



Nicole Elliot, Director
 Angela Hill, Deputy Director
 Department of Cannabis Control
 2920 Kilgore Rd
 Sacramento, CA 95670

Subject: Urgent Appeal to Prioritize True Equity in Cannabis Licensing by Reconsidering SB51 Amendments

Dear Nicole and Angela,

We, the undersigned equity advocates, owners, applicants, and disproportionately impacted community members from across the state of California, write this letter with a shared urgency and hope that our voices will resonate with the principles of justice, fairness, and true social equity that you champion.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your dedication to addressing the long-standing inequities perpetuated by the War on Drugs through policies like SB51. This bill, with its intention to extend provisional licensing for social equity retailers, has the potential to be a beacon of hope for those who have been systematically marginalized and harmed by unjust drug policies.

We are excited that SB51 has cleared the Appropriations Committee and is on its way to the Assembly floor for a vote. However, our hope is tinged with apprehension due to the proposed amendments recommended by the DCC. These amendments, which seek to modify the sunset date of the program to 2028 and introduce new deadlines for applications (2026) and provisionals (2027), raise significant concerns that we earnestly implore you to consider.

We humbly implore you to reconsider these amendments, for reasons deeply rooted in the realities faced by equity applicants:

1. **Barriers to Entry Persist:** As individuals who have experienced firsthand the systemic barriers to entry in the cannabis industry, we can attest to the challenges that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. The proposed timeline fails to acknowledge the ongoing hurdles such as limited access to capital, convoluted regulatory processes, and a lack of comprehensive support. Extending the sunset date while imposing stricter deadlines for applications and provisionals adds an undue burden that equity applicants may struggle to surmount.
2. **Holistic Equity Requires Time:** True equity entails not just providing opportunities, but also affording ample time to seize and leverage those opportunities. We firmly believe that the original intent of SB51 aligns with the ideals of genuine social equity. However, the recommended amendments risk perpetuating inequality by inadvertently handicapping equity applicants and curtailing their potential for success.
3. **Inclusion for All Operators:** Equity should be a universal principle that benefits all deserving individuals. We are deeply troubled by the notion of excluding current social equity retailers from the extended provisions. These entrepreneurs, who have already confronted adversity, deserve equitable support on their journey towards sustainable businesses. A fair and inclusive approach would acknowledge their contributions and challenges as well.

We stand united in our belief that your leadership has the potential to drive transformative change and create opportunities for all, especially those who have been historically marginalized. By reconsidering the proposed amendments and aligning them with the original vision of SB51, you would demonstrate an unwavering commitment to rectifying past injustices and fostering a truly inclusive cannabis industry.

We understand the intricacies of policy-making and the need for balance. Yet, we firmly advocate for an approach that offers a realistic timeline and equitable chances for success. Our shared goal is to create an environment where all Californians, regardless of their background, can participate in and benefit from this industry.

Thank you for your time, your unwavering dedication, and your leadership in driving change. We eagerly await your decision, hopeful that it will reflect the concerns and aspirations of those who are committed to true social equity.

With hope and gratitude,

BEYOND EQUITY
CALIFORNIA MINORITY ALLIANCE
CALIFORNIA URBAN PARTNERSHIP
EQUITY TRADE GROUP
GREEN BELIEVERS
THE HOOD INCUBATOR
THE INSTITUTE FOR MORE
LIFE DEVELOPMENT GROUP
LOS ANGELES METROPOLITAN CHURCHES
LONG BEACH CANNABIS COMMERCE COUNCIL
MINORITY CANNABIS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

SOCIAL EQUITY OWNERS AND WORKERS ASSOCIATION
THE SOCIAL IMPACT CENTER
SUPERNOVA WOMEN
THE WORKING GROUP
CASA GRANDE
SMASTE
PIRATE TOWN
NEW YORK CAURD COALITION
SONOMA COUNTY CANNABIS ALLIANCE
SAN FRANCISCO CANNABIS RETAILERS ALLIANCE
NATIONAL CANNABIS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION