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City of Detroit Extends Temporary Opt-Out Ordinance for Adult-Use Marijuana

Councilman James Tate and industry stakeholders come together to develop essential social equity program

DETROIT – At the January 21st Detroit City Council formal session, Councilman James Tate (District 1) introduced an ordinance to amend the city’s temporary opt-out ordinance for adult-use marijuana to extend through March 31, 2020. This extension will afford Councilman Tate’s office and marijuana industry stakeholders from Detroit, additional opportunity to continue to develop a social equity program that ensures all eligible Detroiters have an opportunity to sustainably participate in the state’s now legal multi-million dollar adult use marijuana industry, should they choose.

Michigan residents voted to legalize adult-use recreational marijuana during the November 2018 election. In accordance with the new law, municipalities across Michigan were given an option to opt-out of adult-use marijuana commercial sales. Since then, more than 1,400 cities in Michigan have formally opted-out. During that time, the Detroit City Council adopted an ordinance to temporarily opt out of recreational commercial sales until January 31st 2020 in order to create proper legislation before the law is implemented locally.

“It’s clear that Detroit’s medical marijuana industry is overwhelmingly owned and operated by individuals who don’t live in the city and take their dollars back to their communities,” said Councilman James Tate. “It’s critical that we take the necessary time now to ensure that Detroit’s impending recreational marijuana industry will properly reflect the demographic of the city it’s located in. It’s not enough for Detroit residents to simply hold security jobs or floor sweeping in this industry within our city. Meaningful and sustainable access for Detroiters has to be the goal. We have to use this legislation to identify ways to reduce the financial barriers of entry and eliminate the structural obstacles that many urban cities are seeking to resolve among communities of color. If we don’t tackle this very difficult issue now, the ability for Detroiters’ access will be harmed indefinitely. I stand firm on being deliberate and inclusive with our approach to drive equity in an industry that has displayed a lack of desire to do so thus far.”

The Office of Councilman James Tate continues to enlist the assistance of industry professionals and advocates including grass-root organizations such as Black Cannabis Access and Advocates for Returning Citizens, who are helping advance Detroit’s recreational adult-use ordinance through the cultivation of a social equity program (SEP). The SEP will allow the City of Detroit to provide a reduction in application fees for “legacy” Detroiters who have lived in Detroit for an extended period of time as well as Detroiters who have been convicted of marijuana related offenses prior to the passage of the November 2018 ballot proposal legalizing recreational marijuana in the State of Michigan. Other incentives could include new zoning options as well as a fund that would assist with start-up costs and technical assistance for SEP applicants.

During the temporary opt-out period, Detroit will continue to operate as a medical marijuana city and individual use as well as possession will not be interrupted as dictated by state law.



To find more information about the temporary opt-out ordinance for adult-use marijuana, contact 313-224-1027 or Councilmembertate@detroitmi.gov.

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