



**Draft Minutes of the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force**  
**August 23, 2022**  
Virtual Meeting

**Task Force Members Present:**

Jim Makoso, Co-Chair  
Sen. Rebecca Saldaña  
Sen. Curtis King  
Carmen Rivera  
Michelle Merriweather  
Ollie Garrett

Tamara Berkley  
Pablo Antonio Gonzalez  
Monica Martinez  
Micah Sherman  
Alison Beason  
Joyce Bruce

**Task Force Members Absent:**

Rep. Kelly Chambers  
David Mendoza  
Raft Hollingsworth

Craig Bill  
Joe Solorio  
Dorian Waller

**Guests and Other Participants:**

Throughout the meeting, approximately 40 members of the public joined and participated. The Task Force thanks all of those who attended and shared their time, expertise, and lived experience to help shape this important work.

**Staff Support:**

Anzhane Slaughter  
Lauren King

Crystal Ogle

**Call to Order**

Jim Makoso, Co-Chair, called the public meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and read from a prepared statement (on file). Anzhane Slaughter, Staff shared the Zoom protocol, conversation norms, reviewed the agenda and facilitated roll call of members.

**1. Legislative Co-Chair Election**

Jim Makoso, Co-Chair invites staff member Anzhane Slaughter to facilitate the election of a Legislative Co-Chair of the Task Force. After explaining the role of the Legislative Co-Chair, Ms. Slaughter calls for nominations and discussion begins. Sen. Curtis King nominates Sen. Rebecca Saldaña. Hearing no other nominations or discussion, Ms. Slaughter calls for a vote.

**Motion:** Sen. Rebecca Saldaña to serve as Legislative Co-Chair

**Motion/Second:** Sen. Curtis King / Michelle Merriweather

Approved unanimously.

## 2. Approval of Agenda and June 28th Meeting Minutes

Jim Makoso, Co-Chair then asks Anzhane Slaughter, to show the agenda for this meeting on screen and present for approval.

**Motion:** Approve Agenda as written

**Motion/Second:** Michelle Merriweather / Carmen Rivera

Approved unanimously.

Jim Makoso, Co-Chair asks Anzhane Slaughter, Staff to show the minutes from the June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting and present for approval.

**Motion:** Approve June 28<sup>th</sup> minutes as written

**Motion/Second:** Sen. Curtis King / Micah Sherman

Approved unanimously.

## 3. Task Force Proposals & Discussion – RCP Workgroup

Micah Sherman and Jim Makoso, Co-Leads of the Regulation of Cannabis Production present their recommendation. The recommendation and rationale are provided on screen and are on file.

The recommendation produced from the workgroup reads:

Given the WSDA's guiding principles and their ongoing efforts to work with and support producers and farmers, it would be beneficial for future social equity licensees if certain aspects of regulatory oversight for cannabis cultivation are shifted from the LCB to the WSDA.

Rationale included comparing the Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA) and Liquor Cannabis Board's (LCB) mission statements and goals. The workgroup felt that the WSDA's mission and vision aligned with social equity and success in particular for social equity licensees and the workgroup appreciated the equity lens the WSDA has implemented with the HEAL act. The co-leads open the floor to Task Force member discussion. Ollie Garrett, Member questions if the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) agrees to the proposed change. Micah Sherman, Co-Lead reminds members that the legislature has asked for a recommendation of the Task Force and that it does not require agreement from agencies at this point. Mr. Sherman also states that the WSDA has been a part of this conversation and has been supportive of the efforts along the way. Sen. Rebecca Saldaña, Co-Chair appreciates the work that has been done and the way the recommendation is written. She believes that the way it's written doesn't mandate anything or set a timeline but simply provides a recommendation. Sen.

Curtis King asks about oversight and authority and has concerns with the difference between cannabis and other crops, cannabis requires much more oversight, fences, barbed wire, etc. Jim Makoso, Co-Lead explains that recommendation is written so the legislature would have to determine what components of oversight would go to WSDA and which would stay with the LCB. Hearing no other discussion, Sen. Rebecca Saldaña, Co-Chair calls for a vote.

**Motion:** Approve the recommendation as presented

**Motion/Second:** Michelle Merriweather / Carmen Rivera

Motion passed. Aye: 10 Nay: 0 Abstain: 2

#### **4. Task Force Proposals & Discussion – Home Grow/Non-Violent Conviction Policy Change Workgroup**

Michelle Merriweather, supported by Tamara Berkely, Co-Leads present the recommendations of the Home Grow/Non-Violent Conviction Policy Change Workgroup. There are four recommendations that came from the workgroup (on file), and they include:

- Legalization of residential cannabis cultivation for personal use will promote social equity (6 per adult and 15 per household of plants)
- The cultivation of 7 to 99 plants should be reclassified as a misdemeanor, instead of a Class C Felony
- Expunge cultivation convictions for 20 plants or less
- Registering in the DOH Database should be a requirement for the 15 plants with Doctors Recommendation or Prescription

Rationale included reducing number of arrests, reducing racial disparities, reducing poverty, increase licensing eligibility, and reduce consequences of convictions. After sharing their recommendation and rationale, the co-leads open the floor to Task Force member discussion. Discussion and clarification around current rules with registering in the Department of Health's (DOH) data base is heard. It's clarified that only those with medical authorization can grow and that if it's more than 6 plants, you have to register in the database. Sen. Curtis King, Member expresses concern and his discomfort that a misdemeanor for growing 99 plants may backfire as incentive to work the system. Discussion regarding what phase a plant is in and the potential need for having plants in various stages occurs. Alison Beason, Member summarizes what she's heard most members say, that the point of this recommendation would be to vacate those that were harmed by the war on drugs. Having 99 be the number, that will help to reach more of those that were harmed. Charges won't go away, they will be reclassified and hopefully not continue to harm people as it has. She also heard some members do not want to decide on a number of plants and leave it to the legislature, however she reminds everyone that the legislators they heard from today would put a lower number on it. Many members agreed with Ms. Beason's comment. After discussion regarding the proper term,

members decide to remove the term expunge and use the term vacate. Hearing no further discussion, Sen. Rebecca Saldaña, Co-Chair, calls for consideration of a motion and vote.

**Motion:** Approval of the recommendations as follows: Legalization of residential cannabis cultivation for personal use without Department of Health registration will promote social equity (6 plants per adult and 15 plants per household), The cultivation of 7 to 99 plants should be reclassified as a misdemeanor, instead of a Class C Felony, Vacation for cultivation convictions for 99 plants or less.

**Motion/Second:** Michelle Merriweather / Tamara Berkley

Motion passed. Aye: 10 Nay: 1 Abstain: 0

Co-Leads Michelle Merriweather and Tamara Berkley then continued presenting the recommendation on Non-Violent Conviction Policy Change, which reads as follows (on file).

- Remove all non-violent cannabis convictions from consideration in the LCB's new threshold protocol.
- LCB training protocol for threshold reviewer should be similar and in alignment with Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) training the new mandate for state.
- LCB to use language that would encourage people with previous felony convictions to apply. LCB should inform potential applicants that based on prior applications, it is very rare to be denied based on criminal history.

Co-Leads provide their rationale, which largely focuses on repairing trust with community members and creating more transparency. Then the Co-Leads open the floor to member discussion. During discussion, it's clarified that convictions are focused on cannabis convictions. Hearing no further discussion, Sen. Rebecca Saldaña, Co-Chair, calls for a motion and a vote.

**Motion:** Approve the recommendation as written.

**Motion/Second:** Michelle Merriweather / Tamara Berkley

Motion passed. Aye: 10 Nay: 1 Abstain: 0

## 5. Task Force Discussion – LCB Social Equity Bill Proposal

Sen. Rebecca Saldaña, Co-Chair, begins discussion regarding the LCB's proposed bill on Social Equity. Anzhane Slaughter, Staff shares the proposed bill summary on screen and explains that feedback is due on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Sen. Saldana suggests there are a couple of options including taking no action or asking Co-Chairs to send a letter on behalf of the Task Force. Justin Nordhorn a representative from the Liquor Cannabis Board is present and explains a bit about the proposed legislation, it's background and is here to answer questions. Monica Martinez, member and Co-Lead for the Licensing Workgroup, encourages the LCB to look at the many ways the workgroup discussed and recommended increasing licenses. She doesn't see them all listed in the bill. Mr. Nordhorn encourages members to send comments and

suggestions to himself or Chris Thompson. Members conclude that there just isn't enough time in the agenda to put together a statement or consensus and decide to have staff and Co-Chairs create a letter and statement on behalf of the Task Force for comment.

## **6. Public Comment**

Sen. Rebecca Saldaña , Co-Chair asks Lauren King, Staff to facilitate public comment. Comments in general call for further action from the Task Force, the community is tired of waiting. There's criticism for how the Task Force was previously run.

## **7. Next Steps**

Anzhane Slaughter, Staff shares next steps, which outlines a timeline for the Task Force (on file).

- Aug 31<sup>st</sup>: Deadline to let staff know what report sections Task Force members are interested in
- Sept 30<sup>th</sup>: 1<sup>st</sup> draft of report to be emailed out to Task Force members for review
- Oct 1 - 14<sup>th</sup>: One-on-one meetings scheduled with staff and Task Force members to individually review the report.
- Oct 26<sup>th</sup>: SECTF Meeting – to review first draft of report

## **Good of the Order & Adjournment**

Sen. Saldana, Tsk Force Co-Chair, thanks everyone for their participation and wishes everyone a wonderful afternoon. She then and adjourned the meeting at 5:02 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](mailto:kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov) TTY users can dial 711.

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