



**Draft Minutes of the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force
Licensing Workgroup
April 21, 2021
Virtual Meeting**

Workgroup Members Present:

Michelle Merriweather, Co-Lead and
Task Force Member

Monica Martinez, Co-Lead and Task
Force Member

Ollie Garrett, WSLCB and Task Force
Member

Micah Sherman, Industry
Representative

Angel Joi Swanson, Industry
Representative

Mike Asai, Industry Representative

Kevin Oliver, NORML

Crystal Oliver, Sungrowers Association

Workgroup Members Absent:

Pablo Gonzalez, Industry
Representative and Task Force Member

Craig Bill, GOIA and Task Force
Member

Guests and Other Participants:

Throughout the meeting, approximately 34 members of the public joined and participated. The workgroup thanks all of those who attended and shared their time, expertise, and lived experience to help shape this important work.

Staff Support:

Christy Curwick Hoff
Joe Radermacher

Elise Rasmussen
Anzhane Slaughter

Call to Order

Michelle Merriweather, Co-Lead, called the public meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and read from a prepared statement (on file). Staff shared the Zoom protocol, conversation norms, and reviewed the agenda. Co-Lead Merriweather facilitated introductions of members.

1. Review Task Force Operating Principles

Monica Martinez, Co-Lead asked Christy Hoff, Workgroup Staff to review the operating principles. Christy reminded the group that the Task Force (TF) has adopted the Operating Principles (OPs). They are not being reviewed for changes by this Work Group (WG), they are being reviewed today simply as guidelines.

2. Discussion: Workgroup Scope and Responsibilities

Co-Lead Merriweather introduced the agenda item and Christy Hoff, staff, opened with a presentation (on file) on the Scope and Responsibilities of the WG. She stated that foundation setting is the goal of the meeting. Hard decisions will be made by the TF, proposals will be made by the WG. The TF will adopt/modify/deny the proposals put forth by the WG. In addition, Christy Hoff gave a brief overview of the rule making process, E2SHB 2870, and ESHB 1443.

Christy Hoff, Staff brought up the areas that ESHB 1443 adjusted. The four primary adjustments were that the SECTF would advise the WSLCB on the SE program, the SECTF would advise Commerce on grants through the SE program, the SECTF would recommend changes or additions to the quantity of available licenses, and the SECTF would recommend changes or additions to the types of available licenses.

Member Garrett provided an update to the current number of available licenses to the SE program: currently 570 retail licenses, 37 available to the SE program of which 15 can operate now and 22 are in ban/moratoria areas.

The group discussed the development of the SE program and several points were echoed throughout the discussion:

- The program should focus on helping black/minority holders of licenses in ban/moratoria areas and focus on getting them open.
- Community and industry members must collaborate rather than work at odds with each other.
- There should be high consideration given to those in bans w/ certificates and those who previously had dispensaries that were forced out of the market.

The group discussed the quantity of retail licenses available to the program as well as the types of licenses available. The most consistent belief of the group was that the current amount of retail licenses available to the program would not be enough to create equity in the industry. In addition to adding more retail licenses to the availability pool, the group identified the following new license types as potential ways to help:

- Licenses for consumption areas, spaces similar to those of wineries at the point of production.
- Event licenses that allow for sales and consumption such as farmer's markets or special events.
- A craft license for small farmers similar to those for craft breweries/distilleries that would allow for limited direct sales to consumers.
- Licenses for home delivery/distributed delivery.

3. Lessons Learned From Other State Social Equity Programs

Co-Lead Merriweather introduced the agenda item. The group discussed the ability of the LCB to increase the number of available retail licenses, whether or not there should even be a cap on the number of retail licenses in the state, and some of the

business types that should be prioritized for licensure by this program. Some of the main ideas voiced by the group included:

- Remove the cap on retail licenses completely and allow the market to dictate balance.
- Prioritize those who previously had cooperatives and/or dispensaries in issuing new licenses, similar to how Oregon conducted their retail licensing upon recreational legalization.
- Ensure reforms to the current industry are equitable and combat racism within the industry.

In response to the discussion about the LCB's ability to increase the amount of retail licenses available, Chris Thompson stated that the LCB did a deep dive into what they have the power to do and what they don't. What they found is that if they increase the allotment, they would have to do that on a population basis and they wouldn't be able to do that strictly for the SE program. It would have to be uniform across all counties and couldn't be reserved for the SE program.

Although the community voiced a lack of trust in the LCB and its ability to equitably distribute the licenses under this program, they also voiced great appreciation and support for LCB Board Member Ollie Garrett.

4. Next Steps

Christy Hoff, Staff said that calendar holds will be sent out and that the next meeting is June 30th at 9 am. Community members who are on the distribution list will get notifications about public meetings through that email list and information will also be posted on the website. The homework assignment that we'd like workgroup and community to consider: What kind of information/data do you need to make the decisions about increasing allotments and adding other license types?

Adjournment

Co-Leads Merriweather and Martinez thanked everyone for joining the meeting and participating in this important work. They adjourned the meeting at 3:27 p.m.

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact Kelie Kahler, Washington State Board of Health Communication Manager, at 360-236-4102 or by email at kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov TTY users can dial 711.

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