intend to do this by shoring up our
5 internal policies and protocols to ensure regulatory
6 policies are being properly applied and publish a
7 written policy on the agency's approach to compliance
8 and enforcement so that regulated businesses know how
9 regulatory issues will be addressed.

10 We'll also look to maintain the agency's
11 momentum on public engagement by conducting round
12 tables between the board of commissioners and the
13 public, key stakeholders, key surrogates as Vice Chair
14 Delgado likes to call them, and regulated businesses
15 on targeted subject matters and areas of concern to
16 identify opportunities for industry improvement. And
17 where appropriate, we also look to ensure that input
18 from patients, businesses, and consumers is solicited
19 on policy ideas in a transparent manner before our
20 agency formally proposes new rules.

21 Also, we look to update our agency
22 regulations for medical and adult-use cannabis
23 regulation -- for the medical and adult-use cannabis
24 industries. We'll propose new regulations that
25 implement the Jake Honig Law, amend medical

1 regulations to eliminate discrepancies between medical
2 and adult-use industries where allowed by law, and
3 amend the adult-use cannabis regulations to clarify
4 agency's regulatory policy on application requirements
5 and enforcement of the rules.

6 The fourth priority here is to conduct
7 timely industry assessments to evaluate the impacts of
8 the agency's regulations and state law. We'll do this
9 by soliciting feedback from applicants and license
10 holders on the licensing process and industry
11 sentiments. The things like the processes that --
12 parts of the processes that work well and areas for
13 potential improvement.

14 We'll also work with regulated businesses,
15 patients, and health care industry leaders to identify
16 possible ways to reduce patient's costs for medical
17 cannabis. And use available research and data
18 collection capabilities for drive informed policy
19 making.

20 And then finally, our fifth priority for the
21 board here is to advocates operational resources
22 needed for the agency to efficiently and effectively
23 carry out its duties. So we'll do that. Part of that
24 work will be where needed, requesting additional
25 resources to support new agencies functions.

1 For our committees. Next slide please. For
2 our committees, we have several committees here at the
3 commission. Some of our priorities for those groups
4 will be to adopt statutorily required annual reports
5 for all of our years that are still outstanding.
6 That's years 2019 to 2023. Monitor and analyze
7 customer complaints to identify any safety concerns
8 and recommend any appropriate action to address those
9 concerns. Execute an agreement with a public research
10 university to conduct the study of the agency as
11 required in the CREAMM Act. Solicit industry feedback
12 on the agency's licensing and permitting process, and
13 recommended actions to clarify procedural requirements
14 and reduce barriers for businesses.

15 We'll also look to recommend improvements to
16 the license and permit renewal process to reflect the
17 agency's policies and enhance transparency and
18 accountability. Increase health care provider
19 participation in the medical cannabis program, and we
20 do need to make some changes to our agency's bylaws,
21 so we'll look to convene an ad hoc committee to
22 recommend any changes to those bylaws.

23 So I do want to note that it is possible
24 that not all -- not all of these stated objectives may
25 be accomplished this calendar year due to time

1 constraints and the need for requisite approvals, but
2 I do believe that making significant progress towards
3 these goals is doable this year. And I am happy to
4 say that the commission is already making progress on
5 some have these 12 priorities, some of which you'll
6 hear about today actually.

7 And while being reactive is sometimes
8 necessary to respond to unexpected or emerging issues,
9 it is imperative that we remember that being proactive
10 is the only way that we ensure that we are reaching
11 our goals together. So as progress continues, the
12 commission will share updates at our public board
13 meetings so that the public stays informed and we
14 demonstrate that we truly are committed to
15 transparency and accountability. That's all that I
16 have for today's chair's report.

17 MR. SAID: The next item on the agenda is
18 the executive director's report.

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Director
20 Brown, the floor is yours.

21 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman.
22 Thank you, Commissioners. So I'm going to be brief
23 here and then I'm going to turn it over to a couple of
24 our staff members. But just at the outset, you know,
25 similarly, as the board has identified some high level

1 priorities for the agency for 2024, I wanted to share
2 with the commissioner a couple things that we're
3 working on at the staff level.

4 So number one, you know, now that we've been
5 in existence for, you know, we'll be approaching three
6 years, really looking at our internal processes, how
7 we make those as efficient as possible, how we make
8 sure we're serving the public as best we can.

9 Something on the agenda today, provisional
10 badging I think is one item that falls into that
11 category. Another that is top priority that we're
12 actively working on is really streamlining and making
13 our product reviews as efficient as possible so that
14 those are getting out, getting reviewed for
15 compliance, particularly with our manufacturing regs,
16 our labeling regs, our packaging regs, and then
17 getting those out to market as soon as possible. So
18 that is, you know, two of the higher level priorities
19 when it comes to process improvement.

20 The other thing I wanted to note is, you
21 know, looking ahead at this market, you know, not only
22 to next year, but the years to come, and I think the
23 edible rules that this board proposed that are now,
24 you know, making our way through the process include
25 some really important provisions that really do that.

1 So number one is referencing current good
2 manufacturing practices in the Federal Register.
3 That's an added level of consumer safety,
4 accountability, and CGMP is, in fact, required in
5 every federal legalization bill that's been
6 introduced, so it's something that will set New
7 Jersey's market to compete in, you know, decades to
8 come. I'm not counting on federal legalization to be
9 happening any time soon, but nonetheless, we want to
10 make sure that businesses here in New Jersey are
11 prepared to compete whenever that opportunity arises.

12 So along those lines, you know, we're making
13 progress here and the market is making incredible
14 progress, and I said before that we are headed to a
15 billion dollar market. I've seen enough now in the
16 data, and we'll be releasing more data in the coming
17 weeks and months, but 2024 is the year this is the
18 billion dollar market. This is the year that New
19 Jersey does a billion dollars in cannabis sales. So
20 you know, there will be more to come throughout the
21 year, but I'm confident that we'll reach and surpass
22 that milestone in calendar year 2024.

23 So you know, some of the people making that
24 happen, one in particular is our Deputy Executive
25 Director Kelly Anderson Thomas, and I'm going to pass

1 it over to her to talk about some of the progress
2 we've made both internally and some of the metrics
3 we're tracking when it comes to licensing and things
4 like that. So Deputy Executive Director, take it
5 away.

6 MS. ANDERSON: Thank you. I'd like to kind
7 of just look back on how far we've come. I think that
8 sometimes it's missed that the Cannabis Regulatory
9 Commission started off as just the medicinal marijuana
10 program under the Department of Health. And then in
11 April of 2021, you know, the state birthed this
12 organization.

13 I can think back to Jeff and my Covid days
14 back in the Department of Health, and I remember him
15 saying you know, he was leaving me in the dust, number
16 one, because he had to go and find space and set up
17 this mission with the help of the chair, but he was so
18 excited. So excited about what the commission was
19 going to become. He was so excited about how this
20 would help him and help the board push forward our
21 medicinal cannabis program. And if anyone in this
22 room knows Jeff, they know that he is the subject
23 matter expert when it comes to all things cannabis
24 scientifically and we appreciate.

25 So the birth of the commission, 2021, and

1 then the last two and a half years, I think it's
2 important to express that one, we went from starting
3 an agency with six individuals; the board that you see
4 before you, and Jeff, I believe our Director of Comms,
5 Toni-Anne Blake was our seventh employee she likes to
6 tell everyone. And over the course of two and a half
7 years, we've increased staff up to 73 and growing. If
8 you have ever worked in the state, you know -- you
9 would know that that is a hard task. Hiring, getting
10 people in. I would not have been able to do it
11 without my Director of Administration Barry Simpkins
12 and staff in general.

13 So we went forward with on-boarding and
14 training staff, but during this process, I remember I
15 on-boarded in July of -- June/July of 2021 and Jeff
16 and I sat down to talk about what the process -- the
17 licensing process should look like. We looked at the
18 statute, we wrote out the guidelines, and he said
19 okay, we need a licensing system. Okay. So we
20 procured a licensing system in four and a half months.

21 Again, if you ever worked in state
22 government, is that unheard of. Not only did we
23 procure the licensing system, we did the business
24 analysis, we did the development, and in December of
25 2021, mind you, the organization was created in

1 April 2021, we launched our application system and we
2 started accepting our first licenses. This is all
3 within and under a year.

4 We continue to build across the office, all
5 of our systems, process development, implementation,
6 procurement, more procurement, a lot more procurement.

7 But I think what's important to realize is that
8 through this, we developed the system requirements,
9 the processes, and then Jeff, you entrusted me to

10 on-board your staff and to implement key operational

11 goals. And I think staff and the board, we have
12 worked together to just build an industry like no
13 other. And I am proud to walk into my office every
14 day to work with such a group of dedicated

15 individuals.

16 So we did all of that in two and a half
17 years. In 2023, recreational cannabis sales hit just
18 under -- I'm sorry, just over 670,000.

19 DIRECTOR BROWN: Million.

20 MS. ANDERSON: Million, sorry. Million.

21 And then the 2023 medicinal cannabis sales reached
22 over 99 million for the first three quarters of 2023.

23 To date, we've had more than 2,500 applications
24 submitted and we recently celebrated more than 100
25 licensed dispensaries opening.

1 I just want to thank the commission and the
2 staff for all the effort you continue to pour into
3 this industry. I thank you, Jeff, for entrusting me
4 and I think the staff for entrusting Jeff and I, and
5 the board for entrusting Jeff and I. Thank you for
6 coming into this space daily where you've been part of
7 some of the best collaboration I've ever seen in state
8 government. We've truly fostered an environment that
9 is productive, diverse, and inclusive just like the
10 market we have worked so hard to establish.

11 One of the first things I remember in
12 talking to Jeff about what he wanted the commission to
13 look like from the staff perspective, and he said I
14 want diversity. If we're pushing for a market that is
15 diverse, then the staff has to represent that. And I
16 think anybody who walks into our offices, if you look
17 around, even if you look around at the individuals
18 sitting here today, we are one of the diverse
19 organizations within state government. And that's
20 just not -- that's from the top down and I think
21 that's very important to also note here.

22 With all that said, let's get into why
23 you're really here. So to date, we have -- there have
24 been 2,537 applications submitted. Of those, a little
25 over 1,700 applications have been approved. 113 of

1 those applications are under review in the Office of
2 Licensing. 301 applications are pending resubmission
3 following a cure, and 194 applications are under
4 review in the Office of Compliance and Investigations.

5 I think what we continue to show here is
6 that we are moving through the applications. People
7 who are applying, they're being heard. We're pushing
8 things. The priority status is working and so that's
9 important.

10 Updates on dispensary openings. We have
11 eight new recreational-only dispensaries that have
12 opened since our last meeting, and an additional two
13 medicinal.

14 Now, as we continue to open and include more
15 businesses in the market, I think it's important to
16 also showcase that we are creating an inclusive
17 market. Our ownership data continues to show that. I
18 know this has always been, you know, a touching point
19 for Commissioner Barker, and I welcome the public to
20 review our website for our last quarterly report that
21 was posted last month where you will see the breakdown
22 of majority ownership -- of majority ownership of
23 businesses that have opened. I think when you
24 reconcile race and ethnicity with majority ownership
25 for annual awardees, this is our breakdown since or

1 last report out.

2 As it pertains to the minority-based
3 majority ownership, have 19 percent Asian, 18 percent
4 black or African American, 9 percent Hispanic or
5 Latino, 1 percent American indian or Alaska native. I
6 think it's also important to continue to tell the
7 constituents of New Jersey, apply. If you are
8 interested in getting into the cannabis industry,
9 please, submit your application. If you're having
10 issues, the New Jersey Business Action Center is
11 sponsoring -- well, sponsoring with us a technical
12 assistance program that can help walk you through the
13 process. That will be launching soon.

14 If you visit our website, there are detailed
15 instructions on how to complete the application
16 process, there are webinars. And also if you send us
17 an email or if you give us a call, we're always here
18 for questions.

19 It's important to note that we are still not
20 only surpassing our benchmarks, but we're also passing
21 Asian and black census populations. We still have
22 more to do within our Hispanic population. I know
23 Director McWhite spoke on that in our last meeting,
24 but we are increasing our outreach efforts.

25 And I think again, I want to reinforce that

1 we are surpassing federal ownership benchmarks across
2 multiple industries across the nation.

3 If we look at our diversely owned data,
4 which is granted by the New Jersey Department of the
5 Treasury's Division of Revenue and Enterprise
6 Services, say that five times fast, we are at
7 46 percent minority-owned and women and disabled
8 veteran-owned which surpasses our 15 percent benchmark
9 by more than 31 percent. Again, these are all
10 wonderful stats.

11 To date, for total recreational licenses
12 approved, a little over 1,300 conditionals, 268
13 condition to annual conversions and 153 annuals.
14 There are 66 expanded ATCs in the market today, and of
15 those, 209 are operating licensees -- licenses that
16 have been issued. Of those awarded, 44 percent have
17 minority/majority ownership.

18 So for today, there are 12 conditional
19 applications up for consideration, 20 conditional to
20 annual conversion applications, five annual
21 applications, and one expanded ATC.

22 I think it's also important to, again, touch
23 on our medicinal cannabis program. To date, current
24 patient enrollment numbers, total patients are a
25 little over 85,000. Caregivers, a little over 5,000,

1 and then doctors, 1,533.

2 That is the end of this section of the
3 executive director's report. I'd like to pass it over
4 to our Director of Communications Toni-Anne Blake for
5 all things comms update.

6 MS. BLAKE: Good afternoon, everyone. I
7 just wanted to share some work from the communications
8 unit at the CRC. Our commitment is to reaching our
9 audience, where they are, across as many platforms as
10 possible with as much information as possible. And
11 our latest venture is High Points podcast. It's
12 available on Spotify and Pocket Casts, and hopefully
13 soon Google Podcasts. About 20 minutes, engage in
14 conversation. Right now it's with internal staff.
15 Our first episode is up with our Director of Diversity
16 and Inclusion Mr. Wesley McWhite, III, and our second
17 episode will be with our chairwoman Commissioner
18 Houenou, and that will be posted on March the 1st.

19 Twenty minutes of your time, really easy to
20 listen to, very informative. Go to the episode notes,
21 click on there, there's even more information. So
22 please join us. And if you have topics that you want
23 to hear about, shoot us an email and we will get that
24 done.

25 Another thing that the comms unit is rolling

1 out right now is our Safe Use campaign. And it was
2 launched in October, it will run through September of
3 2014, and so far we've had a lot of success by all
4 metrics of advertising and public information
5 campaigns. We are getting click-throughs on our
6 online ads. We are getting -- our billboards are
7 along -- there are 93 billboards up along 12 highways
8 across the state, which we anticipate gets about 7
9 million -- okay.

10 So these are some examples of our Facebook
11 and Instagram ads, and they speak to the topics that
12 we broached in this campaign. It is people who may
13 have used cannabis in the past or trying it again and
14 we want them to be aware of potency, or if they're
15 older, maybe talk to their doctors about interaction
16 with medication. There's young people, so there's
17 youth deterrents. We don't want anybody using before
18 they turn 21. And for everybody else, it's safe
19 storage and safe use, not using too much or too often.

20 Go to the next one. And this is YouTube
21 ads. Go to the next one. Display ads.

22 All right. So as I mentioned before, 93
23 billboards up, 12 highways -- well, highways along in
24 12 counties, and we've seen more than 17 million
25 impressions. There are also interactive ads on

1 websites where we're asking people basic information
2 about where you can use, who can use, and then we're
3 going to be using that metric to also see how much
4 people have learned. So if you've interacted with it
5 at one point, in a couple months we'll ask the same
6 questions again to see if there's been change in
7 education among the audience.

8 These are some of the billboards that are
9 along the highway. You may have seen those. And we
10 have posters in barbershops and beauty salons because
11 those are places people sit and have nothing to do but
12 look at the walls during those times. And we're
13 really working with some organizations on the ground
14 to reach all kinds of communities. Many of our ads
15 are in Spanish as well and we have Immigrantly and
16 Trenton Journal, Pushback all of those where we have
17 placed advertorials, articles and ads to make sure
18 that we're reaching as broad an audience as possible.

19 And thank you. Please look out for the ads,
20 interact with them, and let us know if they're
21 reaching you.

22 MS. ANDERSON: Turn it back over to you.

23 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you both. And I have
24 nothing else to add to this tremendous job from
25 everybody working on those projects. And back to you,

1 Madam Chair.

2 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Director
3 Brown, Deputy Anderson and Director Blake. I want to
4 open the floor for any questions from the board. I do
5 have one quick question, Deputy Anderson, about the
6 numbers that you -- that you shared on one slide. I
7 think it was right after -- after you went over the
8 detailed majority owned data, the subsequent slide --

9 MS. ANDERSON: Diversely-owned certification
10 data?

11 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: After that one. At the
12 end it says there were 209 total operating licenses
13 awarded or issued. Can you elaborate on that? It
14 looked in the other -- in the prior slides to be a
15 total of 374, so I just want to make sure I understand
16 what the 209 represents.

17 MS. ANDERSON: So the issue here is it
18 should just say operating license issued, not just the
19 awarded, so we wanted to be clear there. We will make
20 that edit for the document that goes on the web.

21 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Okay. So 209 total
22 annual licenses have been issued across the state?
23 Okay, got it. Thank you. Any questions from the
24 board for the staff?

25 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes, Madam

1 Chair, thank you. So I have a couple questions. And
2 first of all, thank you to both Director Brown and
3 Deputy Director Anderson for the summary, and thank
4 you for all your help in the last three years.

5 The first question is on the dispensary
6 openings, and I'm very happy to know that there are a
7 hundred medical and recreational dispensaries open in
8 20 counties. And you and I had a discussion, Director
9 Brown, that it is important to note that we need to
10 keep an eye on the number of cultivation sites that,
11 you know, are soon to start operating. I think that's
12 crucial to ensure that there's enough supply for the
13 dispensaries that are opening up.

14 With that note, I would like to move into --
15 I want to thank the Director of Communications Blake
16 for the summary here. One of the questions that I had
17 for you is how long would this campaign go for?

18 MS. BLAKE: It's a year long campaign, so it
19 runs through September of this year. It got kicked
20 off in October, so October through the end of
21 September.

22 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Thank you. And
23 your outreach, it's great, it's incredible, the
24 impressions, and the social media and the billboards,
25 education is key, so I know that we are educating

1 consumers, parents, so I'm very happy to know that
2 we're going to do this for year long.

3 MS. BLAKE: And thank you for your help with
4 our Spanish translations.

5 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: You're welcome.
6 I try. Thank you, Madam Chair.

7 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Commissioner
8 Del Cid-Kosso. Are there any other questions from the
9 board for the staff with respect to the executive
10 director's report?

11 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Just a brief question.
12 I remember in a previous meeting I had asked
13 specifically about the businesses that were open and
14 the majority representation of those businesses
15 specifically. Does the staff have that?

16 MS. ANDERSON: Yes. We presented it last
17 meeting. Wesley presented out on it and it's posted
18 on our website, but definitely, I can forward it to
19 you again if you need it.

20 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Yeah, I didn't see it
21 last meeting. I asked the question last meeting, so
22 that's why -- I didn't see it last meeting and I
23 didn't see it on the website, but maybe I missed it.

24 MS. ANDERSON: Yes, I'll forward it to you.
25 So Wesley did the quarterly report, if I'm not

1 mistaken, and we did the oversight of majority
2 ownership and then we did an additional three slides
3 just on those that were awarded and open. So I will
4 forward that to you again.

5 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Please. And I will
6 ascribe this in an email, but I think there may be a
7 disconnect between what I'm asking for and what's
8 being provided. So I do want that to be clearly
9 understood. If we can reconcile that offline, I would
10 greatly appreciate that.

11 MS. ANDERSON: Just a quick question. For
12 my understanding, you would like the entities that are
13 open and you wanted to know of those open, which
14 majority ownerships were of the black and brown
15 ownership?

16 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Black, Hispanic, and
17 indigenous specifically.

18 MS. ANDERSON: Yes, that's in the slides.
19 I'll forward those to you.

20 COMMISSIONER BARKER: I have other requests
21 that have still not been answered, and those have been
22 memorialized. So I want to start putting a pin on
23 that. I'm hearing a lot of the data that we're
24 saying, and it is great data, but it's not as specific
25 and detailed as it could be to evidence and measure

1 the impact that we're having and whether or not we're
2 meeting our goals.

3 MS. ANDERSON: Completely understand. I
4 think what we can do is we'll get that to you, but
5 also we want to make sure that you understand the data
6 that you're getting.

9 that you
don't understand
what we
presented. So I'll

7 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Absolutely.

8 MS. ANDERSON: That might be an issue also,
10 get that over to you, and then we'll set up some time.

11 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Thank you very much.

12 MS. ANDERSON: No problem.

13 COMMISSIONER BARKER: And I do understand,
14 just to be clear, so thank you.

15 MS. ANDERSON: We'll make sure.

16 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Any
17 other -- any additional questions from the board with
18 respect to the executive director's report? Hearing
19 none, Mr. Said, we can move on to the next agenda
20 item.

21 MR. SAID: Next item on the agenda are the
22 committee reports.

23 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Today we'll
24 have the Permitting and Licensing Committee give a
25 readout, and for this, I will turn it to the chair of

1 the committee, Commissioner Maria Del Cid-Kosso.

2 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Thank you,
3 Madam Chair. Quickly wanted to provide an update to
4 my fellow commissioners and the public on the work
5 that the Permitting and Licensing Committee has been
6 working on the last couple of months.

7 So far, from November to January, we have
8 issued 194 extensions. Next slide.

9 For adult-use awardees, they are approaching
10 their operational deadline. We have 14 in the month
11 of January, 22 for this month, and then 17 for the
12 month of March.

13 This slide right here shows two updates
14 regarding the 2019 RFA. The first one is that there
15 are 21 awardees with an upcoming expiration date. So
16 we are highly encouraging any awardee to stay in
17 constant communication with their field monitor and
18 any staff at the CRC to ensure that you guys are going
19 through the process.

20 And the second update here is that from the
21 overall awards, two of those awardees withdrew their
22 consideration from the 2019 RFA. And the committee is
23 recommending not to reissue those awards. There were
24 many factors that the committee considered when making
25 this recommendation. One of them a lot of time has

1 lapsed since those awards were issued, and I'm talking
2 about October 2021. Reissuing those awards may
3 require a new awardee to update a team of owners,
4 principals, and managers, find new locations, or
5 reapply for municipal approvals.

6 And lastly, there were -- they were the
7 highest score applicants on the RFAs, so if we were to
8 reissue these awards, it would go to the applicants
9 that does not have the strong qualifications to
10 properly register -- to properly serve registered
11 patients that require the highest standards of care.

12 And our last slide here. Earlier the chair
13 mentioned public engagement and industry assessment as
14 priorities for this board. As part of those efforts,
15 we're going to be soliciting feedback from you all on
16 our application and licensing processes. The
17 committee is going to convene a public hearing this
18 spring to give the public an opportunity to weigh in
19 on the current licensing process, understand what's
20 working and what can be improved to reduce barriers to
21 entry, hear ideas to make the processes more
22 efficient, and we're going to be sharing those details
23 with you soon via our social media or website, or
24 both.

25 And that concludes my report. Madam Chair,

1 would you like to add anything?

2 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Commissioner

3 Del Cid-Kosso. I think you captured everything here.

4 I just want to underscore for those businesses that

5 are coming up on their operational deadline, those

6 businesses that have -- for the adult-use businesses,

7 you have one year to get all of your construction and

8 retrofitting done and request that final on-site

9 inspection. If you are coming up on that deadline and

10 you're hitting -- you're running into issues or

11 something is drawing out the amount of time that you

12 need to become operational, please, please, please be

13 in touch with your field monitor to let them know

14 what's going on and submit a request for an extension.

15 So that the Permitting and Licensing Committee can

16 properly document that you are having issues, that

17 we've received communication, and we can respond to

18 your extension request. That's all that I have to

19 add, but thank you Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso.

20 Are there any questions from the board

21 regarding the Permitting and Licensing's Committee

22 report? Hearing none, Mr. Said, we can move to the

23 next item.

24 MR. SAID: Next item on the agenda is the

25 consideration of provisional badging.

1 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. So with
2 this, I will turn it over to Director Brown to provide
3 summary remarks.

4 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you. So up for
5 consideration by the Board of Commissioners is the
6 resolution to authorize provisional badging for
7 employees for cannabis business ID cards, and codify
8 that ability for ATC identification cards.

9 We've all been hearing of the problems, you
10 know. One of the issues we have, the average time
11 from request to issuance is 50 days right now for ATC
12 ID cards. A lot of that is things that are outside of
13 our control, outside of the purview of the CRC, but
14 some is certainly within our purview.

15 The statute for ATC ID cards gives us the
16 ability to issue them provisionally for up to 90 days,
17 and so the goal here is to start doing that again as
18 quickly as possible. Next slide please.

19 So just some provisions here. So as noted
20 on the previous slide, provisional cards will be
21 issued after 14 days have passed. So once you get
22 fingerprint results -- or once you get fingerprinted,
23 you get a receipt for those fingerprints. Those can
24 be submitted to CRC compliance staff, and once 14 days
25 have elapsed, if we don't have the criminal history

1 background check results back, then we will issue a
2 provisional card. Applicants will also have to
3 provide an attestation in accordance with the statute.

4 This provisional status is only going to be
5 offered to employees, so it's not going to apply to
6 owners, principals, or managers. So anybody who is
7 issued a provisional card will be working under the
8 supervision of a fully carded and vetted employee.

9 Being issued a provisional ID doesn't guarantee
10 qualification. So you know, if a disqualifying
11 conviction is uncovered, then you have to show
12 evidence of rehabilitation and be considered by the
13 board. And submitting a false attestation under this
14 process could be grounds for disqualification or
15 ineligibility.

16 So we have guidance ready to go on these.

17 We put into place system changes for ATC
18 identification cards. Those are ready right now and
19 thanks to our registry team for getting those done
20 quickly. And it's going to take a little longer on
21 the cannabis business ID card point, but those cards
22 are being issued primarily within 14 days of
23 licensure. So we're seeing those cards are primarily
24 being issued to newly licensed businesses, and
25 employees don't get carded until that business is open

1 anyway. So those cards are being issued under that
2 14-day threshold from the point of licensure, but we
3 will also be rolling that out as well. Guidance will
4 come out as well as an overview of the process for the
5 industry.

6 But the real pain point right now is
7 primarily with the ATC ID cards, and this action by
8 the Board of Commissioners will help us address that.
9 So recommend approving this resolution and we are
10 ready to start implementing shortly thereafter.

11 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Director
12 Brown. Are there any questions from the board
13 regarding the information provided? Hearing none, is
14 there a motion on this matter?

15 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I
16 move that we approve this resolution for the
17 provisional badging.

18 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Vice Chair.
19 Is there a second?

20 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

21 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by
22 Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso. Is there any discussion
23 on this motion to approve the resolution?

24 I want to note that it's my understanding
25 that we have very few individuals who are waiting more

1 than 90 days to obtain their ATC identification cards
2 due to the background check results, so I'm optimistic
3 that this -- that there will be a very, very, very
4 small world, if any, in which this 90-day period is
5 not sufficient.

6 But I am -- I'm also cognizant of the urgent
7 need for businesses to be able to hire individuals,
8 for people to start working, and I'm happy that we are
9 putting this together to make sure that it's clear
10 that these individuals, who do need to work, can begin
11 working within that -- sorry, after 14 days, if things
12 have not -- if a background check has not yet cleared
13 just at that point.

14 So I'm happy that we're doing this because I
15 think it is in the best interests of the employees and
16 the businesses and the industry as a whole to make
17 sure that we understand the impacts of our rules and
18 our regulations, the impacts of our decisions here
19 today.

20 And so thank you to you Director Brown and
21 the folks in the industry who reached out to the
22 commission to alert us to this issue and work with us
23 to better understand the circumstances that we needed
24 to address.

25 Any other discussion for this motion? All

1 right. Hearing none, Mr. Said, can you please call
2 the vote?

3 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

4 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Aye.

5 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

6 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

7 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

8 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

9 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

10 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Enthusiastically yes.

11 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

12 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

13 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item
14 on the agenda is the consideration of applications for
15 name changes.

16 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Yes, we do
17 have one -- so we have two applications for name
18 changes, one of which does include a recusal. So
19 Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso is recused from matters
20 concerning Clade9 New Jersey, LLC and as such, she
21 will be stepping out of the room while the board
22 considers this particular application, after which she
23 will rejoin us and then we'll continue with
24 consideration of the other name change application.

25 So with that, Director Brown, I will turn it

1 over to you.

2 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you. So two name
3 changes. We're doing the one first which is Clade9
4 New Jersey, LLC to the QCC Group, and then I'll cover
5 the second one when Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso rejoins
6 us.

7 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Is that it? Any
8 other --

9 DIRECTOR BROWN: Yeah, they've submitted --
10 you know, they registered with the Division of Revenue
11 Enterprise Services, submitted what they needed to
12 submit to us, and so, you know, they're recommended
13 for approval for the name change.

14 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Any
15 questions from the board regarding this particular
16 application?

17 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: So we're going to take
18 two votes, right?

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Correct.

20 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Okay.

21 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: The first -- any other
22 questions? No? Okay. All right. Hearing no other
23 questions, is there a motion as it relates to Clade9
24 New Jersey, LLC?

25 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: So Madam Chairwoman, I

1 move that we approve the application change the
2 business name of adult-use license awardee Clade9 New
3 Jersey, LLC.

4 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair
5 Delgado. Is there a second?

6 COMMISSIONER NASH: Second.

7 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by
8 Commissioner Nash. Is there any discussion on this
9 motion to approve the name change application for
10 Clade9 New Jersey, LLC? Hearing no discussion,
11 Mr. Said, can you please call the vote as it relates
12 to Clade9 New Jersey, LLC.

13 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

14 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Aye.

15 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso is
16 recused. Commissioner Nash?

17 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

18 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

19 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

20 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

21 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

22 MR. SAID: The motion passes.

23 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. So we'll
24 now invite Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso to rejoin
25 civilization and we'll continue with the next matter.

1 Director Brown, the next name change application.

2 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman. The
3 next name change is Shigh, LLC to Midnight Greens,
4 LLC. And they've registered with Secretary of State,
5 submitted all the necessary documentation to us, and
6 recommended for approval.

7 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Any
8 questions from the board regarding this name change
9 application? Hearing none, is there a motion as it
10 relates to Shigh, LLC?

11 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I
12 move for the approval of application to change the
13 business name of adult-use license awardee Shigh, LLC.

14 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair
15 Delgado. Is there a second?

16 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

17 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by
18 Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso. Is there any discussion
19 on this motion to approve the application to change
20 the business name? Hearing none, Mr. Said, can you
21 please call the vote?

22 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

23 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Aye.

24 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

25 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

1 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

2 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

3 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

4 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

5 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

6 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

7 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item
8 on the agenda is the consideration of applications for
9 ownership changes.

10 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. I will turn
11 it over to Director Brown for a summary of the
12 application submitted for an ownership change.

13 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman
14 Houenou. So today up for consideration is an
15 ownership change related to Harmony Foundation.
16 Harmony Foundation is a distressed alternative
17 treatment center. They've been under the control of a
18 court-appointed custodian for some time now. That
19 court-appointed custodian has found and negotiated a
20 sale to bring in new management to that company. That
21 proposed sale was reviewed by the court and approved,
22 and it is now up for consideration by the CRC.

23 The entity that would take control of
24 Harmony, Illicit Cannabis has complied with background
25 investigations, submitted everything they needed to

1 submit, undergone the criminal background checks
2 required by statute and by regs, and this transfer is
3 recommended for approval by the Board of
4 Commissioners.

5 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Director
6 Brown. Are there any questions from the board
7 regarding the information provided? Hearing none, I
8 will ask for a motion on this matter.

9 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I
10 move approving the transfer of ownership of Harmony
11 Foundation of New Jersey, Inc., to Illicit Cannabis
12 New Jersey, LLC.

13 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair
14 Delgado. Is there a second?

15 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

16 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by
17 Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso. Is there any discussion
18 on this motion to approve the transfer of ownership?
19 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Said, can you please call
20 the vote?

21 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

22 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Nay.

23 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

24 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

25 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

1 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

2 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

3 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

4 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

5 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

6 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item

7 for consideration is the adult-use cannabis business

8 conditional license applications.

9 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Director Brown, I will
10 turn it over to you to describe the applications
11 received.

12 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman. And
13 as we go through this section, we're going to
14 ping-pong kind of back and forth between approvals and
15 denials. But at the outset, I'm going to run through
16 the application review process. It's obviously
17 included in the recommendation report, but just for
18 the record, but then I'll just cover the specific
19 application numbers in each cohort and the specifics
20 related to the denials.

21 So there's 12 conditional licenses, I think
22 20 -- yeah, 20 conversions, and four annuals up for
23 consideration for approval. Those applications,
24 they've all undergone priority assignment based on the
25 type of application. That priority has been verified.

1 The applications have been reviewed for completeness
2 to ensure they have everything that they need.
3 They've been scored in accordance with the notice of
4 the application acceptance. They've all scored
5 sufficiently high to move forward.

6 Then for -- they all undergo various levels
7 of qualification limitations, financial management
8 agreement review. That is much more in-depth for
9 annuals and conversions versus conditionals. Annuals
10 and conversions then undergo qualification review
11 which is probity as well as criminal history
12 background checks. Finally, our staff conducts
13 quality control, and all of these applications are
14 recommended for approval.

15 The first cohort are the conditionals.
16 There are 12 conditional license applications that
17 have gone through that review process and are
18 recommended for approval.

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Are there
20 any questions from the board? Hearing none, is there
21 a motion on this matter pertaining to the conditional
22 license applications?

23 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Madam Chair, I move
24 that we approve the conditional license applications.

25 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: I second.

1 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Commissioner
2 Barker and seconded by Vice Chair Delgado. Is there
3 any discussion on this motion to approve the
4 conditional license applications? Hearing none,
5 Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

6 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

7 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Aye.

8 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

9 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

10 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

11 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

12 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

13 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

14 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

15 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

16 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item
17 up for conversation is the adult-use cannabis business
18 conditional license application denials.

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Director
20 Brown.

21 DIRECTOR BROWN: So for these denials -- and
22 thank you, Chairwoman. There are seven applications
23 recommended for denial, all for nonpayment of
24 application approval fees or licensing fees. These
25 are applications for which they've been noticed

1 several times of the need to pay their fees in order
2 to get issued a license and move forward. Despite
3 those notices, they have not paid and therefore, are
4 recommended for denial here.

5 If the applicants change their mind, they
6 can refile a conditional license application and
7 start -- go through the process once again. But all
8 these businesses have been duly noticed the need to
9 pay the fees and have not, and therefore are
10 recommended for denial.

11 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Are there
12 any questions from the board? I do hope that these
13 businesses resubmit an application and continue the --
14 see the process through to becoming operational. If
15 there are no questions regarding the conditional
16 license application denials, I will ask for a motion
17 on this matter.

18 COMMISSIONER NASH: Motioned.

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Commissioner
20 Nash to approve -- sorry, deny.

21 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: I second.

22 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Sorry, one second. I'm
23 sorry, I don't have the resolution on this one in
24 front of me. Thank you. All right. So thank you,
25 Commissioner Del Cid. So the motion is to approve the

1 resolution to deny the conditional license
2 applications. And Vice Chair Delgado, you are
3 seconding?

4 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: I'm seconding, yes.

5 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by Vice Chair
6 Delgado. Is there any discussion on this motion?

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

8 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

9 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Abstain.

10 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

11 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

12 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

13 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

14 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

15 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

16 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

17 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

18 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item

19 up for consideration is the adult-use cannabis

20 business conversion license applications.

21 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Director

22 Brown.

23 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman. We

24 have 20 conditional to annual conversion licenses up

25 for consideration. They've all gone through the

1 process that I outlined at the beginning of this
2 section and are recommended for approval.

3 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Are there
4 any questions from the board regarding the conditional
5 to annual conversion applications? Hearing none, is
6 there a motion on this matter?

7 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Madam Chair, I
8 move to consider the applications to convert from
9 conditional to annual class one, class two, and class
10 five retail licenses.

11 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Commissioner
12 Del Cid-Kosso. Is there a second?

13 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: I second.

14 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by Vice Chair
15 Delgado. Is there any discussion on this motion?

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

17 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

18 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Aye.

19 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

20 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

21 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

22 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

23 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

24 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

25 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

1 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

2 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item
3 up for consideration is the adult-use cannabis
4 business conversion license application denials.

5 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Director
6 Brown.

7 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman. I
8 was hoping to not see one of these, but we have one
9 application who, again, similar to the conditionals,
10 haven't paid the license approval fees and therefore,
11 you know, have been noticed that they need to make
12 those payments, and given many opportunities to do so.
13 So we are recommending them for denial, same with the
14 conditionals. If the situation changes, they are
15 welcome to reapply and move through the process again.

16 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. I share the
17 sentiment on lamenting the fact that we have one of
18 these, but it is what it is and our process is our
19 process. So hopefully businesses will pay their fees
20 so they can move forward in the process. Are there
21 any questions from the board regarding this conversion
22 application denial? All right. Hearing no questions,
23 is there a motion on this matter?

24 COMMISSIONER NASH: Motioned.

25 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Second.

1 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Commissioner
2 Nash to deny the conditional license application for
3 this entity. Seconded by Vice Chair Delgado. Are
4 there any -- is there any discussion on this motion to
5 deny the application? Hearing no discussion,
6 Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

7 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

8 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Abstain.

9 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

10 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

11 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

12 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

13 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

14 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

15 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

16 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

17 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item

18 up for consideration is the adult-use cannabis

19 business annual license applications.

20 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Director

21 Brown, I'll turn it over to you.

22 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman. So

23 we have four annual licenses up for consideration. I

24 will note, versus what was listed on the website

25 before the meeting, 2893 has been removed from

1 consideration. So the other four are still under
2 consideration here. They all went through our
3 licensure process as outlined at the beginning of this
4 section of resolutions and they're all recommended for
5 approval by the Board of Commissioners.

6 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Are there
7 any questions from the board? Hearing no questions,
8 is there a motion on this matter?

9 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Just a brief
10 statement, not a question.

11 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Is that okay?

13 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Sure.

14 COMMISSIONER BARKER: I'm very concerned.

15 And so -- and it pains me to be here during Black
16 History Month to share, through my purview, from what
17 I see, our cannabis industry in New Jersey is shaping
18 up to be dominated by businesses whose majority
19 ownership does not reflect those that have been most
20 harmed by the failed war on drugs, particularly our
21 black, our indigenous, and our Hispanic people and
22 communities.

23 We need to focus on this more. We need to
24 provide more in-depth data to measure the impact we're
25 having and to see if we're meeting our goals. We

1 didn't legalize this because it's business as usual.
2 We did not legalize it because black businesses or
3 Hispanic businesses or indigenous businesses were
4 failing. We did this to address the harms that the
5 failed war on drugs caused.

6 And so when I see a state right next door
7 that may have half as many businesses open, but
8 probably the same amount of businesses open by black
9 and Hispanic and indigenous people, that is
10 concerning. And so I'm hoping that our board can
11 consider the request to focus on this issue more. And
12 I hope that you the people demand it from us and
13 demand it from the New Jersey leadership.

14 We just heard that there's going to be a
15 billion dollars realized in 2024. And I'm hoping that
16 black, and indigenous, and Hispanic people,
17 communities, and cannabis businesses significantly
18 benefit. And it's incumbent upon all of us in this
19 room, and those outside the room, and those watching
20 to please join us so that the right thing can be done.
21 It's always the right time to do the right thing. I
22 turn it back to you, Madam Chair.

23 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Commissioner
24 Barker. Is there a motion on the matter as it relates
25 to annual license applications?

1 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I
2 move that we approve the consideration of annual
3 license application for the four applicants listed in
4 the resolution.

5 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair
6 Delgado to approve the annual license applications for
7 four cannabis businesses. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso,
8 was there something that --

9 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yeah, just a
10 brief statement if that's okay with you. Just in
11 response to Commissioner Barker's comment.

12 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: I see. If you don't
13 mind, we have no motion that has been seconded yet,
14 but when we do open for discussion on a motion that
15 has been presented, I'm happy to turn to you,
16 Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso, to offer comment.

17 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: That's fine
18 with me.

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: So Vice Chair Delgado
20 has moved to approve the four annual license
21 applications. Is there a second?

22 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

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

1 COMMISSIONER NASH: Madam Chair, may I have
2 the floor?

3 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Commissioner Nash, I
4 will turn to you. I will first give Commissioner Del
5 Cid-Kosso the floor to share her thoughts, and then
6 we'll turn over to Commissioner Nash.

7 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Thank you,
8 Madam Chair. You know, as a Latina woman, you know, I
9 take this very seriously, Commissioner Barker. The
10 numbers that Wesley has presented -- Director McWhite
11 has presented to us show progress, and it's not going
12 to change overnight, right? It's going to take time.
13 It's going to take effort, both by the applicants and
14 by the state. We are working very hard to provide
15 those resources. Working with our partners at CBA and
16 also at EDA to hopefully lower the barriers to entry,
17 and that's our goal. And that's something I think we
18 can all agree on as the board as it is our priority to
19 make sure that we have representation in the
20 ownership, and that goes to, you know, blacks,
21 Latinos, indigenous.

22 So you know, with all due respect, I
23 understand that you want data and more details on the
24 information that we're getting from staff, but
25 nonetheless, it is a priority of mine, a personal one,

1 to make sure that, you know, we do have demographics
2 that represent this industry. And I'll leave it at
3 that. Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Commissioner
5 Del Cid. I'll kick it over to Commissioner Nash and
6 then we can go back to Commissioner Barker.

7 COMMISSIONER NASH: So during my review of
8 applications in general, I have identified certain
9 individuals who are submitting consultant or vendor
10 contractor agreements which are not subject to the
11 statutory cap. In my opinion, we need to conduct more
12 probity on such agreements to determine whether they
13 are actually management service contractors which
14 would be subject to the five limit cap.
15 Commissioner's oversight in this area is crucial to
16 promoting a fair and equitable industry. I cede back
17 to you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Commissioner
19 Nash. Commissioner Barker.

20 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Just very briefly. In
21 case it's lost on this board, I'm black and Latino.
22 My mom is Dominican, so that is not lost on me either.
23 But when we talk about time and effort, we're on year
24 three, and the benefit that we had is that we were
25 able to learn from other states.

1 And in addition to that, we communicated to
2 the public and ensured that we were going to start as
3 a foundation leading with equity and diversity. And
4 so I'm here to say we're going approaching year three.
5 We can and should be willing to do better.

6 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Commissioner
7 Barker. Any further discussion on this motion?
8 Hearing no additional discussion, Mr. Said, can you
9 please call the vote?

10 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

11 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Abstain.

12 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

13 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

14 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

15 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

16 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

17 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

18 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

20 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item
21 up for consideration is the adult-use cannabis
22 business annual license renewals.

23 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Director Brown, I'll
24 turn the floor to you.

25 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman. So

1 we have three renewals, all BLOC Dispensary. The
2 addresses are there on the screen. So this is for
3 adult-use annual license renewals. They have
4 submitted renewal applications, submitted everything,
5 you know, required by our regulations for that
6 renewal. They're seeking renewal, continue to be in
7 compliance with patient-access provisions both in
8 statute and reg and FADs, and so they are recommended
9 for renewal.

10 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Are there
11 any questions from the board? Hearing none, is there
12 a motion on this matter?

13 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I
14 move that we approve the renewal of adult use cannabis
15 business license for expanded treatment center BLOC
16 Dispensary, LLC for their three locations.

17 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Is there a
18 second?

19 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

20 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by
21 Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso. Is there any discussion
22 on this motion to approve the renewal? I just want to
23 note that for -- again, I did note in the chair's
24 report that part of the -- part of the priorities for
25 the board and for the committees will be to enhance

1 the renewal process for licensing and permitting. So
2 I look forward to strengthening our -- strengthening
3 our renewal process for applicants that are coming up
4 on their annual license expiration. Is there any
5 other discussion? Hearing none, Mr. Said, can you
6 please call the vote?

7 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

8 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Abstain.

9 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

10 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

11 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

12 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

13 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

14 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

15 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

16 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

17 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item

18 up for consideration are the expanded alternative

19 treatment center certifications.

20 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Director

21 Brown, I'll turn it over to you.

22 DIRECTOR BROWN: Thank you, Chairwoman. We

23 have two expanded ATC certifications up for

24 consideration. So I mentioned with the ownership

25 change that Harmony Foundation was a distressed

1 alternative treatment center, they have since ceased
2 operations at their dispensary location in Secaucus.
3 The remaining operations are at a facility in
4 Lafayette. They have cultivation and manufacturing
5 there, and they are seeking expansion.

6 In reviewing against the statutory
7 requirements, their production capacity, what they do
8 in wholesale, they are -- you know, they meet the
9 standard for expansion, they have municipal approval.
10 They have those factors that are required by our ATC
11 expansion criteria, and so therefore, they're both
12 recommended for approval both for a class one
13 manufacturer and a class two -- sorry, class one
14 cultivator and class two manufacturer license.

15 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you, Director
16 Brown. Are there any questions from the board? I
17 just have one question. So I believe the materials
18 list an ATC for this matter as Illicit Cannabis, New
19 Jersey, but Illicit owns Harmony.

20 DIRECTOR BROWN: It's Harmony.

21 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Harmony Foundation of
22 New Jersey would still be the --

23 DIRECTOR BROWN: It's Harmony Foundation of
24 New Jersey, that's correct.

25 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: So Harmony Foundation

1 is still the ATC name, it's just that Illicit has
2 now -- well, would be -- will own Harmony.

3 DIRECTOR BROWN: Yes, once that is
4 effectuated, Illicit will be the owners of Harmony
5 Foundation -- or control, they will have control of
6 Harmony Foundation of New Jersey.

7 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: So I want to make sure
8 that that name -- correction needs to be made on the
9 resolution that we have before us.

10 DIRECTOR BROWN: Yes, we'll make that
11 correction, and we'll also make the correction on the
12 slides before they -- before they're published.

13 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Great, perfect. Thank
14 you. Vice Chair, yes?

15 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: The motion is for
16 Harmony?

17 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Correct.

18 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Okay, gotcha.

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Correct. Well, if
20 there is a motion. There hasn't been a motion yet.

21 Are there any other questions from the board for
22 Director Brown? All right. Hearing none, is there a
23 motion on this matter?

24 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Madam Chair,
25 I'd like to move resolution on the acceptance of

1 certification for ATC Harmony to expand operations to
2 adult-use personal use cannabis market.

3 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you.

4 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: And I second.

5 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by Vice Chair

6 Delgado. Is there any discussion on this motion to
7 approve acceptance of the certification for Harmony
8 Foundation? Hearing no discussion, Mr. Said, can you
9 please call the vote?

10 MR. SAID: Commissioner Barker?

11 COMMISSIONER BARKER: Nay.

12 MR. SAID: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

13 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

14 MR. SAID: Commissioner Nash?

15 COMMISSIONER NASH: Yes.

16 MR. SAID: Vice Chair Delgado?

17 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Yes.

18 MR. SAID: Chairwoman Houenou?

19 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Yes.

20 MR. SAID: The motion passes. The next item

21 on the agenda is we have the open public comment
22 period.

23 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. Now, as we

24 remind folks at every board meeting, members of the

25 public can submit written -- can submit their comments

1 during and after this meeting in writing via our
2 website, nj.gov/cannabis/meetings. The deadline for
3 submitting written comments for today's board meeting
4 is 5:00 tomorrow, Friday, February 16th. Written
5 comments will be shared with the commission members
6 and will be made public.

7 Speakers today will be limited to three
8 minutes. Mr. Said will call out the names of our
9 registered speakers. When you hear a name called,
10 please come forward. There is a microphone at the
11 table here, so just tap the button that says push
12 until you see that green light and then you may begin.

13 Mr. Said, can you please call the first
14 speakers.

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

20 So the first three names that I'm going to
21 call up are David Feder, Samuel Reichbart, and Susan
22 Sciarretto. If you're in the room. Just please state
23 your name on the microphone.

24 SAMUEL REICHBART: Hi, my name is Samuel
25 Reichbart. I'm here to speak to you guys about a

1 couple of things today. [Indiscernible] was actually
2 asking the commission to consider a patient advisory
3 board, so I'm very happy to hear that you guys are
4 [indiscernible].

5 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Excuse me, I'm so
6 sorry. The microphone had cut off for a second. So
7 you're fine. You're good.

8 SAMUEL REICHBART: Sorry.

9 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Continue.

10 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: You can move it closer
11 to yourself if you want. There you go.

12 SAMUEL REICHBART: I do encourage you guys,
13 though, to reach out to patients as soon as possible
14 and not wait until we're considering new rules. There
15 are actually current rules and regulations that are
16 taking a toll, specifically on medical patients, and
17 we hope to get those things figured out as soon as
18 possible because that's why you guys are continuing to
19 see patient numbers drop off.

20 Unfortunately, it's easier to walk in as a
21 recreational patient and a recreational customer. I
22 can buy as much as I want typically. We're only
23 limited per transaction whereas patients are limited
24 to three ounces a month. Why would we be patients?
25 It quite literally does not make sense.

1 And which just -- we even spoke today about
2 not issuing more medical licenses. Why aren't we
3 issuing those medical license? Patients don't have
4 access to medicine. We haven't had access to medicine
5 for years. I stopped using medical cannabis in New
6 Jersey in 2018 when I started seeing pictures of
7 Curaleaf growing moldy weed, Harmony with dirty grow
8 rooms. All of these places, they're all horrible and
9 nothing has changed. It's unfortunate. I wish I
10 could say something better.

11 I don't know what else to say. I don't know
12 how many more times patients can sit up here, how long
13 we can continue to ask for the provisions that we
14 need. I would really like to discuss some of this
15 stuff with you guys privately. I've gone through the
16 process of requesting a meeting and I've not gotten
17 any answers back. So thank you for letting me speak
18 today.

19 MR. SAID: The next three on the list are
20 Matha Figaro, Michael John Odenwald, and Brian
21 Noronha.

22 MICHAEL ODENWALD: Good afternoon. My name
23 is Mike Odenwald. I'm founder and CEO of Green Growth
24 Advisors doing business as Local Flower Farms. My
25 company's built and organized and funded as an MSC,

1 management services contractor, just mentioned to help
2 other companies get into operate their licenses.
3 We're an incubator of sorts.

4 I pivoted from software and technology after
5 30 years in New Jersey cannabis. This the first time
6 I've worn this suit in three years. I've helped 20
7 startups with strategy, most recently measuring risk.
8 Go figure.

9 I share this because I typically look to
10 create a playbook. In this case, the state has given
11 me, all of us, all of us a large playbook to analyze.
12 I've collected and organized a lot of data. After a
13 year of analysis, I've confirmed a bunch of things,
14 all of which I want to share more with you in a
15 follow-up meeting. Thanks in advance for that.

16 In the interim, one observation in
17 particular I want to call to your attention is
18 micro-business cultivation. My team is 95 percent
19 confident that six licenses were approved in all of
20 2023. Six. None of them in an impact zone. Yet a
21 majority of the reason we are all here is to help
22 maintain and revitalize impact zones across the state.

23 We then went on the prove with a high degree
24 of confidence that a standalone micro-business is not
25 an economically viable business. Getting a harvest to

1 a shelf is an expensive hobby at best. I have a
2 solution to change that, one that puts New Jersey
3 residents at the forefront of entrepreneurship and
4 cultivation. White, black, Hispanic, indigenous,
5 woman-owned, disabled vets, all profiles.

6 People smarter than me say that the state
7 needs about 1 million square feet of modern indoor
8 cultivation canopy to feed the New Jersey market.

9 We're already north of close to 500,000 square feet,
10 as my team can see. Ninety percent of that is in
11 warehouses on highways.

12 What's missing in the market?

13 Micro-business cultivation and products that stem,
14 pun, from the sun. Seed, soil, sun in micro-sized
15 greenhouses. Rural and urban communities alike. My
16 model helps open up another license type for all New
17 Jersey residents beyond a retail dispensary. When
18 this happens, New Jersey residents can create another
19 grow local buy local market for sun-grown products in
20 the state, in locally-owned dispensaries.

21 This is a proactive economic development
22 plan for the municipalities to take an interest to
23 listen to my plan. My model is built to creates 50
24 new small businesses, and over 1,000 jobs, unionized
25 jobs, many of them, to make the first dent in big

1 business cultivation dominance. And my model makes
2 compliance around micro-business cultivation possible.

3 My ask today is for a follow-up with some of
4 you to share the data, a lot of data, and discuss some
5 ways for the state to elevate the opportunities for
6 micro-business cultivation for New Jersey residents.

7 Thank you very much.

8 MR. SAID: The next three speakers on the
9 list are Aric Ifergan, John Marchetti, and Mariam
10 Kure.

11 MARIAM KURE: Hi, my name is Mariam Kure.

12 AMINA KURE: I'm Amina Kure.

13 MARIAM KURE: Our company's IndaKure.

14 Sorry, we're really, really nervous, we're not used to
15 public speaking so bear with us for three minutes.

16 AMINA KURE: Six, because there's two of us,
17 right?

18 MARIAM KURE: Yeah. Yeah, okay? So the
19 first thing we want to say is thank you for believing
20 in us. We are your equity. We are two-time Iraqi
21 combat veterans, we're minorities, we're females, and
22 we really appreciate the fact that you guys saved
23 licenses for us.

24 I want to start by saying when we first
25 started this journey, it was like three years ago, we

1 went to, like, the cannabis entrepreneur conference,
2 and we actually paid a consultant to tell us that --

3 AMINA KURE: He said that nobody --

4 MARIAM KURE: Nobody will save a license.

5 Yeah, he said nobody would give you guys a license
6 that --

7 AMINA KURE: Wait two years and then see how
8 everything works, and we were like you know what --

9 MARIAM KURE: F frigging him. Sorry. I'm
10 really, really sorry. Forget him. We're going to go
11 for our license, and we did, and you guys believed in
12 us and you guys gave us the license. Thank you very
13 much.

14 AMINA KURE: Also, honestly, we want to,
15 like, bridge the gap between I guess veterans and the
16 industry and the community because there are a lot of
17 issues with veterans wanting to use cannabis, but the
18 stigma behind it.

19 MARIAM KURE: Like at first, we became
20 medical recipients because we were like not in a good
21 place for a really long time, and we had a battle
22 buddy that, like, introduced us to, like, the medical
23 marijuana, and it's been --

24 AMINA KURE: It's helped us a lot. So
25 that's what pushed us to, like, try to get into the

1 industry.

2 MARIAM KURE: And we initially really just
3 wanted to grow, because we're gardeners by trade.
4 Like that's all we do is grow.

5 AMINA KURE: We grow plants.

6 MARIAM KURE: Plants, like gardening.

7 Sorry. Hostas, dahlias, like flowers. Flowers.

8 AMINA KURE: Flowers.

9 MARIAM KURE: Yeah. So that really helps
10 us, like, with our anxiety and everything, and we
11 realized that we wouldn't be able to get on the
12 cultivating side because we wouldn't be able to afford
13 to get in it that way, so that's what prompted us to
14 go the dispensary side so that the dispensary would
15 help us be able to get into the grow and
16 manufacturing.

17 AMINA KURE: And we also want to thank
18 Inspector Ryan, because he like always communicating
19 with us --

20 MARIAM KURE: I don't know, is he here? So
21 inspector -- thank you. Inspector Ryan. Yeah, he's
22 always opening up lines of communication. And also
23 Wesley --

24 AMINA KURE: Director McWhite, because we
25 were in kind of a bad place and we, like, e-mailed and

1 reached out and he --

2 MARIAM KURE: Guided us. Like right now, we
3 own 100 percent -- well, she owns 100 percent of our
4 company, but what's hers is mine, what's mine is hers,
5 so 50/50. And she owns 100 percent of the company
6 right now. Like it's ours, our build-out's going to
7 start within, like, next week, so we're really
8 excited.

9 AMINA KURE: And also, like another reason
10 why we're able to, like -- we're here, like, talking
11 and owning the amount of our company is because of
12 Scheril Murray Powell, Leo Bridgewater, Tahir Johnson
13 and the Dank Duchess. They've been guiding us
14 throughout the whole thing.

15 MARIAM KURE: Like they saved us.

16 AMINA KURE: We don't know anything about
17 business.

18 MARIAM KURE: We're LPNs by trade, so we
19 just came over.

20 AMINA KURE: We're going to school to get
21 our RN, and then Murphy legalized, and we were like
22 let's just try it, and we did.

23 MARIAM KURE: And we're here.

24 AMINA KURE: We're here. So thank you.

25 MARIAM KURE: So that's really it.

1 AMINA KURE: Well, we didn't use all of it.

2 MARIAM KURE: And then I'm sorry, if we're
3 not here to talk to everybody afterwards, like my
4 daughter has a basketball game and we're coming from
5 North Jersey, so we might have to leave. We would
6 love to speak to everyone, but just in case.

7 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: What's your location?

8 MARIAM KURE: Somerset.

9 AMINA KURE: IndaKure [indiscernible]
10 Township.

11 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: If I can let you speak
12 for another six minutes, but I can't.

13 MARIAM KURE: Thank you.

14 AMINA KURE: Have a great day.

15 MR. SAID: The next three on the list are
16 Carlos Almanzar, Tahir Johnson, and Mariah Williams.

17 TAHIR JOHNSON: Hello commissioners, it's an
18 honor to be here today. My name is Tahir Johnson, I'm
19 the founder and CEO of Simply Pure Trenton. We have
20 an annual adult-use cannabis dispensary license close
21 down the road in Ewing Township, and we were also
22 thankful to be granted our conditional cultivation
23 license today.

24 Today, I'm here talk about Rule 6.8(g) which
25 restricts -- which restricts cannabis business owners

1 from having ownership in more than one license entity.

2 And the reason for that is because I believe that it
3 causes restrictions and in allowing businesses to be
4 able to grow.

5 In my case, like I said, I was awarded the
6 cultivation license today for Simply Pure Trenton, but
7 if I had my way, it would have been good to be able to
8 form a separate entity to own that business rather
9 than it be Simply Pure Trenton. Why is that
10 important? Because I raise a significant amount of
11 equity capital to fund the dispensary, and now that I
12 have to try to raise funds to be able to fund the
13 cultivation, there's not much left to give to be able
14 to fund the business.

15 So when you look at how that causes
16 restrictions, being able to have a separate entity
17 that you can raise capital for will allow those
18 business opportunities to be able to grow. So I think
19 it's an unintended consequence of, you know, being
20 limited to one entity ownership. And when you look at
21 the larger companies, I don't believe they have that,
22 you know, that same restriction.

23 So again, I think that it has, like I said,
24 unintended consequences that limit the ability for
25 businesses to be able to raise capital, to be able to

1 become vertically integrated, and have multiple
2 business lines, especially if we want the, you know,
3 minority and social equity businesses to be able to
4 grow and expand into other lines of businesses if they
5 already have one business open. And that was just the
6 point I wanted to speak about today. Thank you.

7 MR. SAID: The next three names on the list
8 are Walter Iwachiw, John De Los Santos, and David
9 Little.

10 JOHN DE LOS SANTOS: Good afternoon,
11 commissioner members. My name is John De Los Santos,
12 founder and CEO of Royal Roll, LLC, holding
13 conditional license number RE42.

14 I am a social equity minority-owned impact
15 zone applicant, and I'm here to bring some issues to
16 the commission over my municipality. I am the first
17 applicant to apply to my municipality which is
18 Paterson, New Jersey. This is going back to May 8,
19 2023. And I have been proactive in contacting the CRC
20 with my issue. It's just gotten to a point where it's
21 getting a little bit, to use proper words, it's too
22 much to have faith in this municipality anymore as a
23 social equity applicant, and I'll be straightforward.
24 I've been bleeding out \$20,000 of rent a month for my
25 dispensary.

1 In that time, I've been able to obtain
2 resolutions for manufacturing and cultivation, but it
3 is tough to move forward with those licenses when
4 you're held up with your dispensary. And this
5 municipality has caused me more than two groups that
6 I've been working with that have been willing to come
7 to the table and help fund this venture.

8 They issued three resolutions on July 18th
9 of 2023 without regards to their own ordinance and
10 disregarding their zoning and ordinance for the
11 distance between places of worship and schools. The
12 three resolutions they issued did not adhere at all,
13 and their response was to add more licenses.

14 I was told on record during a meeting wait,
15 we'll add more licenses, and we'll issue you a
16 resolution. That's eight months now. I don't know if
17 the CRC can step in at all. I know you have been
18 clear on the rule with municipalities and what the
19 state can do, but I also know that the regulations
20 state that you will not approve any resolution that
21 does not adhere to its city ordinance. So it's a very
22 clear issue we're having here and it's being
23 overlooked for some reason. Thank you.

24 DAVID LITTLE: Thank you for having me. My
25 name is Dave Little, I am the managing member of

1 Inclusion Gourmet which is a cannabis processor.

2 Thank you for my license a couple months ago. I'm
3 very grateful.

4 I'd like to talk about processing. We've
5 heard a gentleman talk about cultivation, and a couple
6 people talk about retail. We're a processor.

7 Inclusion Gourmet, and our Jersey cannabrand's an FDA,
8 FISMA registered, GMP certified 30-year confectionary
9 lab with nutraceutical background with a specialty in
10 chocolate.

11 Having always been in New Jersey, we also
12 have 30 years of FDA and New Jersey Health Department
13 inspections. This looks pretty familiar, Mr. Brown?
14 This is from the year 002000. So we got a lot of
15 experience here.

16 Coincidentally, February is national
17 chocolate month and Valentine's Day, so let's discuss
18 chocolate and processing, okay? I actually brought a
19 sample and I want to explain briefly what's involved
20 in processing because there are very few processors
21 and it should be understood what's involved in the
22 processing format. So let's start with this.

23 Right now, there are only four processors on
24 the website listed, and I believe we are only one of
25 two that specialize in edibles.

1 Quick explanation of how we make our
2 product. We start with about ten of these, which is
3 11 pounds, or 5,000 grams, and then we take oil, and
4 obviously we couldn't bring oil, but this is
5 approximately 150 grams, just to give you an idea.
6 And we use very expensive and sophisticated machinery.
7 With our experience, we're able to homogenize, get
8 independent lab results. These are independent lab
9 results, so everybody can look at them. And we create
10 a three-gram finished piece which is -- every day we
11 do this, we think it's an absolute miracle when you
12 realize that we can correctly homogenize into this
13 piece ten milligrams which came from 200 grams.
14 Really amazing.

15 It's very involved, and it takes a lot of
16 expertise is what I'm trying to get at. And I don't
17 know if the commission has seen this, but there is
18 complimentary press on the commission and on
19 ourselves, I might add, in New Jersey Monthly's
20 February issue. I was told I can't give one out, but
21 I will attach it in my comments. It actually says Let
22 Them Eat Chocolate. Very funny. And it talks about
23 our experience and, of course, what we've done.

24 So to cut to the chase, I'd like to make
25 some simple suggestion for the CRC based on our

1 experience. First I think we should have a faster
2 product approval process. We talked about that
3 briefly before. We know that retail cultivating can
4 really help us along, but should be modeled off of
5 what's existing in the alcohol beverage and control
6 industry. Okay.

7 This is very simple. They have a thing
8 that's called the POSSE system, it's online. If we
9 can implement this, it would really expand and make it
10 a lot easier for processors. They would do a lot of
11 stuff online in this commission, so this would really
12 be something worthwhile.

13 I know we also talked about the need for
14 quicker on-boarding. I work with the Passaic
15 Community College culinary program with interns, so
16 that would be very helpful. I'd like to see if we can
17 share some stats of the actual people who have
18 licenses, that would help all of us. I know
19 Mr. McWhite, we talked about that briefly.

20 MR. SAID: David, I'm sorry, time is up.

21 DAVID LITTLE: And my time is up. I'm
22 running out of time.

23 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: If you can just wrap up
24 your comments.

25 DAVID LITTLE: All right. I have one last

1 comment. I encourage the creation of a CRC ombudsman
2 who works directly with private, independent licensees
3 to assist in their interaction with the CRC. Similar
4 to the Business Action Center of New Jersey, we need a
5 focused contact who can go to bat on our behalf.
6 Thank you for your time. I'll clean up now.

7 COMMISSIONER NASH: Sir, could you leave
8 that 11 pound chocolate block?

9 DAVID LITTLE: I'm not allowed to give you
10 samples, I was told, right?

11 COMMISSIONER NASH: I was kidding.

12 DAVID LITTLE: But you're more than welcome
13 to visit our factory and understand processing.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Where are you located
15 again?

16 DAVID LITTLE: We're in Fairfield, New
17 Jersey, Essex County. In the same factory we've been
18 in for 25 years.

19 MR. SAID: The next three names on the list
20 are Abigail Kalmbach, Marcel Rodriguez, Chris
21 Goldstein.

22 ABIGAIL KALMBACH: Hi, my name's Abigail
23 Kalmbach, and I come before you as a medical cannabis
24 patient and a member of the Coalition for Medical
25 Marijuana of New Jersey, CMMNJ, and a scientist.

1 I'm here to talk about two things. The need
2 to increase accuracy of laboratory tests with cannabis
3 for safety, and the need to finally implement three
4 last provisions of the last -- of the Jake Honig
5 Compassionate Care Act that haven't been implemented.

6 Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for
7 the work that you've done to create a robust and
8 equitable market. However, one of the biggest
9 advantages of a regulated cannabis market for patients
10 and consumers is accuracy of the -- or assurance that
11 the products we have passed rigorous safety tests on
12 representative samples from each batch of flower-grown
13 or product manufactured.

14 I'm here today to urge the commission to
15 increase the frequency of testing cannabis flower to
16 ensure representative and effective testing which will
17 ensure increase accuracy for cannabinoid and terpene
18 profiles, as well as catching any contaminants that
19 may be present.

20 The easiest way to increase accuracy of
21 testing is to reduce batch size. At New Jersey's
22 current batch size of 100 pounds, out state is double
23 the size of any other legal market, and nearly seven
24 times the size of the most common state batch size.
25 What's most striking, however, is that while New

1 Jersey has literally copied Maryland's testing
2 regulations during this interim period of regging our
3 own, we have made one change. Instead of the ten
4 pound batch sizes that Maryland has, we have 100 pound
5 batch sizes.

6 The huge batch sizes in our state make a
7 mockery of any assumption that representative samples
8 can be accurately reflected across the entire batch.

9 It gives financial advantage to larger cultivators
10 because they don't have to test as frequently as
11 smaller cultivators. And most importantly, the huge
12 batch sizes hurt the patients and consumers as moldy
13 and toxic products cannot accurately be detected. It
14 is unfair to push the risk of mold and toxins onto
15 patients and consumers as we cannot visually inspect
16 the product for mold prior to use.

17 Switching gears more fully to patients, I
18 want to ask the commission's members what the timeline
19 for fully implementing provisions of the Jake Honig
20 Compassionate Care Act. Patients are still waiting
21 for access to their cannabis medicines in hospitals,
22 like Samuel mentioned earlier today. I know patients
23 who have risked their lives by not seeking medical
24 treatment because they're unable to continue use of
25 their cannabis-based seizure medicines while in the

1 hospital.

2 This act was passed years ago, and since
3 recreational cannabis came on the scene, it seems like
4 everyone has washed their hands of setting up the
5 institutional caregivers dosing and administration
6 guidelines, and educational programs for doctors and
7 nurses. These educational programs are particularly
8 needed because less than 2 percent of doctors in New
9 Jersey are licensed to prescribe cannabis medicine,
10 perhaps because they lack educational material and
11 institutional support to understand how cannabis can
12 be medicines and prescribe it to patients.

13 Please advise on how we can implement these
14 important provisions so that medical cannabis patients
15 can access their medicines from informed
16 practitioners. Thank you for your time today.

17 MARCEL RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon,
18 Commission. Thank you for allowing me to speak. God
19 bless you all. Good afternoon. My name is Marcel
20 Rodriguez the owner and founder of Wee Shop, LLC, in
21 Somerset, New Jersey.

22 Since 2019, I've been an entrepreneur
23 experiencing rapid growth with my first retail
24 business in Woodbridge Mall. Fortunately, the success
25 allowed me to open up another location in East

1 Brunswick Mall shortly after. Both locations were
2 thriving, the opportunities opened by the Hemp Farming
3 Act of 2018 enabled me to offer a high quality
4 product.

5 However, like many small businesses and
6 business owners, Covid-19 dealt a devastating blow. I
7 was forced to close my doors, losing inventory and the
8 momentum I had built. Despite these setbacks, my
9 strong relationship with both mall locations allowed
10 me to recover some inventory and begin rebuilding with
11 limited funds. Giving up was never an option.

12 Being an entrepreneur is engrained in me.
13 My innate skills and the support of a welcoming
14 community propelled me forward. Finding, building
15 available for immediate occupancy, I seized the
16 opportunity and poured everything into making it work.
17 Though I lost my apartment, had my car repoed, even
18 lost my place, I had to sleep in hotels with my kids,
19 I remained determined and passionate. Since I was ten
20 years old I've been doing this, so I wasn't about to
21 vanish.

22 As a cannabis patient myself, I knew how to
23 excel in the role and offer exceptional service to
24 fellow patients. To fellow patients and fellow people
25 in my community, I always said why not me became my

1 driving force.

2 Equipped with extensive industry knowledge

3 and a deep understanding of customer needs, I earned

4 all necessary certificates and opened my doors in

5 Somerset in June 2020. Even at the height of the

6 pandemic, I took a calculated risk, believing in

7 myself when few did. When the CRC application window

8 opened up in 2021, I immediately filled out the forms

9 with my lawyer. Through reviews and evaluating, since

10 then, I've eagerly awaited the CRC's response.

11 Having received neither an approval or

12 denial, my legal counsel clarified that my application

13 is undergoing additional reviews to confirm my

14 minority business ownership status. I'm here today to

15 introduce myself to the committee, provide any further

16 information required, and confidently prove that I am

17 indeed a minority business owner. So hello, and good

18 afternoon to you guys. God bless you, and I'll await

19 your answer.

20 CHRIS GOLDSTEIN: Good afternoon. My name's

21 Chris Goldstein, I'm a cannabis consumer advocate with

22 Normal. I've been working on this for more than

23 25 years. Next week is the third anniversary of us

24 passing the adult-use laws. It was a momentous

25 occasion. And while you're focusing on a hundred

1 dispensaries being opened, we had another number that
2 we were using back in the day which was a really hard
3 number to talk about. That was a hundred people
4 getting arrested for marijuana possession every single
5 day in the state of New Jersey. That's what stopped
6 three years ago. That means today, more than 100,000
7 people have had -- have been prevented from having a
8 police encounter over a small amount of marijuana.

9 And that's why it's tough for me to come
10 here today and I hope the communication staff will
11 listen to this because there have been some seriously
12 tone deaf social media posts from you guys.

13 You're asking people to turn in unlicensed
14 medical marijuana sellers out there and marijuana
15 sellers. Call the cops if you see an unlicensed
16 seller. Do you guys think that all the terrible
17 enforcement problems have stopped? Do you think the
18 police have completely changed how they treat people
19 who are selling marijuana? They haven't. Don't tell
20 them to call the police. Tell them to call you.

21 I would like to see a hotline by NJ CRC to
22 answer calls about unlicensed marijuana sellers so
23 they can go out with a strike team, get them a permit
24 instead of the police. We're in the post-prohibition
25 era. The police are the method of prohibition.

1 Please, don't encourage people to call the police.

2 This is your job.

3 Something else on social media was posted

4 about delta-8. I find this to be, quite frankly,

5 misinformation. Delta-8 has nothing to do with

6 regulated cannabis. If you're worried about delta-8,

7 there are laws on the books. We passed them to deal

8 with K2 and Spice, synthetic cannabinoids that were in

9 gas stations in the same space that delta-8 is today,

10 sold by the same people.

11 We got those things off the shelves with

12 careful enforcement and laws that have already been

13 passed. Laws that have catch-alls about all synthetic

14 cannabinoids. Are you worried about delta-8? Tell

15 the cops to enforce it. Don't put up social media

16 posts to people like me. I'm an old cannabis

17 consumer. I'm just an old quaker stoner, you know.

18 I'm going and looking at the dispensary menus every

19 week. I don't see anything I can afford. Literally.

20 So you know, this is the view I have. I'm

21 glad that we've made the progress that we have. I'm

22 glad that we're licensing cannabis businesses. I do

23 not -- you heard from the public that we don't want

24 any of our taxes going to the police, we don't want

25 the NJ CRC acting like the police either. Or telling

1 people to call the police.

2 So please, you want public engagement, right
3 now, you're a brick wall to consumers and patients.
4 You're hearing from us today, we're not hearing back
5 from you. Either consumer advisory board, a patient
6 advisory board, and real public engagement. Thank
7 you.

8 Thank you. Oh yeah, I will pass this
9 around. This is my presidential pardon for marijuana
10 possession from President Biden. Please take a look
11 at it. Thank you, thank you. And remember, the
12 president and vice president say nobody should be in
13 jail for marijuana, so please don't tell people to
14 call the cops about unlicensed marijuana dealers.
15 Thank you.

16 MR. SAID: The next three names on the list
17 are Maor Rozalis, Guy Holzman, and Jennifer Cabrera.

18 MAOR ROZALIS: Hello. My name is Maor
19 Rozalis, first of all. Thank you so much for having
20 me here and having this opportunity. I will be quick.

21 I'm here to talk about, as a future wannabe
22 delivery business, and some of the problems I know I'm
23 having, and I know a lot of other entrepreneurs are
24 having is finding a location. And I'm here to speak
25 on a very specific part of that because a delivery

1 license and a delivery vertical is right now lumped up
2 together with most of the townships in the state of
3 New Jersey as the same regulation, the same security,
4 but for the most part, so therefore, none of us can
5 find locations.

6 For the most part, a delivery business that
7 is not connected directly to a dispensary, if I want
8 to be a standalone delivery business, which means it's
9 an office space with a desk and a computer and a
10 telephone. It does not need a 24/7 security guards
11 and it does not need all the provisions and problems
12 and regulations that a township put on those
13 businesses, which right now are -- just to put out
14 there, we can't open those businesses.

15 It's almost impossible because every
16 township, the few that do allow it, they limit the
17 number of businesses, they limit of where you can have
18 it, but at the end of the day, a delivery business is
19 an office with a dispatcher, hopefully the bigger it
20 is, we'll have more people working in it, but it's
21 strictly an office without any product, without having
22 anything that should be supervised.

23 I am not saying not to have it supervised by
24 the CRC. Quite the opposite. I would like it to be
25 supervised, and make sure it's safe. And I'm just

1 saying that my goal, my wish to the CRC commission is
2 to -- just like the rule that a township cannot say
3 no, no one can deliver in our township, same blanket
4 tool. Township must approve. It's a regular
5 dispatched business in the township as long as it's
6 not connected to a dispensary. As long as it's a
7 standalone business.

8 That is my point. I would like to say
9 thanks again for all the hard work of everyone
10 involved. Thank you so much.

11 JENNIFER CABRERA: Hello, my name is
12 Jennifer Cabrera, I'm with the law firm Vicente, LLP.
13 I just want to say off the bat, I'm really proud of
14 New Jersey. So I work -- we do only cannabis law, and
15 I work in New York, Maryland, a few other states, and
16 New Jersey is just killing it. So great job everyone.

17 I am here today to advocate for a rule
18 change to Rule 6.8(g). Tahir Johnson spoke to this
19 much better than I can, and I don't really have
20 anything to add beyond what he's already said. This
21 is the rule that restricts you to being an owner of
22 only one license. This is not 6.1(g)(1) -- I'm sorry,
23 6.8(g)(1) which has to do with family ownership. It
24 is simply the requirement that you're only on one LLC
25 or one corporation.

1 And the problem here is that if you're
2 raising money, you need to have separate companies.
3 There's no effective way to do that with one company.
4 If you get separate investors for cultivation, which
5 you're probably going to need because cultivation is
6 hugely expensive. So it's much more expensive than
7 retail. So you need to raise money which means you
8 probably need to do it through a different investment
9 vehicle.

10 This affects small businesses and minority
11 owned businesses so much more than big companies
12 because they can be vertically integrated, and that's
13 fine. But if you're a small business, you need to
14 find funders, and that's hard enough. So that is the
15 request I've made. Thank you.

16 GUY HOLZMAN: Hello, my name is Guy. I am
17 the cofounder of a company called Triplet. Our idea
18 is to connect dispensaries and delivery companies
19 together. Basically creating, if you will, a cannabis
20 Door Dash for the state of New Jersey.

21 And Maor here previously spoke about
22 something that I also wanted to speak about. In order
23 to start our business, we spoke with all the guys who
24 want to start a delivery service. We spoke with them
25 about their difficulties, and there is a lot of

1 difficulty in getting a delivery business up and
2 running. He already spoke about the technical side, I
3 don't want to take too much of the commission's time.

4 I would like to say on the economical level,
5 what will happen eventually, in 2024, we're going to
6 get to a billion. Eventually this business will go
7 into delivery. Like consumers, adult consumers will
8 take delivery as they consume from restaurants and
9 take it to their homes. What will happen is you will
10 form oligopolies and monopolies. Because the delivery
11 service licenses is so scarce, you will have a certain
12 amount of companies controlling that.

13 Now, for me personally, my business is good
14 because that means I get to connect with as many
15 companies as possible, but that's not what this is all
16 about. We want to have as many companies out there.
17 Want, as you said, Commissioner, to have as many
18 people involved in this business, and something I
19 think you guys should be aware of.

20 In particular, this is happening in South
21 Jersey. North Jersey is more advanced, maybe because
22 of the proximity to New York, I don't know, but in
23 South Jersey, towns are not allowing anybody. Almost
24 complete -- I'm from Cherry Hill, nothing in the
25 proximity of having a delivery. I'm not talking about

1 dispensaries, and I think this is a problem that the
2 committee should address. Thank you so much.

3 MR. SAID: And last two names on the list
4 are John Harmon and Osbert Orduna. I'm just going to
5 go over the names that I called that did not speak up.
6 If you're here and you missed your name, this is your
7 opportunity.

8 David Feder. Susan Sciarretto. Matha
9 Figaro. Brian Noronha. Aric Ifergan. John
10 Marchetti. Carlos Almanzar. Walter Iwachiw. John
11 Harmon. And Osbert Orduna. Chairwoman Houenou, this
12 looks like will conclude the registered speakers we
13 have for today's public meeting.

14 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Thank you. And thank
15 you to everyone who shared their thoughts, their
16 experiences, and their ideas with the commission
17 today. As a reminder, if you ran out of time or if
18 there was something that you were not able to share
19 with us today, by all means, go to our website to
20 submit comments in writing at
21 nj.gov/cannabis/meetings. And the deadline to submit
22 your written comments to us is 5:00 tomorrow Friday,
23 February 16th.

24 So this concludes the business that we have
25 before us today. Is there any new business for the

1 commission to consider? Hearing none, is there a
2 motion to adjourn?

3 VICE CHAIR DELGADO: Madam Chairwoman, I
4 move that we adjourn.

5 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Moved by Vice Chair
6 Delgado. Is there a second?

7 COMMISSIONER DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

8 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: Seconded by
9 Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso. Thank you or else we'd be
10 sitting here like lost ducks. Is there any discussion
11 on this motion to adjourn? Hearing none, all those in
12 favor of adjourning say aye.

13 (Board responds aye.)

14 CHAIRWOMAN HOUENOU: All those opposed say
15 nay. Any abstentions? Hearing none, motion passes.

16 The time is now 3:02, and we are adjourned. The next
17 meeting is scheduled for March back here in this room.

18 Thank you so much.

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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 **February 15, 2024**.



Christopher Riggs
Chief Counsel



Daniel Said
Board Secretary

Date: 3/21/2024

Date: 3/21/2024