

July 24, 2020

Dear Member of Congress –

The Cannabis Trade Federation proudly represents many of the most successful companies in the cannabis industry. **We are writing on their behalf today to express our strong support for the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act of 2019 (H.R. 3884) and to urge all members of the U.S. House of Representatives to support it.** As an organization dedicated to ending federal cannabis prohibition in a manner that provides significant benefits to both individuals and communities that have been harmed by decades of disproportionate enforcement of our nation’s cannabis laws, we believe that the MORE Act represents a major step in this direction.

The past two months have underscored that the cause of cannabis policy reform is riding upon a much larger wave. Americans across the country are rising up for justice and the end of systemic racism. CTF stands with this movement, because cannabis policy cannot be separated from social justice policy. CTF is committed to listening to the communities impacted by racial injustice as we advocate for policies that advance social justice and equity.

Cannabis policy reform is also likely to contribute to the nation’s economic recovery in the wake of the global pandemic. Due to the economic devastation caused by the novel coronavirus, states are seeking new sources of revenue and employment. Federal laws should not stand as a barrier to progress on cannabis policy at the state level.

For far too many years, state-legal cannabis producers and providers – both medical and adult-use – have lived with the threat of arrest and prosecution by federal law enforcement officials hanging over their head. This is true for both owners and employees. **The MORE Act would eliminate that threat by removing cannabis from the federal Controlled Substances Act (CSA),** therefore eliminating the federal criminal penalties associated with cannabis-related activity. This change is not only fair, but is long past due, with 33 states (and D.C. and numerous territories) having legalized medical or adult-use cannabis markets and nearly two-thirds of Americans favoring cannabis legislation for all adults – and far more supporting medical cannabis.

Beyond the removal of cannabis from the CSA, passage of the MORE Act would accomplish numerous worthy objectives, all of which would move us toward a more equitable and just society. Those objectives will be accomplished by the following provisions in the bill:

Funding for beneficial programs. The MORE Act establishes an Opportunity Trust Fund, which would support the programs described below and would be funded by a 5 percent tax on cannabis products – a tax rate we consider reasonable.

Grants for programs and services. Funds from the Opportunity Trust Fund would be used to establish a Cannabis Justice Office (CJO) in the Justice Department. The CJO would have as a primary responsibility the administration of the Community Reinvestment Grant Program (CRGP). In turn, the CRGP would support a broad range of programs and services, from job training and reentry services to literacy programs and substance abuse treatment services.

Small Business Administration (SBA) assistance. The bill includes provisions to ensure that state-legal cannabis-related businesses will be eligible for Small Business Administration programs, such as the Microloan Program, which assists women, low-income, veteran and minority entrepreneurs and business owners.

Eliminating collateral consequences associated with cannabis use. The bill provides that the use and possession of cannabis shall not be the basis for the loss of federal benefits or for the denial of any benefit or protection under the nation's immigration laws.

Reducing the impact of past cannabis convictions. The bill contains critically important provisions that would provide for expungement and/or sentencing reviews for individuals who have suffered cannabis-related arrests and convictions under federal law.

Now more than ever, we need a commonsense approach to the nation's cannabis laws. We believe that the MORE Act is the best opportunity to tackle the pressing social, economic, and criminal justice challenges that accompany the transition to a legal and regulated cannabis market. We thank Representative Jerry Nadler (D-NY) and Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) for their steadfast leadership on this issue and urge all committees to work toward passage of this crucial legislation.

For more information or to co-sponsor please contact Milagros Cisneros with the House Judiciary Committee at milagros.cisneros@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Steve Fox
Strategic Advisor
Cannabis Trade Federation