



News Release

Oregon Liquor Control Commission
9079 SE McLoughlin Blvd., Portland, OR 97222-7355
1-800-452-6522

For more information:
Mark Pettinger, Spokesperson
Mark.Pettinger@oregon.gov
971-235-7561 (mobile)

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State Regulators Start “Cannabis Regulators Association”

Oregon Liquor Control Commission joins organization Group will help navigate cannabis regulations at federal, state, and local levels

PORTLAND, OR. – Today state cannabis regulators from across the United States announced formation of a non-partisan organization, the Cannabis Regulators Association (CANNRA), to better share institutional knowledge and regulatory best practices. Cannabis regulators from 19 states have joined in filing documents to establish CANNRA, which is being created in order to assist federal, state, and local jurisdictions that have approved or are weighing legalization of cannabis.

“CANNRA’s formation provides assurance to citizens and policy makers that cannabis regulation across the U.S. will be informed by best practices and the consolidated expertise of state regulators,” said Steve Marks, Executive Director of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. “Whether it is for recreational or medical purposes, states are on the cutting edge of a transition from a societal prohibition on cannabis use to systems that effectively provide for consumer protection standards in the commercialization of cannabis.”

For years, cannabis regulators across the country have relied on each other to share regulatory experiences, institutional expertise, and to provide assistance navigating the numerous evolving policy and regulatory issues associated with legalizing and regulating cannabis. Often the first step for state and local jurisdictions weighing legalization is to engage with regulators from established markets and programs. However, there has never been an organization to facilitate these interactions or help stakeholders find objective data and evidence-based approaches to policymaking and implementation.

“The Cannabis Regulators Association will provide a much needed forum for regulators to engage with each other to identify and develop best practices, create model policies that safeguard public health and safety, and promote regulatory certainty for industry participants,” said Norman Birenbaum, CANNRA’s inaugural president.

The Cannabis Regulators Association is not an advocacy group and takes no formal position for or against cannabis legalization, but rather seeks to provide government jurisdictions with unbiased information to help make informed decisions when considering whether or how to legalize or expand regulated cannabis.

CANNRA will facilitate communication and information sharing between subject matter experts in regulatory approaches for industrial hemp, medical cannabis, and adult-use cannabis. This will include exchanges with research organizations, public health officials, policymakers, legal authorities, advocacy groups, and cannabis industry participants.

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OLCC – CANNRA Launch

“The association will strive to create and promote harmony and standardization across jurisdictions which choose to legalize and regulate cannabis,” said Birenbaum. Birenbaum currently serves as the Director of Cannabis Programs for New York State. “The Cannabis Regulators Association will also work to ensure federal officials benefit from the vast experiences of states across the nation to ensure any changes to federal law adequately address states’ needs and priorities,” he said.

CANNRA founding members include the principal cannabis regulators from 19 states: Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, and Washington.

Additional state regulators are expected to soon join CANNRA; CANNRA anticipates providing membership opportunities for county and municipal cannabis regulators in the near future. Membership is limited to regulators and representatives from relevant government offices. Membership in CANNRA is not available to industry participants or advocacy organizations.

CANNRA members will be able to access a national registry of member regulators, resources for cannabis policy development and staff training, and will have the ability to access, and participate in the development of model standards and best practices for cannabis regulation.

Members will also be eligible to attend exclusive “Regulator Roundtable” conferences and programs, and receive legislative analyses, policy tracking data, and bulletins on current issues and events in the cannabis industry and regulatory arena.

CANNRA’s executive officers will include Norman Birenbaum, Director of Cannabis Programs for New York State as President; Rick Garza, Director of the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board as First Vice President; Jim Burack, Director of Colorado’s Marijuana Enforcement Division as Second Vice President; Andrew Brisbo, Executive Director of Michigan’s Marijuana Regulatory Agency as Third Vice President; and Tyler Klimas, Executive Director of Nevada’s Cannabis Compliance Board as Secretary Treasurer.

“Our intent in forming this organization is to have CANNRA serve as a resource for policy makers, elected officials, researchers, and other stakeholders to engage with regulators from across the country and receive unbiased information and recommendations regarding the impact and implementation of cannabis policies,” said Birenbaum.

For more information about the Cannabis Regulators Association or to inquire about membership please visit www.Cann-RA.org or email info@Cann-RA.org.

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