

California Approves Direct Cannabis Sales at Farmers Markets

California Senate Advances Bill to Allow Small Cannabis Growers to Sell Directly at Farmers Markets

California senators have advanced a groundbreaking bill that would permit small marijuana growers to sell their products directly to consumers at state-organized farmers markets and other temporary events. The legislation, introduced by Assemblymember Gail Pellerin (D), was unanimously approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee with a 4-0 vote on Thursday. This bill marks a significant step forward in California's evolving cannabis industry, as it would also allow adults to consume cannabis on-site at these approved events.

Assembly-Backed Bill Moves to Senate Floor

The bill, which garnered nearly unanimous support in the Assembly in late May, has successfully passed through two Senate committees. With its recent approval in the Appropriations Committee, the legislation now moves to the Senate floor for a final vote. If it passes, the bill will need to return to the Assembly for concurrence on Senate amendments, including a key modification that restricts the licensee's ability to sell and allow on-site consumption only at "state temporary events." Originally, the bill's language was broader, permitting such activities at "specified temporary events."

Implementation Delayed to 2026

An additional amendment by the Senate Appropriations Committee delays the implementation of the bill until January 1, 2026. This extended timeline gives regulators and local jurisdictions ample time to prepare for the new licensing system and ensure compliance with the state's cannabis laws.

Details of the Temporary Event License Proposal

Under the proposed legislation, the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) would be empowered to issue a "state temporary event license" to qualifying licensees. This license would authorize the sale of cannabis and allow on-site consumption for individuals aged 21 and older at specific venues approved by local jurisdictions. Importantly, local government consent is a prerequisite for the events, ensuring that communities have a say in whether such activities can take place in their area.

To qualify for the state temporary event license, applicants must meet the definition of a small marijuana producer. This includes cultivating no more than one acre of cannabis, 22,000 square feet under a mixed-light tier 1 cultivation license, or 5,000 square feet under a mixed-light tier 2 or indoor cultivation license.

Expanding Upon Existing California Law

The bill seeks to expand upon a 2018 California law that allows regulators to issue temporary marijuana event licenses in jurisdictions where local governments permit such activities. This existing law paved the way for the historic inclusion of marijuana sales and on-site consumption at the California State Fair for the first time earlier this year.

Comparisons to New York's Cannabis Market

California's legislative push mirrors similar efforts in New York, where lawmakers passed a measure in June that would make marijuana farmers markets a permanent feature of the state's cannabis market. The New York legislation aims to revive the cannabis growers showcase events that were temporarily authorized but ended last year, allowing regulators to issue permits for farmers markets on an ongoing basis.

Hemp and Marijuana Market Reforms Stalled

While the bill advancing through California's Senate represents a significant development, another legislative plan aiming to enact sweeping changes to the state's marijuana and hemp markets has stalled. A Senate committee did not call the bill for a vote ahead of an end-of-week deadline, effectively halting the proposal for the current session. The proposed amendment from Governor Gavin Newsom (D) would have integrated hemp-derived cannabinoid products into California's regulated marijuana system and permitted out-of-state hemp producers to sell products within the state.

Governor Newsom Signs Psychedelics and Marijuana Research Bill

In related news, Governor Newsom recently signed a bill into law designed to streamline the application process for studying psychedelics and marijuana. This move reflects California's ongoing commitment to advancing research and regulation in the rapidly evolving field of cannabis and other controlled substances.

Email: info@cannabisriskmanager.com | Phone: +415-226-4060

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