



# Office of Cannabis Management

**KATHY HOCHUL**

Governor

**TREMAINE WRIGHT**

Cannabis Control Board Chair

**JESSICA GARCIA**

Board Member

**HOPE KNIGHT**

Board Member

**ADAM W. PERRY**

Board Member

**JENNIFER GILBERT JENKINS**

Board Member

**CHRIS ALEXANDER**

Executive Director

## Meeting Minutes

<b>Title:</b>	New York State Cannabis Control Board Meeting
<b>Time &amp; Date:</b>	March 22, 2024 at 10:30 AM
<b>Location:</b>	Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, Community Room, 1368 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11216 and 181 Ellicott St., Buffalo, NY 14203

## Attendance

<b>Board Chair:</b>	Tremaine Wright
<b>Board Members Present:</b>	Jessica Garcia, Hope Knight
<b>Board Members Present (virtually):</b>	Adam W. Perry
<b>Board Members Present (virtually from a private location due to extraordinary circumstances):</b>	Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins
<b>Board Members Absent:</b>	N/A
<b>Others Present:</b>	Chris Alexander, John Kagia, Tabatha Robinson

## Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 16, 2024 Board Meeting
- IV. Consideration of Adult-Use Cannabis Licenses
- V. Consideration of Cannabis Laboratory Permit Renewals
- VI. Consideration of Enforcement Regulations for Adoption
- VII. Consideration of Registered Organization Medical Renewal
- VIII. Consideration of Registered Organization Dispensary Relocations
- IX. Consideration to Waive License Fees for Certain Cultivator Applicants
- X. Executive Director Report
- XI. Public Comment
- XII. Adjourn



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## Action Items

<b>Resolution No. 2024-60:</b>	Resolution to Issue Certain Adult-Use Cannabis Licenses.	Passed, Unanimous Vote
<b>Resolution No. 2024-61:</b>	Resolution Issuing Certain Cannabis Laboratory Permits.	Passed, Unanimous Vote
<b>Resolution No. 2024-62:</b>	Resolution Directing the Office of Cannabis Management to Adopt the Violations, Hearings, and Enforcement Regulations.	Passed, Unanimous Vote
<b>Resolution No. 2024-63:</b>	Resolution to Consider Renewal of Registration for Medmen, Inc.	Passed, Unanimous Vote
<b>Resolution No. 2024-64:</b>	Resolution to Approve a Certain Relocation Request of Registered Organization Dispensing Facilities.	Passed, Unanimous Vote
<b>Resolution No. 2024-65:</b>	Resolution to Waive License Fees for Certain Applicants.	Passed, Unanimous Vote

## Notes & Comments

- A resolution considering a Registered Organization Non-Dispensing application was removed from today’s agenda.
- Chair Wright stated that today they are prepared to take one step further in building a market with healthy competition, ample choice and equity. She commented that since the enactment of the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), they have made significant progress toward the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory framework, and that their current framework guides the New York cannabis industry towards safety, equity, and sustainability. She noted that they have successfully licensed cultivators, retailers and other key industry players, all with a focus on ensuring product safety and quality for consumers. She commented that today they will consider over 100 applications representing cultivators, retailers, processors and microbusinesses and also consider registered operators and laboratories. She stated that they have already issued over 500 cannabis licenses in this state, that their licensees represent significant economic opportunities, and that the New York legal cannabis industry creates jobs, generates taxes and spurs innovation. She commented that the Cannabis Advisory Board (“CAB”) is determining how to reinvest tax revenue into communities that have been historically and disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition. She further commented that they are committed to continuous improvement and expansion of the cannabis industry in New York State, addressing the existing challenges and ensuring that New York remains a leader in regulations, programs and innovation, working with all of their stakeholders, licensees, industry players, communities and their partners in government, and this is how they continue to foster a responsible, inclusive and thriving cannabis ecosystem.



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- Upon a motion from Board Member Hope Knight, and a second from Board Member Jessica Garcia, the Minutes of the February 16, 2024 Cannabis Control Board (“CCB” or “Board”) Meeting were approved unanimously.
- Chris Alexander, Executive Director for the Office of Cannabis Management (“OCM” or “the Office”), provided an overview of Resolution No. 2024-60, a Resolution to Issue Certain Adult-Use Cannabis Licenses. Before the Board today is the second cohort of adult-use cannabis licenses which have cleared the multistep review process and are being recommended for approval by the Board. These applications are from the application window that opened on October 4, 2023 and closed for all types of applications on December 18, 2023. Overall, nearly 7,000 applications were received. The applicants include 45 retail dispensaries, 31 microbusinesses, 14 cultivators and 14 processors. If approved, this will make 223 adult-use cannabis applications approved in 2024.
- Board Member Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins commented that she continues to get emails from people concerned about number of licenses and wants them to clarify for the public the process of continued review of licenses and that there has been a removal of any caps.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander commented that there are no license caps in this market, but they are very intent of growing the market responsibly.
- Upon a motion from Board Member Adam Perry, and a second from Board Member Jessica Garcia, Resolution No. 2024-60, a Resolution to Issue Certain Adult-Use Cannabis Licenses, was approved unanimously.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander provided an overview of Resolution No. 2024-61, a Resolution Issuing Certain Cannabis Laboratory Permits. This resolution seeks to renew the permits of 17 cannabis testing laboratories. On December 21, 2023, OCM released the application for permitted laboratories to renew their permits. Applicants were required to verify their current information and provide:
  - \$1,000 non-refundable application fee
  - Updated ownership information (Entities and True Parties of Interest (TPI))
  - Information about technical staff (Lead Technical Director, Technical Director(s), Technicians, QA Officer)
  - Cannabis Testing Scope
  - Status of ISO/IEC 17025 CertificationApproved applicants will pay a permit fee of \$1,000 or 1% of their gross annual receipts for calendar year 2023 (whichever is greater) to receive a cannabis laboratory permit commencing April 1, 2024, and expiring on March 31, 2024. The Office recommends that the Board approves to permit the 17 laboratories who have successfully met the requirements pursuant to the cannabis laboratory regulations.
- Board Member Hope Knight asked if there have been any site visits or inspections of these labs.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander commented that they do inspect their labs and work pretty closely with their labs as they are troubleshooting issues. He further commented that not all of their labs have the full spectrum of testing available and that they are also constantly working with them to ensure that they can perform the full testing for their licensees.



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- Upon a motion from Board Member Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins, and a second from Board Member Jessica Garcia, Resolution No. 2024-61, a Resolution Issuing Certain Cannabis Laboratory Permits, was approved unanimously.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander provided an overview of Resolution No. 2024-62, a Resolution Directing the Office of Cannabis Management to Adopt the Violations, Hearings, and Enforcement Regulations. On October 17, 2023, the CCB voted to extend the Emergency Regulations and revise the language in Part 133, the Violations, Hearings and Enforcement Regulations. The proposed regulations went through a public comment period in accordance with New York State Administrative Procedures Act (SAPA) and no comments were received to the revisions filed. These finalized regulations would establish the adopted Violations, Hearings and Enforcement Regulations, which will lay the regulatory framework over the enforcement of all activities associated with licensed and unlicensed cannabis businesses.
- Board Member Jessica Garcia asked if the law that gets passed on enforcement at the state level, if the statute says that it is effective immediately, if it still needs to come before them and go through the traditional regulatory process of the 60-day commenting period.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander commented that the law can be effective immediately but the processes that are created by the law still need to be developed and should the proposal advance and become law, they will have to update their administrative processes to capture the change that is being proposed.
- Board Member Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins asked if they are moving ahead with drafting those so that they are ready when that gets passed, and to move this ahead as fast as possible.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander commented that the Office is prepared to advance emergency regulations at that time.
- Upon a motion from Board Member Jessica Garcia, and a second from Board Member Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins, Resolution No. 2024-62, a Resolution Directing the Office of Cannabis Management to Adopt the Violations, Hearings, and Enforcement Regulations, was approved unanimously.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander provided an overview of Resolution No. 2024-63, a Resolution to Consider Renewal of Registration for Medmen, Inc. The Office is recommending MedMen, Inc., for renewal as they have met all the requirements as outlined in the regulations. Pursuant to Section 35 of the Cannabis Law, a registration shall be valid for two years and the Registered Organization (RO) must apply to the Board to have their registration renewed. ROs were required to provide several items with their renewal applications, including but not limited to:
  - An environmental sustainability program plan, recycling plan, and explanation as to how the RO minimizes or eliminates adverse environment impact.
  - An explanation of how the RO engaged in cannabis research, performed education and outreach to patients/practitioners, and improved affordability of medical cannabis products for patients.
  - A description of how the RO is, or plans to become, culturally, linguistically, and medically competent to serve unserved and underserved patients in New York.



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- An explanation of any activities the RO has initiated, or plans to initiate, to have a positive community impact.

- Chair Wright commented that this entity had been closed for a very long time and asked if they are now up running and is current on all of their locations.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander commented that they have met all the requirements of the regulations.
- Board Member Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins asked if those store fronts that are supposed to be open are open.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander commented that the medical regulations do not require that a RO has all the facilities that they are able to operate operating at the same time or operating congruently to this renewal. He further commented that what it does require is that they have continued to serve the patients of New York and them not having a particular medical dispensary open does not impact their renewal, and what it does impact is their transition to being an adult-use operator, which requires that they have four stores open.
- Upon a motion from Board Member Jessica Garcia, and a second from Board Member Hope Knight, Resolution No. 2024-63, a Resolution to Consider Renewal of Registration for Medmen, Inc., was approved unanimously.

- Chair Wright provided an overview of Resolution No. 2024-64, a Resolution to Approve a Certain Relocation Request of Registered Organization Dispensing Facilities. This resolution would approve two dispensary relocations within the same county the dispensary already exists. Pursuant to the regulations, all dispensary relocations require Board approval.

- Registered Organization: PharmaCann of New York, LLC

- Current Dispensing Facility Location: 10 Executive Park Drive, Albany, NY 12203 in Albany County. New Dispensing Facility Location: 2 Wade Road Latham, NY 12110 in Albany County.
- Current Dispensing Facility Location: 642 Old Liverpool Rd., Liverpool, NY 13088 in Onondaga County. New Dispensing Facility Location: 5841 Bridge Street, East Syracuse, NY 13057 in Onondaga County.

- Upon a motion from Board Member Hope Knight, and a second from Board Member Jessica Garcia, Resolution No. 2024-64, a Resolution to Approve a Certain Relocation Request of Registered Organization Dispensing Facilities, was approved unanimously.

- Executive Director Chris Alexander provided an overview of Resolution No. 2024-65, a Resolution to Waive License Fees for Certain Applicants. Section 15(1) of the Cannabis Law, the CCB is charged with establishing a licensure fee for each licensee and Section 120.4(c) of Title 9 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (9 NYCRR), an applicant may pay a reduced, waived, or deferred application or license fee in certain circumstances. Adult-Use Conditional Cultivators (AUCCs) applying to transition to full licensure have demonstrated sufficient need for financial assistance in order to waive the applicable license fees due to the unusual and unique circumstances faced by the New York State cannabis market, which has resulted in severe financial distress for AUCCs. The Board recognizes that AUCCs have suffered a sufficient need for financial assistance which rises to the level of such a waiver of applicable license fees.



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- Board Member Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins asked how this impacts the wave of licenses for the AUCCs that have transitioned and are there fees that have already been paid that need to be refunded.
  - Executive Director Chris Alexander commented that there are fees that have been paid and they will be processing refunds. He further commented that they will be communicating in the immediate future about how to proceed without paying that fee for folks who are currently transitioning.
  - Upon a motion from Board Member Jessica Garcia, and a second from Board Member Hope Knight, Resolution No. 2024-65, a Resolution to Waive License Fees for Certain Applicants, was approved unanimously.
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- Executive Director Chris Alexander, Tabatha Robinson, Director of Economic Development for OCM, and John Kagia, Senior Policy Director for OCM, provided the following Executive Director report.
    - Licensing Update
      - Since the last CCB meeting, 19 dispensaries have opened.
      - There have been 60 dispensary openings in the last 100 days.
      - The order that you appear in the queue does not represent the order in which the license will be issued.
    - Social and Economic Equity (SEE) Applicants
      - Out of the 114 licenses issued today, 63% are SEE applicants with minority-owned businesses and women-owned businesses taking the lead in this category. For the microbusiness license, 71% are held by SEE applicants, whereas 87% of retail licenses are held by SEE applicants.
      - SEE licenses span across six categories identified in the cannabis law, including women-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, distressed farmers, service-disabled veterans, individuals from communities disproportionately impacted (CDI) and those with convictions qualifying for extra priority.
      - Applicants who successfully qualify as SEE receive reduced application fees and licensing fees. Extra priority applicants are given extra priority.
      - Applicants wishing to receive assistance on their corrections process can contact the Office for one-on-one support through the Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs).
    - The Cannabis Hub and Incubator Program (CHIP) Training and Education Initiative
      - Sessions first launched in November 2023 with a focus on issues such as GMP certification, TPI and investment, distressed farmer certification, minimal processing and microbusiness transition.
      - Part II of the program launched this month, expanding training and education to all approved transitioning licenses, AUCCs, Adult-Use Conditional Processors (AUCPs), as well as Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensaries (CAURD) and new licensees in order to establish a deeper learning of compliance rules and regulations for all license types.



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- The program will run for 18 weeks, in partnership with Cornell University and SUNY Morrisville. Topics include compliance overview, regulations overview, cannabis business accounting and capital raises, GMPs, track and trace, environmental controls, sustainability, and more.
    - Delinquent Payment Reporting
      - A retailer is delinquent if they do not pay their cannabis supplier within 30 days of taking delivery of a product.
      - Suppliers must notify retailers when they become delinquent. Suppliers cannot sell product on credit to any delinquent retailer. Suppliers can accept Cash on Delivery (COD) only.
      - The Office maintains the list of retailers on the COD list. The COD list goes live on April 3, 2024.
    - Proximity Protected Location Map
      - This map lists all retail dispensary locations that are receiving proximity protection for both open licensed dispensaries, and applicants or provisional licenses whose applications are still pending but the location has been reviewed by the Office and is compliant with the proximity distance requirements in the Cannabis Law and regulations.
      - Over 650 retail locations have received proximity protection.
    - Market Update
      - Year to date, \$77 million in legal cannabis has been sold.
      - Weekly sales now exceed \$8 million.
      - Consumers are now purchasing 200,000 units of legal products weekly. Flower and prerolls account for half of product sales.
      - Suppliers are well prepared to serve new retailers. AUCCs and AUCPs have nearly 4 million packaged products on hand.
    - New OCM Chief of Staff Intro
      - OCM welcomed its new Chief of Staff, Nicole Triplett, to the team.
  - Executive Director Chris Alexander thanked the Chair for recognizing where they stand today, just shy of the three-year anniversary of the passage of the MRTA. He stated that he is so optimistic about New York cannabis and that they are doing something differently, something that has never been done, and that it is hard. He commented that he wanted to thank the Board, their legislative champions, Liz Krueger, Crystal Peoples-Stokes, the Governor for creating the space for this to exist, the public and the OCM team. He further commented that this is an important marker in their market and their industry as they continue to grow and transform and that he is excited about what is next to come.
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- Members of the public were provided the opportunity to address the CCB during the Public Comment period. Participating individuals must limit their remarks to two minutes and remarks should be related to agenda items. Public Comments are listed in Appendix A.
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- The CCB adjourned the meeting.



Appendix A

NYS Cannabis Control Board 3/22/2024 Meeting – Public Comment

	First Name	Last Name	Organization (If Applicable)	Public Comment
1.	David	Feder	Weed Law	<p>Good morning, everybody. Congratulations to all the winners and to all those who are will be winners. And thank you very much to the Cannabis Control Board for all the work you are doing. I know it's an incredible amount of work to be done. And, everybody has expectations and everybody wants a license and hopefully we all will get our chance. We have some issues that obviously have been made transparent by a lot of, you know, lawsuits and things like that. Amongst the things that I want just bring up to the board is, some concerns that we have from clients is that they apply for a license, as this is well known, people apply for licenses not knowing that there were dispensaries, nearby, and they got zoned out. Unfortunately, in some of these instances, people spent, like, a lot of money, with the anticipation that there would be no dispensaries nearby them. And we know that the board has the ability to do waivers of the thousand-foot requirements. And I would hope that in certain instances, I guess in the instances where it justifies it, maybe even with the community board would vote for it or something in those lines that if they would say, hey, we could support more than one dispensary in the area, that maybe there should be a justification of a waiver of the thousand-foot requirement in those particular instances. Any of this can be a general rule, but, but I think that perhaps on a case-by-case basis, it should be considered. Again, I really appreciate all you guys are doing. I know there's a lot of complaints that you may have gotten already, and you guys are great. Thank you for all the work you're doing. Please keep it up. Thank you so much. Congratulations to everybody.</p>
2.	Jeffrey	Hoffman		<p>Thank you. Good morning. My name is Jeffrey Hoffman. I'm an attorney here in New York City. Got a bunch of cannabis clients, some of whom you've given licenses to today. Thank you on behalf of them for doing that. As Mr. Alexander mentioned, the expungement part of the law is a tremendously critical part. The conservative judges in the state of New York are not following the law for that expungement for the high-level cannabis offenses. Mr.</p>





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	First Name	Last Name	Organization (If Applicable)	Public Comment
				<p>Hugh here had a case related to that in a second department. I have one in the third department. We're going to need your assistance in getting that right. The conservative judges in the state are not doing it right. We do have some concerns related to some things that are going on, particularly on Long Island. I mentioned this at the previous meeting. We are waiting on your opinion letter on what the communities on Long Island are doing wrong as far as their zoning. We are going to sue them as soon as you release that letter. My understanding is we've been waiting for that from you since October. Let's get that out there as quickly as possible because we're going to sue them. You've got 60 some odd CAURDs that are never going to be able to open on Long Island. If we don't do that. So we got to get it on. Additionally, we're talking about this map. I have a lot of clients that are on the map that are just a little bit confused about kind of where their positions are. I know it's difficult to communicate with them. I know the communication is always challenging. I would just encourage you to continue to try to communicate. We have folks that even think there may be something wrong with their applications. They're not able to get up with you seeing on the map. It would just be great if you had a little bit better of an account management process such that, you know, if you got 400 CAURDS, you get ten account managers, they each get 40 CAURDs, and that's the only person the CAURD ever talks to at the office. They don't bombard your general emails, they don't go off to other places. They don't talk to people they shouldn't be talking to. If we can get some kind of process like that in place, I think that that will save a tremendous amount of the issues that you're having, one point of contact for your licensees, for your applicants, so that they can really figure out what's going on. And that won't overwhelm you with communication internally in the office. And I think that's the biggest complaint my clients have across the board is the ability to communicate with you on that front. Thank you very much.</p>
3.	Kevin	Kaminker		<p>Hello, everybody. Thank you, control board for letting me speak. I am a applicant in the December queue. I have friends here today. We were granted the license. I wanted to congratulate everybody here today who did get a license. Provisional or not. It's been a long journey. OCM, again. You guys doing an excellent job. There's obviously many bumps along the road we're here with that. One main concern I have is the proximity protection map. If there's a way that you guys can really look into the leases,</p>



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	First Name	Last Name	Organization (If Applicable)	Public Comment
				there are a lot of locations on this map that do not have control over these locations, and they are holding people that I know and myself back from possibly gaining a location near that location. And we can't because there's proximity protection. I don't know the process that you guys are going through to check the legitimacy of these leases or the control, but that is a huge, huge, huge impact because it's going to slow everybody down. Besides that, good luck to everybody. And thank you again.
4.	Josh	Elyachar	Highline	Just wanted to thank Dr. Jenkins for clearing up the cap issue. I know I was very concerned about that. I'd like to bring the attention to several important points regarding the ongoing license process. We were told to expect expedited review by 12/18, with applicants with compliant spaces receiving proximity protection as they work towards a final license. It is now 3/22, and we have observed these things that are clearly not consistent with the statement queue not being followed, people getting extra time to cure deficiencies, people without retail getting license from priority queue, improperly zoned locations, getting proximity protection. Please live up to what you told us you would do before we started, bleeding, started bleeding money for this opportunity and to join the industry. Get back to FAQ 91. That is the, work shows that, despite initial intentions for the November queue to be exclusively for applicants with secured retail locations, their delays in reviewing these applications with provisional and microlicenses being issued without retail in place. That raises the question about how the queue was formed in the first place. Three concerns have been raised about the allocation of application fees. Is there is only a fraction of the collected funds seems to be dedicated to application review. With the limited number of staff assigned to this task, it's essential to ensure transparency in the use of these funds. Additionally, the licensing telling tally provided indicates a deviation from the linear progression through the application queue, suggesting that some applicants are given more time to address deficiencies. Lastly, statements made regarding the intention to avoid creating scarcity with licenses seems contradictory given the observed trends. Furthermore, conflicting information regarding the review process merit-based nature calls for clarity consistent in policy enforcement. Thank you for your attention to these matters, and I encourage open dialogue to address these concerns efficiently. Thank you.



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	First Name	Last Name	Organization (If Applicable)	Public Comment
5.	Iris	Ladao	Buzzy New York	<p>Thank you all for your time. The opportunity to address the board today. I appreciate all of the difficult work that you've been doing. My name is Iris Ladao, owner of Buzzy New York. I'm a SEE retail applicant and licensee hopeful. I want to share my experience in the hope that it could help inform ways to streamline the application assessment process moving forward. Buzzy New York is minority and woman owned. We signed a commercial lease in my community in Brooklyn. We've secured cannabis compliant banking, unanimous support from our community board, a labor peace agreement, and endorsement from local 338. We completed all required application documents, fees and fingerprinting. We are fully funded and business ready. Our application fulfills the state's social and economic equity objectives and criteria established by OCM for priority licensure. Our application has yet to be reviewed and there is no timeline on when that might happen. We followed the guidelines of the state to the letter. Understanding the applicants for the retail space lease would be processed as part of a priority round. The lottery system placed us towards the back of the queue behind over 250 non-SEE applicants. We're paying rent on an empty commercial space in Brooklyn, while thousands of illicit smoke shops operate across the state. In fact, within just five blocks of our proposed location, there are 12 shops openly selling illicit cannabis. Our team embodies the equity policies the MRTA established. We are business ready and can help OCM achieve its goal of a sustainable, legal, regulated market. We are patiently awaiting review of our application to close the gap between the high number of licenses awarded and the comparatively low number of dispensaries open. I hope you will consider elevating the applications of SEE applicants who are ready to open. We understand the challenges that you have faced and the enormity of the task ahead of you, and we really appreciate all of the hard work. We hope that sharing our experience will help inform those recommendations. Thank you. Congratulations to all who received a license. And best of luck to everyone still waiting.</p>
6.	Tiffany	Stoker	New York Cannabis Chamber of Commerce	<p>Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Tiffany Stoker. I'm the executive director of the New York Cannabis Business Chamber of Commerce. I'm going to be brief. I'm basically just here to thank the OCM for the work that they continue to do in the heart of what they have done, because this is a very challenging, challenging process. I just want to encourage everyone to be vigilant but be patient. As we</p>



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	First Name	Last Name	Organization (If Applicable)	Public Comment
				know, social equity is something that is challenged so often which is why this has probably been as challenging. as it has been. We are a resource. Please come visit me in Harlem anytime. We want to be a connector to the legislature as well as the folks at the OCM with any questions and things that we can help with to guide you along the process, whether it be education workshops, just to discuss how tough this process is. Mental state capabilities are very important. But just, you know, that know that we are here to guide you along and to assist in any way possible. So everyone just stay strong, stay together, and, you know, push forward. Thank you.
7.	Walter	Iwachiw	Wee4justice	Hello. I want to thank the board and staff working on all these applications. I'm sure it's a monumental task. Let me go back to using AI to help in distributing information following Jeffrey's suggestion. I'm sure it's to work something in when they access your database and provide the information to individual vendors. The only thing I see they would have to get a password to access their information and ask AI where's my staff's? Thank you again and congratulations to the people who got licenses today. Keep going.
8.	Sophia	Mortell	SMMB, Inc. Purple Plains	My name is Sophia Mortell. I am a CAURD provisional licensee and the co-owner of Purple Plains. I received my provisional license on May 11th, 2023. My partners and I promptly submitted the second part of the application, signed the lease, and began taking all steps necessary to prepare our store for opening. In this process, we have invested over \$400,000 to date. We do not have a big investor. This money has come from our friends and our family's retirement funds. We received our final inspection nearly three months ago on January 8th. We were told that we have zero deficiencies with compliance and zero deficiencies with licensing. So what is the holdup? Since our final inspection, we have spent over \$50,000 in rent and expenses. I have emailed AU licensing countless times only to get no reply. I have called the OCM daily where they repeatedly tell me to be patient and check my email. Unfortunately, we can no longer afford to be patient. Literally, we cannot afford to pay \$20,000 in rent on the first of next month. If we do not receive our final license before April 1st, 2024, we will go bankrupt. We will default on our lease, we will be evicted from our building, and we will have to tear out showcases, custom built counters, furnishings, vaults and offices. We will have to turn down employees who are eager to work. We will have to turn away customers who are constantly asking us when we



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	First Name	Last Name	Organization (If Applicable)	Public Comment
				are opening. You sit here today giving out all these licenses. Why don't you first finish what you started? Finish out the CAURD program. License the people who have finished buildings, no deficiencies and completed inspections that you've decided to abandon. This is unethical. And what has been a lifetime dream of mine has now become a nightmare.
9.	Dispensary Master	Hu	MRTA Law PC	Thank you so much for giving me a few minutes. I just want to be brief. You just have two things to say. I you know, I'm so happy to be operating a licensed dispensary right now. I'm so proud to paid over \$66,000 in taxes to really support this program this regulated industry. We have employees, and I'm so proud are incredibly diverse. Come from such rich backgrounds, and we're able to work with other vendors that are growing. What I read in New York times last week was that OCM only had 32 application staff. I know when I was waiting, I was certainly very anxious and sort of really calling them sort of like, hey, why can't I join the club? But what I realized is like 32 people really aren't that many. There are thousands of applications out there. So really, I want to say thank you so much to Chris. Really. Light the feet under fire and really maximizing the use of all our staff to really address our licensing needs. So really, thank you so much for OCM for really putting attention to all license applications and really addressing them as soon as they can. The last thing I want to say is that Damian Fagon true, true, champion for social equity for all of us. Damian has work, I know, imagine how hard we've all been working to open our stores. He's literally been there with us. You know, he's been going out, speaking truth and trying to really, get people to honest, you know, come to come to Jesus moment. What can we really expect? So, I hope that OCM can really continue this, open conversation for a lot of licensees. And we really bring back Damian's really championed social justice, economic equity for all of us. Thank you.
10.	Matthew	Robinson	Legacy Dispensary, Inc.	Hello, everyone. My name is Matthew Robinson. I'm a New York State license operating owner. I own Legacy Dispensary. And first and foremost, I would like to congratulate all the new licensees and licenses that were given out today. Thank you to the OCM for everybody that you gave a license to today. Second, I would like to thank the board themselves for all the hard work you've put in all the OCM staff members. Thank you all. It's a very hard job what they do. I really don't think people take and understand. People don't really understand what they're



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	First Name	Last Name	Organization (If Applicable)	Public Comment
				<p>doing, how hard it is when everybody is pressing on you. Everybody look at all of us in this room. Everybody here is pressing them. Not giving them any consideration. Have consideration. Have consideration. But everyone wants to be open this fast. It doesn't happen like that. It took me almost 18 months to get open. It didn't take a couple weeks. This is a year and a half. So I want to thank you and everybody should be thanking them for doing this. They didn't have to do this. They could let anybody do this. They took social equity and justice involved and put them first, put them at the forefront. They gave me a kid from the projects back in Albany, New York an opportunity for future. My son, my family. I employ staff, I'm put up to 40 employees under my company at one time at a point. I've generated tax dollars and I couldn't have done this without them. We can't do this without them. To show respect for those that aren't showing respect. Pay homage. I'll give you guys your flowers. I'll give you flowers now. Thank you.</p>
11.	Sasha	Nutgent	Housing Works Cannabis Co.	<p>Good morning. My name is Sasha Nutgent, and I proudly serve as director of Cannabis Retail at Housing Works Cannabis Co., an integral part of Housing Works, a community dedicated to supporting individuals living with and affected by HIV, Aids and homelessness. Since our inception in 1990, we've been providing essential services to over 15,000 low-income communities, including those affected by HIV, Aids, homelessness, mental health issues, and substance abuse disorders. In December 2022, we achieved a milestone by opening Housing Works Cannabis Co, New York's inaugural first legal adult-use dispensary. Our venture contributes to vital services such as health care, housing and job training. We lend our support to Governor Hochul's proposal to empower localities and combining unlicensed dispensaries, bolstering public safety and tax revenue. I'm very nervous, by the way. However, additional legislative measures are necessary to address systemic inequities without further criminalizing impacted communities. The OCM must collaborate with advocates, licensed dispensaries and community boards. While the program faced challenges. Like in any other state rollout, the office has been a leader in ensuring the licensing of small and equity businesses. That mission cannot be changed. The 1000-foot rule outlined in the OCM Regulations for retail dispensaries or microbusinesses, plays a crucial role in preventing oversaturation. While no other state has as many Bipoc-owned businesses, critical challenges impeding entry into</p>



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				the legal market include financing real estate, sorry, financing, real estate, capacity building, training, and technical assistance. Our mission at Housing Works Cannabis is to provide education to consumers and entrepreneurs about cannabis. We have an educational model aimed to destigmatize cannabis use and highlight its benefits. In conclusion, I urge the legislature to prioritize social equity, address regulatory gaps, and invest in comprehensive support structures to ensure the success of the equity in New York's legal cannabis market. Thank you for the opportunity to talk.
12.	Gia	Moron		You know, I don't come out that often, but, you know, I had to first of all, I have to congratulate on all that your offices have accomplished in three years. And the three-year mark doesn't even hit until March 31st. So, I want to thank you for all the work that you all have done. I want to thank you for making social equity and justice impacted, a priority, because we haven't seen it in any other state. And that many states use social equity as a buzzword during election years, but then seem to fall short when following up on those deliverables. But I see an issue that I want to, I want to express. So while the state was very aggressive in terms of the timeline. As an ancillary business owner, I recognize when, an industry has taken on too much. What does it take for you all to get, additional staffing? Because from what I've heard even earlier that you added a new chief of staff, we know when the other chief of staff left, which that was some time ago. Okay. Got it. But in order to meet the aggressive timeline that New York has set forward for all of these business owners that are waiting. The only way that can be met is if you have adequate staffing. And I don't know if that needs to come from the governor's office to help you will add further staff so that you can review the processes, in a more timely manner. Also, there was a new, advisory that was announced. I hope that doesn't prolong the process that you already have in place, because New Yorkers don't want to wait anymore. And I think it's important that we make cannabis not only the priority during an election year, but that we make it throughout the year because the taxes that are going to be collected from this industry are supposed to be reinvested into communities, as were laid out in the MRTA. So that's, my time. Thank you.
13.	Bruce	Sterman	Unlicensed NYC	Bruce Sterman, Unlicensed NYC. Too many unlicensed stores. Not enough licensed ones. And the public doesn't know the difference. Please take the licensing



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				restrictions, the marketing restrictions and override them using your emergency powers tomorrow.
14.	Ramon	Reyes	HappyMunk ey	Good morning, everybody. Happy wake and bake, actually, because we are a bunch of potheads up in here. Yeah. Acting so like stiff. So crazy. I hear a lot of frustrations. I'm not here to complain. I'm not here to, like, pointing things out or any of this stuff. I'm just kind of reminding everybody that, if you're a parent like me, if you got kids, right, understand that this is a two-year-old that we're talking about, right? If you raise a two-year-old, you know that it's unpredictable. You know, they have temper tantrums. Things happen. This is a two-year-old. We just became legal two years ago. Right. So it's just like I need everybody to kind of just be patient. You know, I just finally got my license in February. I've been working as hard as everybody else is and, you know, probably more so just telling everybody, just have some sort of patience. OCM as well. Have patience with us as well. And y'all have patience with them. At the end of the day, we are all here together, and I'm just hoping that this becomes and first of all, I'm a New York super biased person, and I'm hoping that we come out better than everybody else in this country. Right. So that's going to take a lot of patience and that's it. I'm not even gonna take up too much time. Happy wake and bake.
15.	Raymond	Ruiz		He was so happy he took my spot. But that's alright. Hi. My name is Raymond Ruiz. I appreciate you guys for putting in a lot of work. And, the opportunity to put in a license, myself, me and my family have all put in licenses because we was in a queue. Felt like that we had a better chance. So thank you for taking off the cap and making us feel like we would have no chance. But another situation is I'm in a real estate entrepreneur. And because of that, I started to notice when we put up the maps and when you asked us to put in our applications, if there was any dispensaries known and in our neighborhood or anything along those lines, there was nothing. I thought, I thought I was in a jam spot and come there was hidden agendas. There's even one that's next to me that is supposed to be getting their license. But it's a house. And I'm really like us, like wondering, like, how is that even possible? And I guess it goes back to some of the statements some of the people have said before about, how are these locations being looked at? I have a \$40,000 lease. And, I'm over a half \$1 million in, and, and I would project and, I know it is a hard task. I know it's not an easy one. I respect you all putting in the work and time and efforts to make this





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				happen. But I'm in hopes that my proximity is not going to hurt me and, in any way when it comes to these other situations. So I appreciate your time.
16.	Kaelan	Castetter	Castetter Cannabis Group	<p>My name is Kaelan Castetter. I run a compliance and regulatory affairs firm dedicated to the cannabis industry. I've been part of the regulated cannabis and hemp industries here in New York since 2015. Though my family has operated in this market spanning back three decades. I listened to nearly all these meetings on my computer, but felt compelled today to come in person and speak about what I feel is an undermining of the rulemaking process. To be clear, I, like many operators here, have concerns about some of the rules and regulations governing the New York's cannabis program. But I do take issue with though, however, is a mandate. What I do not take issue with, however, is the mandate that all of us must operate within the bounds of these rules, whether they suit us or not. That is the foundation of a regulated industry. I currently work with nearly all of the largest processors in New York and can attest that all of them have experienced enforcement actions. And while the aspects of the enforcement process can certainly be frustrating, what it is not is surprising. My firm has spent countless hours over the past several months working on corrective action plans responses to violations found during these inspections. Some of these violations are seemingly trivial and some are serious. In fact, one of my clients had the products quarantine days for the first sale because the words the letters LOT was not put for the lot number. We followed the process and figured it out. Based on these observations, I can tell you that the enforcement has been conducted thoroughly and equitably, though that does not certainly mean that the office has addressed every violation. Just like someone speeding to get to work does not always get pulled over. We have a responsibility, and the government has a responsibility to prioritize those harmful violations when possible. It does not mean that an office is choosing to allow wrongful behavior unilaterally, just means that they're doing their job to protect consumers and steer resources to those critical issues. What I do take issue with is any single operator choosing for themselves to operate outside the bounds of these rules, and then using the media to pressure the office for their own selective benefit. When a person or business elects to break the rules, there are consequences. That is life. So we have a solid foundation and we're seeing wins</p>



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				every day. Let's continue to celebrate and work. Collaborate And change the rules.
17.	Arthur	Abramov	212 cannabis company	<p>Hi, everybody. First and foremost, I want to thank God for giving me this opportunity. I want to thank OCM. I want to thank my attorneys and the state of New York. My name is Arthur Abramov. I'm a conditional adult use dispensary licensee number 772. I was granted, in June of 2022. So, as you know, it's been a long journey for me and my team. I first want to thank the OCM once again for and everyone working very hard in this industry. I know it's not easy, but this is what we're doing here now. I'm speaking here today and hope that I may receive proximity protection from my site that I submitted. I've been actively searching for a space since the junction was lifted. As soon as I was able to secure a location, I was submitted a lease through a postelection application that I was required by me to consider my location. I was informed that I would not be granted because there was a site nearby that was granted 99 Van Damme. The proximity protection was granted to micro business applicant, who failed to notify the community board even of the application that as required, he as well as a SEE applicant and I'm a CAURD holder, so I feel like I should deserve some kind of right. Additionally, I understand there's a lease in the unit which is on the fifth floor. I did my due diligence. I went to the building and it's an apartment on the fifth floor. I don't know how that works here. You know what I mean? In that case, anyone could get it. Why I understand the OCM policy accept leases that are factually valid. I feel the same due diligence must be required of them to do so. I hope that the OCM consider my proximity as I truly believe in this industry. And I really want to fight. I made strides to the sanitation department right across the street from me. I went to the Google headquarters, will employ over 3000 employees. So I'm a face that would actually push this agenda, make more taxes, make New York stronger. So people like me are the ones who should be here, not somebody who just put-up a, lease and saying, hey, I'm here. I want to follow the map I went to yesterday, yellow dot, yellow dot is a running operation. I went in, the guy says, what would you like to order? I said, I want you guys on marijuana. He's not. I have a ten-year lease here. So what are we really doing? You know what I mean? It's I don't think it's fair that I'm running into walls as it is. And I just feel like with my space, I should be approved. Thank you so much for your time, guys. I appreciate.</p>



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18.	Jamal	Pugh		<p>Good morning, everybody. First of all, I want to say, respect to doing stuff like that to the OCM. Respects due to the OCM, Christopher, everybody else's stuff like that, the legislators that they gave social equity a chance to, plentiful wishing. The one thing I want to say is that, you know, a lot of things are always talked about negatively when it comes to the OCM. Nothing works perfectly. I'm saying I don't think that I like some of the processes, but I understand that y'all doing your best. I believe that what happened to Damian Fagon was wrong. I pray that y'all just stick together as a team and you see this out in fulfillment. And that when y'all do bring other people on, y'all be able to take care of issues and stuff like that that are necessary to make sure we move forward. I want to make sure I say, respect to Ms. Crystal Peoples-Stokes and I hope that, we figure this thing out.</p>
19.	Kate	Hruby		<p>Hi, guys. How you doing? I'm Kate Hruby. I'm a regulatory consultant, and compliance consultant, Master of Public Administration. I've worked with various licensees across the supply chain to both obtain and maintain licenses in this, regulatory scheme. What I will say is, I got my, from Long Island family is from Brooklyn, Queens. I'm proud to be a New Yorker. I'm proud to say that New York has stood up one of the best, probably the only real and meaningful social equity program in the country where we're giving licenses to people who have been disadvantaged. One of the primary legislative intent of this law was to repair the damage done by the war on drugs in communities disproportionately affected by cannabis prohibition and the law enforcement policies and procedures that occurred during that time. What I will say is that I worked in South Carolina for years doing regulatory policy and energy and child abuse and neglect. I ran the Senate committee that had jurisdiction over, family and veterans services, i.e. the child abuse, the neglect laws. And what I will say is that I moved back to New York when I read this law. Why? Because New York was trying to do something different. New York was trying to do something meaningful. The system is imperfect. However, the regulations are imperfect. We need to work on that. Everybody knows it's under review. I would love to provide input on how we can revise the regulations to make the system work better, but we cannot give up on the goals of this law, because if we do, we're going to have California, where there's five companies. That's not the point of this law. The point of this law is to build</p>



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				generational wealth in disadvantaged communities. Thank you.
20.	Saki	Fenderson	Tainted Love BK and On the Revel	<p>Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Saki, co-founder of Tainted Love BK, Director of Events, On the Revel and a long, long-time advocate here in Bed-Stuy. Really? Usually I'm a solution-oriented action person. But today I want to focus on our wins. We have 85. I know. Give me a second. I'm trying to see and do this simultaneously. I know I'm taking time away too. All right. We have 85 licensed retailers operating. That's more than three quarters since the injunction is lifted. We heard that earlier today right here at Restoration Plaza. We do an event celebrating and educating. A cannabis event. Over 1000 people came here on the same day as Afropunk and a Spike Lee event. Right? Oh, no. I lost my page. Oh, no. Oh. There is. And we're breaking stigmas. I'm killing time, too. We're breaking stigmas and building businesses. But negativity sells papers and breaks spirits. Right. We need to focus on the spirit of the law we fought for. This is an industry with small business and equity get equal access. That means funding of course, but more so non predatory access to how the business is run. Manage expectations because this is a high risk highly regulated industry. And we have to maneuver the rugged waters of capital investment. We've had a slow start, and this is the really big thing I want to say, because I'm losing time and I can't get to my notes. New York's industry has been viciously stalled by the same people who spread the narrative that New York created a broken system, and they've been allowed to monopolize other states. This is not happening here. Every small business takes five years to sink or swim. Prohibition has happened for over 100. Can we get five to make changes?</p>
21.	Vladimir	Bautista	Happy73	<p>Good morning, everyone. First of all, congratulations to everybody that won a license today. I'm Vladimir Bautista. I'm here representing Vladimir Bautista LLC. I was awarded a license back in 2022, but I'm not here to promote myself. I'm here to speak objectively today and put things in perspective. So. OCM, we got some work to do. People need more resources. You need more staff. You gotta work on the illicit stores. And I know it's a lot, but we still got more work to do. But for the community, I speak all over the world. I'm not speaking in a vacuum. Just looking at New York. New York will be the cannabis capital of the world. New York has more black and brown and marginalized owned dispensaries than any other state. But I'm gonna tell you what's a slippery slope? A</p>



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				slippery slope is when you push these people to the edge, and then all of that ends up with no generational wealth, because we have to work on fixing it. But you can break it if you push too hard. If you go as far as to mess with that thousand-foot protection law, it's a slippery slope and we could end up like Oklahoma. And that means that all the black and brown and marginalized people that have currently have licenses will end up with nothing. So don't get caught up with the hype. They gotta do their thing. I appreciate what you do. We all know we all have to. You have to step it up. We can help them. But don't break the program because we only be hurting ourselves. And New York is the capital of the world and will be the cannabis capital of the world. So let's fix it and not break the program. Thank you all for everything you do. I appreciate you, and let's continue working forward. Thank you.
22.	Oleg	Maryasis	Lock and Key Remedies Incorporated	Hi, everybody. So my name is Oleg. I've been in the cannabis industry here for 12 years. Legal side. And I'm excited. I'm going to be graduating with the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. I'm going to get my master's in a medical cannabis science and therapeutics in just a few weeks. So really excited about that. I want to congratulate, all the new license holders. It's definitely a monumental day for all of you. And it's really exciting. As one of the people who, worked, to set up a licensed dispensary in Long Island City, NYC Bud. I know I can tell you that what lies ahead for you is, not at all simple. Unfortunately, in the state, in the current state of affairs, survivability is a great challenge for license holders. Some of the things that Vladimir Bautista just pointed out to, with blatant and ruthless illegal, competition on every corner that don't pay taxes. One like us, do accept credit cards and Apple Pay. You will feel your hands are tied behind your back. Implementation delays on a bio track mean that you're going to be doing a lot of manual inventory counts. And seamlessly endless spreadsheet entries. This is the most diverse and equitable group of cannabis licensees. And, the OCM has responsibilities to facilitate a higher chance of success. The state government must get rid of the current the THC potency tax, which especially on products such as low and edibles. One combining two layers of cannabis tax consumers are paying 40% tax. Which makes it really crazy. Furthermore, we need to bring back New York cannabis. Sorry. New York hemp cannabinoid industry back to life. Local CBD consumers now rely on, unregulated products from other states that they could buy legally online. Today, as usual, I bring,



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				research reports that indicate that, high CBD, low THC products should be primary antidote for lowering chances of cannabis use disorder, hyperemesis syndrome, and schizophrenia. Thank you so much for all the work you do.
23.	George	Tabi		<p>Hello. Good afternoon. At this point, everyone. My name is George Tabi, MD. Representing common courtesy and paint puff in peace. And I'm just happy you all here to support what this CAURD license program has been able to do. And I just think everybody's that's been involved and everybody's, you know, continuing this fight, making sure that we have, all the support needed to continue to push the initiative forward. Unfortunately, there's been so many things that have gone down, from the injunction. From difficulty finding real estate, from difficulty finding resources. Difficulty with educating individuals in the community to understand what this is and the necessity, of this program. Throughout this time, I've watched, from the medical standpoint how we've been lacking the support. Me being a Doctor, I thought it was imperative for me to today to speak about how important it is for community and health. Health is not just what we eat and we drink. It's how we consume and see our life. And I think that with this CAURD program has helped a lot of individuals from unfortunate circumstances see their life differently, which is essentially how they're going to view their health. It's a positive contribution to their health when they're able to be impactful in the community, support themselves financially, help their families, help other people in the community. It's also imperative that we continue to support this throughout the nuances, throughout the obstacles that it must, be challenged with, because that is the way things operate in our country. But let's continue to please continue to fight. We have people here that are doing what they have to do. We are in the midst of this thing. I don't want to see something like this be pulled, because this is very important to our communities and what we have to do going forward and as long as we're in it together, we're going to be able to fight this too. So hold on tight, stay positive, stay committed. And we're going to have hope for the best outcome for this whole situation.</p>
24.	Mr.	Samuel		<p>Good afternoon. I'm a New York State resident and entrepreneur. I'm here because I use cannabis for many years, and I've been around it for many years. I'm actually the first totally blind, smoke shop owner. I own a smoke shop in Pennsylvania. As someone who's operated my shop for about four days a week for the past year and a half in gross sales over 150%, I'd like to be in the forefront</p>



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				of the cannabis industry in the state of New York, my home state. I also my, my application is also, in the pending stage. And I'd also like to congratulate the board on their progress in meeting their goals and exceeding their goals with the SEE in minority applications, 80% of people with disabilities in the state of New York are unemployed. I'd like to be on the forefront of the industry, to be able to give other people like me and who are in my position, jobs and employment as well. Thank you.
25.	Osbert	Orduna	The Cannabis Place	<p>Thank you very much. First and foremost, I want to say thank you to you Tremaine, Chris for, Mike. Mike, Mike, check. One two. One, two. Hear me now. Okay. Sound off. Right. Maybe I need to put my marine hat on. So what I would say was, I'd like to first thank you Tremaine and Chris for all of your hard work that you've done, you know, to date to get this to this point. For those that don't know me, my name is Osbert Orduna. I'm the CEO of the Cannabis Place dispensary, and I'm happy to share a can I get some respect in the back, please? And I'm happy to share that after many trials and tribulations like the DASNY process and all of its infinite delays, like the seven months of court delays that stopped our industry. We have finally opened our doors in Middle Village, Queens. Some of you may know that we're also licensed in New Jersey, and we're a licensed dispensary in Jersey City. People like to compare states. Let me give you a comparison. In New Jersey. The first businesses that opened or that had, crack at the adult market were the MSOs. Not us. Not small businesses, not social equity. Not, people with that were, justice impacted. But there were other challenges in Jersey, too. Like, it takes five months. My own employees had to take them five months to get a cannabis worker I.D. card. It's a yearlong municipal approval process and many, many others delays. I share this because while New York does have work to do, New York has gotten a lot of things right as well, and they deserve credit for that. One of which, in my opinion, is the 1000-foot rule. We need to preserve and protect the 1000-foot rule. Otherwise, you're going to create a race to the bottom where only big MSOs will survive and small businesses will be cutting each other's throats to stay afloat. Doing an impactful things like, for example, not paying our workers true living wages, not, being proactive members of our community. And so I apologize. I got one sentence left. So instead, this room should be working together to demand that our legislature does the right thing and immediately</p>



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				grants municipalities the authority to padlock unlicensed operators now.
26.	Kris	Kahl		As we know, the rollout has been a little sluggish. Can you give an estimated timeline in which the Distribution applicants from December will be reviewed.
27.	Cat	Grows	Catgrows	Are we still in November Que? What official protocols were taken to ensure a fair lottery? Who in ultra specific detail Does NOT qualify for SEE. Why is money being spent on a task force to shut people down when you still need to open people up. That money needs to be spent opening people up. As a Licensee I do not care if there is a place down the road selling cannabis if i DO NOT have a license. I Cant sell it anyways and atleast our community members have a choice of places to buy from. Which is a free market. An American tax payer right.
28.	Richard	Keith	Cannahouse	Looking for an opportunity to see how the process works
29.	Limor	Feder	Soho Dispensary Corp	<p>Subject: Immediate Action Required: Addressing Licensing Delays and Zoning Challenges for Cannabis Dispensaries</p> <p>Dear Members of the Cannabis Control Board,</p> <p>As the owner of Soho Dispensary Corp., a women-owned enterprise, I reach out to express my growing concerns and the urgent challenges we, and similarly positioned applicants, face in the New York cannabis dispensary licensing process. Our commitment to adhering to regulatory demands, including securing a compliant location, has been met with unforeseen and disconcerting obstacles.</p> <p>Our application, submitted before the November deadline, secured us a promising position at number 132 in the lottery queue. Anticipating priority review based on this placement, we were later blindsided by the revelation of undisclosed pending CAURD card license locations near our chosen site, inadvertently placing us in a position of non-compliance. This lack of transparency and the ensuing confusion underscore significant inefficiencies within the licensing framework, jeopardizing the stability and fairness of the entire process.</p> <p>A pressing issue exacerbating our plight is the swiftly diminishing pool of appropriately zoned real estate. This problem, coupled with procedural delays, threatens not only the viability of Soho Dispensary but also the financial investments and aspirations of numerous applicants who find themselves in a similar quandary. The narrowing opportunity to secure compliant properties heightens the risk of significant financial repercussions and lost</p>





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				<p>prospects within the burgeoning cannabis market. Despite rectifying all deficiencies prior to the last board meeting, our application inexplicably remained stagnant, while licenses were granted to several applicants ranked higher than us in the queue. This situation has raised alarming concerns regarding the potential for targeted delays in our licensing process, a speculation we earnestly hope does not reflect the board's intentions.</p> <p>In light of these challenges, we implore the OCM and the Cannabis Control Board to urgently re-evaluate and enhance the licensing procedure's transparency, efficiency, and fairness. We specifically request the swift issuance of licenses for November round applicants, enabling us to finalize our property arrangements and advance our business endeavors. Such measures are imperative not only for the affected applicants but are crucial for the integrity and flourishing of New York's cannabis industry at large.</p> <p>Our plea for your immediate intervention is driven by the hope that, together, we can foster a solution that equitably supports all applicants and sustains the investments made towards this promising industry. We trust in your commitment to fairness and the promotion of equal opportunities, principles that are essential for our collective achievement and the cannabis industry's reputable growth in New York.</p> <p>We await your prompt and favorable response, confident in your resolve to address these critical issues with the urgency and consideration they demand.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention and anticipated action.</p> <p>Sincerely,            Limor Feder            Owner, Soho Dispensary Corp.</p>
30.	Mark	Buzzetto	SMMB, Inc (Purple Plains)	<p>As a Provisional CAURD Licensee I would like to express how frustrated we are with the final approval process. We have been paying rent since July of 2023 and had our final inspection nearly 3 months ago with no word as to when we can expect our final license. Emails and calls to the OCM are almost pointless. The only information being given is that our application seems to be complete, without deficiencies and that we should be patient.</p> <p>Does the CCB/OCM understand that we WILL run out of money and default on our debts and lease? For an organization that claims to be trying to get stores open, it certainly feels like there are a-lot of us ready to go (and unfortunately on the brink of collapse).</p>



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31.	Brandon	Hodges		Dear OCM please clarify the order in which you are reviewing the licenses between both of the License application Queue, How is provisional and non-provisional being assessed in what order
32.	Jeffrey	Roizman		My first public comment with this agency on March 2nd of 2023 was about when the microbusiness, nursery, and other license types, have the availability to apply for licenses aforementioned. It took 8 months after that comment for the ability for individuals/entities to apply for only the Microbusiness. A year later, we haven't heard anything about on-site consumption, nursery, or the co-op license. I hope we hear more about these license types within the coming weeks/months.
33.	Justin	B	SJD Associates LLC	<p>Cannabis Control Board,</p> <p>Highlighting a critical issue facing our state's cannabis industry: the urgent need to expedite the issuance of licenses. As we convene, it is paramount to recognize that effective enforcement measures cannot be prioritized until a substantial number of licenses are granted.</p> <p>Currently, our state faces a dilemma where demand for cannabis far outweighs the capacity of our licensed establishments. Consider the statistics: over-conservatively estimating that 10% of our population purchases cannabis at least once a month, we are met with the reality of a staggering consumer base. In New York City alone, with its 8 million residents and up to 2 million tourists at any given time, this translates to a minimum of 1 million monthly cannabis purchasers (actual is closer to 2.5 million transactions).</p> <p>Presently, we have approximately 75 licensed dispensaries in the state, with 35 of them centralized in NYC. If we assume just one purchase per cannabis consumer per month, the sheer volume of transactions overwhelms our current infrastructure. With an average transaction time of 5 minutes, each dispensary would need to process 952 transactions per day to accommodate demand.</p> <p>However, the logistical challenge becomes apparent when we delve deeper into these numbers. At 952 transactions per day, each dispensary would require an average of 80 hours of operation daily, an impossibility given conventional business hours. Even with staff managing transactions, the workload surpasses practical limits, amounting to 32 hours of work per person within an 8-hour workday.</p> <p>The ramifications of this imbalance are profound. Without an adequate number of licensed establishments,</p>



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				<p>consumers are left with limited access to legal channels, inadvertently bolstering illicit markets. Moreover, the strain placed on existing dispensaries compromises service quality and regulatory compliance, undermining the integrity of our cannabis industry.</p> <p>Therefore, I urge this esteemed board to prioritize the swift issuance of at least ONE THOUSAND licenses across NYS (majority in NYC) to address this pressing issue. By expanding the number of licensed establishments, we not only meet consumer demand but also foster a robust tax base essential for the state's economic prosperity.</p> <p>Furthermore, a larger network of licensed dispensaries enables greater community engagement, facilitating self-policing mechanisms such as the 311 hotline.</p> <p>The time to act is now. By accelerating the licensing process, we pave the way for a sustainable and equitable cannabis industry that serves the needs of both consumers and communities alike and stems the continued growth of the illicit market. We all implore the CCB's swift and decisive action.</p> <p>Given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 million monthly cannabis purchasers in NYC *This is with them buying just once a month most buy twice.</li> <li>35 licensed dispensaries in NYC</li> <li>Average transaction time of 5 minutes</li> </ul> <p>First, let's calculate the total number of transactions per day needed to accommodate this demand:</p> $1 \text{ million monthly purchasers} / 30 \text{ days} = 33,333 \text{ transactions per day}$ <p>Now, let's distribute this demand across the 35 licensed dispensaries:</p> $33,333 \text{ transactions per day} / 35 \text{ dispensaries} = 952 \text{ transactions per dispensary per day}$ <p>Finally, let's calculate the total time needed to process these transactions in an 8-hour day:</p> $952 \text{ transactions} * 5 \text{ minutes per transaction} = 4,760 \text{ minutes}$ <p>Converting this to hours:</p> $4,760 \text{ minutes} / 60 \text{ minutes per hour} = 79.33 \text{ hours}$ <p>So, each dispensary would need to operate for approximately 79.33 hours in an 8-hour day to handle the minimum amount of orders from NYC's cannabis purchasers. This exceeds practical limits and highlights the urgent need for more licensed dispensaries to meet demand.</p> <p>Please keep this in mind: For every 1 Million cannabis purchases made a month distributed across 222 Licensed</p>



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				stores is 150 transactions per day per store. \$15,000 in revenue a day per shop and \$3M gross sales DAILY.
34.	Timon	Parsels	Crooked Lake Cannabis, Inc.	Will applicants be notified if there application was reviewed and rejected?
35.	Maddie	G		When will NYS allow the use of discounts, coupons, sales, or rewards programs?
36.	Larry	Acoff	laffoca	am i on a waiting list...?? my application was submitted ..showing that i have a building and i am a state certified VET.....as well as a minority business owner and i am a black male... REALLY NEED TO KNOW WHAT AM I WAITING FOR AND WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO DO....??
37.	Ervin	Raboy	Farm Bureau	Can you please reimburse the AUCCs for the application and licensing fees that we are paying. We are sitting on many pounds of Cannabis that has gone to waste and lost large sums of investment money. We followed all the rules. Meanwhile the illicit market is flourishing.
38.	Daronne	Hudson	Divine Kinnektion	In person
39.	Marc	Kusewich		What happens to dispensaries if marijuana becomes federally legal? Will licenses be voided?
40.	Kyle	B		I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current licensing process for cannabis businesses in New York. As an applicant in this competitive landscape, I have observed several areas where improvements could be beneficial for all stakeholders involved. Firstly, I would like to address the communication channels between the OCM and applicants. Timely and clear communication is crucial in any regulatory process, and it seems there is room for enhancement in this regard. Many applicants, including myself, have experienced delays in responses or have not received feedback on our queries. This lack of communication contributes to a sense of uncertainty and frustration among applicants. Moreover, the transparency of the licensing process has been a topic of discussion within the applicant community. It is essential for the integrity of the process that all applicants are assured of a fair and unbiased evaluation. The perception that licenses are awarded on a preferential basis, regardless of the queue or application quality, undermines trust in the system. I urge the board to consider measures that would provide greater clarity on the decision-making criteria and process. Additionally, the current pace of license issuance and the limited number of licenses available have been



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				<p>disheartening for many. Given the significant investments and preparations made by applicants, such as securing leases, a more expedited process would be greatly appreciated. Doubling the number of licenses issued in the initial window could alleviate some of the bottlenecks and demonstrate the board's commitment to fostering a robust cannabis industry in New York.</p> <p>In conclusion, I respectfully request that the board consider these points and take steps to improve the licensing process. Enhanced communication and transparency, along with a review of the license issuance rate, will not only benefit applicants but also serve the broader goal of establishing a fair and thriving cannabis market in New York.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention to these matters. I look forward to your response and a continued dialogue on how we can collectively ensure a successful and equitable cannabis industry.</p>
41.	Sarah	Stenuf	Ananda Farms	<p>It is disheartening and perplexing that despite years of dedication, sacrifice, and patience, AU's find themselves ensnared in a seemingly arbitrary queue and instructed to "wait patiently".</p> <p>As a farmer, how can I adequately plan for spring when uncertain about the status of my license?</p> <p>The reliance of my family, farm, and business on the OCM's competence to timely review our applications for approval adds to our anxiety. While no one advocates for rushing through processes, a reasonable level of efficiency and consideration is expected.</p> <p>Having applied for Micro status months ago in the initial round, it is confounding why AUCCs are subjected to delays.</p> <p>Despite our commitment to legality, tax compliance, brand establishment, and transitioning from the black market, the OCM's purported prioritization of AU holders seems inconsistent with the treatment received.</p> <p>With my AUCC license set to expire in April, the imminent timeframe exacerbates the frustration of being relegated to a queue without apparent cause.</p> <p>Despite assurances from the OCM regarding the completion of my paperwork, absence of deficiencies, and fulfillment of prerequisites such as fingerprinting and TPI, the prolonged review period is very concerning.</p> <p>The discrepancy in treatment, evident in the frequency of emergency meetings granted to ROs compared to the monthly approval meetings for the new rec licensees (especially AU's transitioning), further compounds the</p>



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				<p>frustration.</p> <p>The perceived randomness of the application review process, coupled with disparities in response times for different applicants, raises questions about equity and transparency within the system.</p> <p>The challenges faced by small farmers, including the lack of communication and prolonged waiting periods, underscore the need for systemic improvements.</p> <p>Despite the acknowledged difficulty of starting a business in New York, successful applicants find themselves subjected to undue delays and inadequate support from the OCM.</p> <p>The OCM's handling of AUCC applications leaves much to be desired, with delays and inconsistencies undermining the efforts of small businesses and farmers.</p> <p>The lack of responsiveness and accountability only serve to exacerbate the frustrations of those relying on timely approvals for their livelihoods.</p>
42.	Ellexcion	Ojo	El barrio legacy group	<p>Please allow more micro licenses and retail licenses to operate, the more licenses will eliminate the illicit ones .</p> <p>Thank you in honor</p>
43.	Sasha	Nutgent	Housing Works Cannabis Co	<p>My name is Sasha Nutgent and I proudly serve as the Director of Cannabis Retail at Housing Works Cannabis Co., an integral part of Housing Works—a community dedicated to supporting individuals living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Since our inception in 1990, we've been providing essential services to over 15,000 low-income New Yorkers annually, focusing on the most vulnerable demographics, including those grappling with homelessness, HIV/AIDS, mental health issues, substance use disorder, chronic conditions, and incarceration.</p> <p>In December 2022, we achieved a milestone by opening Housing Works Cannabis Co., New York's inaugural legal adult-use dispensary. Our venture contributes to vital services such as healthcare, housing, and job training, aligning with our mission to combat homelessness and AIDS through advocacy, service provision, and sustainable en</p> <p>While the program has faced its challenges, like in every other state rollout, the office has been a leader in ensuring the licensing of small and equity businesses. That mission cannot be changed.</p> <p>We lend our support to Governor Hochul's proposal to empower localities in combating unlicensed dispensaries, bolstering public safety and tax revenue. However,</p>



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				<p>additional legislative measures are necessary to address systemic inequities without further criminalizing impacted communities. The Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) must collaborate with advocates, licensed dispensaries, and community boards in enforcement efforts.</p> <p>The 1000-foot rule outlined in the MRTA for retail dispensaries or micro businesses plays a crucial role in preventing oversaturation and ensuring fair market conditions. Its elimination would tilt the scales in favor of well-resourced Multi-State Operators (MSOs), further widening the gap between them and CAURD license holders. Moreover, the prevalence of unlicensed dispensaries presents a significant concern. Consumers are left vulnerable to confusion and potential harm, as untested products flood the market. The New York State Cannabis Control Board must stand firm against any proposed changes to the 1000-foot rule and strongly advocate Governor Hochul for its retention, emphasizing the detrimental effects on market equity and public health. While no other state has as many BIPOC-owned businesses, critical challenges impeding entry into the legal market include financing, real estate, capacity-building training, and technical assistance barriers. Furthermore, we urge for a \$50M allocation towards job training programs and technical assistance, prioritizing community-based and non-profit organizations with proven track records in developing comprehensive workforce programs. Housing Works intends to leverage our cannabis retail location to create training opportunities for justice-involved individuals, fostering entrepreneurship within marginalized communities. We are committed to investing in job training for minorities seeking guidance in operating a licensed dispensary. Training would include key factors such as how to operate a POS system, inventory management and accuracy, customer service and the importance of brand identity and marketing just to name a few.</p> <p>Our mission at Housing Works Cannabis Co is to provide education to consumers and entrepreneurs about cannabis. We have an educational model aimed to destigmatize cannabis use and highlight its benefits. Housing Works has always remained committed to educating the public and destigmatizing drug use. Our programs provide a safe space for folks who use drugs, while at the same time providing them with vital information on how to safely consume. We plan on continuing educating folks through our work with other</p>



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				CAURD partners. In conclusion, I urge the legislature to prioritize social equity, address regulatory gaps, and invest in comprehensive support structures to ensure the success and equity of New York's legal cannabis market. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.
44.	Coltin	Barody	Asset packaging	<p>Dear Office of Cannabis Management, I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current process of license allocation for cannabis dispensaries in New York State. As an engaged 5th generation New Yorker following the developments in our state's burgeoning cannabis industry, I have noticed that many of the individuals and entities who have been awarded licenses in the first window are AUCC applicants. While I understand the importance of supporting these groups, I believe that they should have been considered in a separate pool to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of licenses.</p> <p>The current approach has inadvertently limited opportunities for other applicants who have secured locations and are ready to commence operations but were not part of the AUCC category. These applicants, many of whom have invested significant resources into securing leases and preparing for licensure, find themselves at a disadvantage due to the oversaturation of AUCC licenses in the initial allocation.</p> <p>To address this issue, I propose that the Office of Cannabis Management consider increasing the number of licenses available in the first window. This would not only provide a fair chance for all prepared applicants but also stimulate economic growth and job creation in our state. I trust that the Office of Cannabis Management will take this suggestion under advisement and continue to work towards a licensing process that benefits all New Yorkers looking to participate in this new industry.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Respectfully Coltin Barody</p>
45.	Danny	Mitchell	DEM Cannabis LLC.	Communication is everything in life...can there be a better communication process for people who's waiting to hear about the process or who's in the que? Can we have a certain point of contact that we should be able to communicate with throughout the process?
46.	Saki	Fenderson	Tainted Love BK and On the Revel	Let's focus on the wins: We have 85 licensed retailers operating. More than 3/4 of them opened once the injunctions lifted. Right here at Restoration Plaza in one of the communities





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				<p>hardest hit by the war on drugs, we hosted a cannabis event that brought over 1000 people on the same day Afro-Punk and Spike Lee were also throwing events. We are breaking stigmas and building businesses. But negativity sells papers and breaks spirits Let's focus on the spirit of the law we fought for -- let's have an industry where small business and equity get equal access. That means funding, of course. It means non-predatory access to accurate information on how to run a cannabis business.</p> <p>We have had a slow start. We allowed cultivators to grow their entire canopy with no stores open. We have been hit with lawsuit after lawsuit stalling specifically, our retail industry which is where most people think the goose will lay her golden egg. The industry has been viciously stalled by the same people who spread the narrative that NY created a broken system had they been allowed to monopolize the market with their vast resources as they've done in every other state, we would have more tax revenue and fewer of those oh, so dreaded smoke shops. Let's honor the people who came first in licensing. Those who were hardest hit by enforcement. Those who have lost tremendous amounts of personal and financial stability. Many of whom are still fighting to have a place in this legal industry and are now competing with MSOs and general license holders.</p> <p>It takes 5 years for any small business to sink or swim...we are barely 2-1/2 years into a regulated cannabis industry. We have had almost 100 years of prohibition and enforcement, we can't get 5 to make a change?</p>
47.	Karen	Smith		<p>My name is Karen Smith I am a black female disabled veteran born and raised in Yonkers. When NY opened up both the November and December application processes I was extremely excited as I thought I would be given a fair shot at generational wealth. Unfortunately I feel like I was slighted with only 5% of the applicant pool being disabled veterans I'm not sure why on both list I was not offered or shown any advantages in the queue. There are over a thousand people ahead of me in the November round and I was omitted from the December round as the OCM did not accept my application due to a technical error on their side. Although my account was charged and I have time stamped proof of submittal in time I am left with no resolution other than a refund of my application fee and a denial by the OCM despite all of my time stamps and evidence of submittal. I'd like to know as a black female</p>



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				disabled veteran where was my chance at opening a dispensary when over 1000 general applicants are ahead of me. I feel as not only a Social Equity applicant but also a disabled service veteran I have been done an injustice
48.	Titus	Vaus	Asteria Cannabis Farm	Hello I'm looking for clarity on why AUCC's transitioning over appear on the same Que with the October - December new applicant round ? When the November instructions clearly state on page 5 and 6 that they will be reviewed outside of the Que process.
49.	Godfrey	Gooden	Applicant	Applicant
50.	S	B		Is the online meeting happening? It shows a technical difficulty. How long I still need to wait?
51.	Rhaukeem	Conner	Erietreehouse Corp	At present, there are no DASNY locations or establishments in Western NY that accept cannabis dispensaries, as far as we are aware. Unfortunately, we seem to be limited in our ability to explore other options with the CAURD License. This issue requires attention.
52.	Beck	Hickey	mary alice, LLC	<p>In Article 4, section 87 of the MRTA, it states that The Cannabis Control Board, in consultation with the Chief Equity Officer and Executive Director shall implement a social and economic equity plan, and actively promote applicants from communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition, and promote racial, ethnic, and gender diversity when issuing licenses for adult-use cannabis related activities.</p> <p>The OCM has done a great job of promoting the application window to diverse social and economic communities, and utilizing a simple application that required very little to no legal assistance, and the fees for application were lower than most (all?) other adult-use cannabis programs. This brought in a large number of social equity applicants which is commendable and in the true spirit of the MRTA.</p> <p>But, coming off Black History Month, and being in the midst of Women's History Month, we in America know that the problem with minority and gender diversity in our capitalist society is not about the application process, but about the promotion and funding of those minority and women applicants in business.</p> <p>The Office of Cannabis Management has implemented a randomized queue, AKA lottery, to determine the priority given to applications for review. Because of the high number of SEE applicants the OCM has been able to point to the "great diversity" and pat themselves on the back. And, to their credit, if we were to bring in a statistician they would probably say that in a randomized queue if a large percentage of the applicants are of SEE status then the</p>



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				<p>percentage would probably hold even when randomized. Except, this is not a lottery. These not numbers printed on ping pong balls, they are applications from people with unequal backgrounds, resources and capital.</p> <p>The writers of the MRTA recognized these inequities and in order to ensure a truly equitable cannabis industry they dictated that the Cannabis Control Board shall actively promote SEE applicants, and that does not simply mean make the fee less.</p> <p>The dictionary defines PROMOTE as;            1 to further the progress of (something, especially a cause, venture, or aim); support or actively encourage.            2 to advance or raise (someone) to a higher position or rank.</p> <p>So, simply throwing all the minorities, women, and people from communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition into a bucket with white men and start pulling names is in no way what the law dictates. Now, I know that the OCM has justified this by saying that they are offering SEE applicants help, training, education and those cheaper fees, but that is also mandated by the law so they had to do that IN ADDITION to promoting SEE applicants in the licensing process.</p> <p>What now? We are already through the queue process, so, we could throw our hands up and say it's too late. But it is not. The MRTA has given the Cannabis Control Board the ability to review and approve applications as they see fit. They can change the number of licenses issued as well. In this instance The Board has the power to approve SEE applications first, regardless of the order in which the queue is telling them to. I call upon the board to exercise this power, because we all know from living with good old American Capitalism we will wind up with an industry devoid of much gender and racial diversity. Again.</p>
53.	Pilar	Dejesus		<p>I want to express my unwavering solidarity with the NYS Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) and its dedicated Social Equity Officer Damian Fagon. The journey towards establishing a new regulatory office, particularly in an area marred by decades of stigma and harm inflicted disproportionately upon Black and Latino communities, demands patience and perseverance.</p> <p>The path to legalization has been arduous, marked by years of advocacy and struggle. It is imperative to recognize that the establishment of a smoothly functioning regulatory body cannot be achieved overnight. I firmly believe that the current leadership of the OCM is diligently working towards this goal, despite facing numerous</p>



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				<p>challenges.</p> <p>It deeply troubles me to witness the barrage of attacks, particularly emanating from the governor’s office. Her pre legalization history has shown a lack of positive engagement from the governor regarding the war on drugs and the prohibition of cannabis. This pattern of behavior raises concerns and hints at a broader agenda.</p> <p>I am unequivocally opposed to what appears to be a targeted campaign against the Black leadership within the OCM. Instead of undermining their efforts, the governor should be channeling resources towards supporting the OCM, grassroots community-based organizations, and providing technical assistance to social equity applicants. Frivolous lawsuits initiated by vested interests post-legalization only serve as barriers hindering the OCM from fulfilling its mandate of nurturing a burgeoning industry within our state. It is imperative that we stand in solidarity with the leadership of the OCM and resist any attempts to derail their noble efforts.</p> <p>In conclusion, I urge the governor and all stakeholders to prioritize collaboration and support for the OCM, recognizing that its success is intertwined with the well-being of our communities and the realization of social equity in the cannabis industry.</p> <p>Thank you. Pilar DeJesus - one of the pioneers of MRTA!</p>