

Medical Marijuana Package September 14, 2015

The following three bills have advanced to the Governor's Desk. Together, they comprise the Medical Marijuana Regulation & Safety Act. In a rare move, they have been triple-joined so that they must all be signed by the Governor, or all will fail. Since his staff were directly involved in and in fact controlled the final drafting of each measure, Governor Brown is expected to sign each of these measures.

AB 243 (Wood) - Medical Marijuana

- Places the Dept. of Food and Agriculture (DFA) in charge of licensing and regulation of indoor and outdoor cultivation sites. Creates a Medical Cannabis Cultivation Program within the department.
- Mandates the Dept. of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to develop standards for pesticides in marijuana cultivation, and maximum tolerances for pesticides and other foreign object residue.
- Mandates the Dept. of Public Health to develop standards for production and labelling of all edible medical cannabis products.
- Assign joint responsibility to DFA, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to prevent illegal water diversion associated with marijuana cultivation from adversely affecting California fish population.
- Specifies that DPR, in consultation with SWRCB, is to develop regulations for application of pesticides in all cultivation.
- Specifies various types of cultivation licenses.
- Directs the multi-agency task force headed by the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and the SWRCB to expand its existing enforcement efforts to a statewide level to reduce adverse impacts of marijuana cultivation, including environmental impacts such as illegal discharge into waterways and poisoning of marine life and habitats.

AB 266 (Bonta, Cooley, Jones-Sawyer, Lackey, Wood) – Medical Marijuana

- Protects local control as it establishes a statewide regulatory scheme, headed by Bureau of Medical Marijuana Regulation (BMMR) within the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA).
- Provides for dual licensing: state will issue licenses, and local governments will issue permits or licenses to operate marijuana businesses, according to local ordinances. State licenses will be issued beginning in January 2018.
- Revocation of a local license or permit will unilaterally terminate the ability of the business to operate in that jurisdiction.
- Expressly protects local licensing practices, zoning ordinances, and local constitutional police power.
- Caps total cultivation for a single licensee at four acres statewide, subject to local ordinances.
- Requires local jurisdictions that wish to prevent delivery services from operating within their borders to enact an ordinance affirmatively banning this activity. No specific operative date for the ban is specified.
- Specifies that DCA will issue the following licenses: Dispensary, Distributor, Transport, and Special Dispensary Status for licensees who have a maximum of three dispensaries. Specifies various sub-categories of licensees (indoor cultivation, outdoor cultivation, etc.)

- Limits cross-licensing to holding a single state license in up to two separate license categories, as specified. Prohibits medical marijuana licensees from also holding licenses to sell alcohol.
- Grandfathers in vertically integrated businesses (i.e. businesses that operate and control their own cultivation, manufacturing, and dispensing operations) if a local ordinance allowed or required such a business model and was enacted on or before July 1, 2015. Also requires such businesses to have operated in compliance with local ordinances, and to have been engaged in all the covered activities on July 1, 2015.
- Requires establishment of uniform health and safety standards, testing standards, and security requirements at dispensaries and during transport of the product.
- Specifies a standard for certification of testing labs, and specified minimum testing requirements. Prohibits testing lab operators from being licensees in any other category, and from holding a financial or ownership interest in any other category of licensed business.
- Includes a labor peace agreement under which unions agree not to engage in strikes, work stoppages, etc. and employers agree to provide unions reasonable access to employees for the purpose of organizing them. Specifies that such an agreement does not mandate a particular method of election.
- Provides for civil penalties for unlicensed activity, and specifies that applicable criminal penalties under existing law will continue to apply.
- Specifies that patients and primary caregivers are exempt from the state licensing requirement, and provides that their information is not to be disclosed and is confidential under the California Public Records Act.
- Phases out the existing model of marijuana cooperatives and collectives one year after DCA announces that state licensing has begun.
- Preserves enforcement authority of the City of Los Angeles with respect to Measure D, the local regulatory structure for medical marijuana within the city limits.

SB 643 (McGuire) – Medical Marijuana

- Directs California Medical Board to prioritize investigation of excessive recommendations by physicians.
- Imposes fines (\$5000.00) vs. physicians for violating prohibition against having a financial interest in a marijuana business
- Recommendation for cannabis without a prior examination constitutes unprofessional conduct.
- Imposes restrictions on advertising for physician recommendations
- Places Dept. of Food and Agriculture in charge of cultivation regulations and licensing, and requires a track and trace program
- Codifies dual licensing (state license and local license or permit), and itemizes disqualifying felonies for state licensure.
- Places DPR in charge of pesticide regulation; DPH in charge of production and labelling of edibles
- Upholds local power to levy fees and taxes.

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