



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Liquor and Cannabis Commission

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Honorable Senator Wyden
707 13th Street SE, Suite 285
Salem, OR, 97301

Honorable Senator Wyden,

We are writing with a heightened sense of urgency regarding access to financial services for our licensed marijuana businesses. As you know, Oregon voters passed Ballot Measure 91 in November of 2014, legalizing and setting a regulatory structure for marijuana commerce in Oregon. Since that time Oregon has seen dramatic growth in this sector, and Oregon's legitimate cannabis industry has provided the state with more than 600 million dollars in tax revenue.

However, it cannot be ignored that, while cannabis businesses are providing the state with valuable tax income criminals are targeting them for robbery. The industry is being targeted because they are known as cash-transaction only businesses without access to financial services, and in most cases not even a basic checking and savings account. In Oregon, and across the nation, employees and owners of marijuana businesses are being robbed at gunpoint, and in some cases killed for the cash their operations have on hand.

In Oregon the state enacted legislation allowing financial institutions to enter into financial compliance verification agreements with our agency so qualified banks and credit unions can provide banking services to licensees. While a handful of credit unions are supportive, the financial products they're offering cannabis licensees are limited and come with extraordinary fees. That is just to set up basic accounts, with lending services not available at all. Without access to lending, licensees are put in the situation of taking private loans from individuals who may not be loaning funds in accordance with usury laws.

We are fully aware of the many comprehensive efforts being undertaken to redress cannabis prohibition and the devastation that federal and state marijuana criminal codes have had on so many people's lives. We also are aware that the complete package of cannabis reforms faces an uphill battle. If comprehensive reform is not possible at this juncture, we hope we can at least make incremental progress, and that you will utilize the strength of your collective representation to ensure that there is banking reform to help reduce the public safety threat to marijuana businesses. Even our agency hasn't been

immune to this negative impact of losing existing or not having access to banking services because of the cannabis connection.

Cannabis banking should be a priority. It will allow businesses and consumers to more safely complete transactions. It will provide law enforcement with greater data on cannabis businesses and help them distinguish legitimate businesses from those of international criminal cartels. It will set the stage for federalism of cannabis commerce. Legitimate cannabis businesses, licensed by the State of Oregon, under state law, should no longer be denied access to the banking system of our country, as if they are not part of the fabric of our union.

Enough states are engaged in some form of cannabis legalization that this should be an immediate national priority, not just a priority for our state. Please consider making every effort to pass a provision of law that allows cannabis businesses to safely bank cash. This is certainly an achievable policy step that will save lives – now.

Sincerely,



Paul Rosenbaum
Chairman
Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission

Letter sent via email and hard copy individually addressed to each Oregon delegation Congress.

cc: Governor Kate Brown
Senate President Peter Courtney
Speaker Dan Rayfield
Republican Leader, Senator Tim Knopp
Republican Leader, Representative Vikki Breese Iverson
Andrew Brisbo, President, CANNRA
Rick Garza, Director, Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board
Nicole Elliott, Director, California Department of Cannabis Control