



Dear Senators Booker, Schumer, and Wyden,

We write to you today on behalf of state-legal and licensed cannabis businesses located in legacy cannabis cultivation regions of Northern California.

Collectively, our associations represent regions that are home to nearly 2,000 independent licensed cannabis cultivators, constituting approximately two-thirds of the licensed cannabis farms in California and the greatest concentration of legal cannabis agriculture in the United States. The regions we represent also include many hundreds of licensed cannabis businesses in other segments of the supply chain including manufacturing, distribution, testing, and retail.

The end of federal prohibition is long overdue, and we commend your leadership in charting a path forward for legalization of cannabis through the U.S. Senate.

We also stand in strong support for your commitment to federal cannabis reform that is grounded in principles of equity and justice. In our view, there can be no path forward for federal cannabis legalization that does not, as its central goal, seek to redress the fundamental injustices perpetrated by the War on Drugs.

We believe strongly that addressing the deep and systemic harm caused by the War on Drugs must be foundational to federal cannabis reform, embedded in the DNA of federal legislation itself, and not instrumentalized as a talking point or slogan. From our experience in California, we have found that a commitment to equity cannot be fully expressed in any single policy or piece of legislation: it must be enacted as an ongoing, democratic, participatory process, in which the challenge of building a newly-legal industry based on principles of justice is continually kept at the forefront of the discussion, and informed by the people and communities who are most impacted.

California's history with cannabis differs in many ways from other American states. In 1996, California voters approved Proposition 215, the Compassionate Use Act, which legalized cannabis for personal medical use but which did not clearly address the question of how cannabis could be produced, distributed, or sold. As a result, for the twenty years leading up to the passage of Proposition 64 in 2016, California cannabis patients and caregivers remained highly vulnerable to law enforcement activity. In our communities, law enforcement operations including the Campaign Against Marijuana Planting and Operation Green Sweep were a fact of life for many decades, deeply impacting thousands of individuals, many of whom now operate within the licensed cannabis market.

Today, thousands of legacy cannabis businesses in California have made the transition into the legal, licensed, and regulated state cannabis market. These businesses are overwhelmingly small, and often led by families and owner-operators with few or no additional employees. In the regions we represent, nearly all cannabis farms are under an acre in size, and most farms are smaller than a quarter-acre. The vast majority of these licensed cultivation sites are operated outdoors and under the full sun: they are *farms*, operated by farmers, who are struggling with many of the same agricultural issues as small farmers in any other part of America. This perspective leads us to view cannabis agriculture through a deeply environmental lens, with a focus on production standards and that prioritize sustainability, protection of water resources and wildlife, carbon sequestration, and strictly-enforced prohibitions on the use of toxic pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals.

Over many years of engagement in state and local cannabis reform efforts, we have found that the small-scale, outdoor, legacy cannabis cultivation that is so central to our communities is often not well-represented in conversations on the future of the "cannabis industry," which is often assumed to be the provenance of a small number of well-capitalized, vertically-integrated

companies, who grow cannabis indoors in large-scale, energy-intensive, and factory-like conditions.

Consequently, as a discussion on cannabis reform moves forward in the U.S. Senate, we write today to request that we be included as stakeholders alongside the many other people and communities who will be impacted by this historic legislation.

In collaboration with other stakeholders, and with the leadership of your offices, we are hopeful that it will be possible to establish a federal cannabis framework that ends cannabis prohibition, addresses the legacy of the War on Drugs, and builds a lasting federal cannabis framework that is firmly based on principles of racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues, and your leadership in seeking to provide an equitable path forward in response to the failed policies of cannabis prohibition. As we move forward into a new era of cannabis reform and renaissance, we look forward to cooperatively striving for a bright future together.

Sincerely,



Ross Gordon
Policy Director
Humboldt County Growers Alliance



Genine Coleman
Executive Director
Origins Council



Diana Gamzon,
Executive Director
Nevada County Cannabis Alliance



Joanna Cedar,
Board Member
Sonoma County Growers Alliance

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Adrien Keys
President
Trinity County Agricultural Alliance

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Patrick Sellers
Chair of the Board of Directors
Mendocino Cannabis Alliance

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Oliver Bates
President
Big Sur Farmers Association