

California Cracks Down: \$316 Million in Illicit Cannabis Seized

Governor Gavin Newsom Announces Major Cannabis Seizures and Increased Enforcement Actions to Protect Public Health and the Legal Market

SACRAMENTO – Governor Gavin Newsom today revealed that California officials have seized over \$316 million worth of illegal cannabis and \$474,000 in cash since January 2025. This effort is part of the state’s ongoing crackdown on illicit cannabis operations, which threaten consumer safety and the integrity of the state’s legal cannabis marketplace. The latest figures highlight a continuation of the state’s aggressive enforcement strategy that resulted in \$534 million worth of illegal cannabis being seized in 2024.

Coordinated Enforcement Efforts Lead to Significant Results in Combating Illicit Cannabis Trade

These impressive results are the product of coordinated enforcement actions with state agencies, local law enforcement, and other governmental partners. In total, officials have confiscated 212,681 illicit cannabis plants, issued 99 warrants, and conducted arrests that led to the removal of 35 firearms from illegal operations. These joint efforts, led by the Governor’s Unified Cannabis Enforcement Task Force (UCETF), are focused on disrupting illicit trade, ensuring public safety, and supporting the growth of the legal cannabis industry in California.

Governor Newsom’s Commitment to Protecting California’s Legal Cannabis Industry

Governor Newsom emphasized the importance of these efforts, stating, “As California’s legal cannabis market expands, we have a responsibility to crack down on the nefarious actors that put public health at risk and undermine the progress we’ve made. Unlicensed, unregulated products threaten consumer safety and jeopardize the integrity of this industry. We’re doubling down on our commitment to protect Californians and lift up the legal cannabis marketplace that so many have worked hard to build.”

A Unified Strategy to Tackle the Illegal Cannabis Market and Protect Consumers

The figures shared by Governor Newsom demonstrate a concerted, multi-agency approach that includes collaboration from the Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW), the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC), the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, and various local law enforcement agencies. The unified strategy has resulted in the seizure and destruction of over 800 tons (1.7 million pounds) of illegal cannabis since 2019, with a total estimated retail value of \$3.1 billion.

California’s Regulated Cannabis Market Drives Economic Growth and Public Benefits

California's legal cannabis market is the largest in the world, driving economic growth, creating jobs, and funding essential programs in education, public health, and environmental protection. The Department of Cannabis Control's recent market outlook report reveals that the licensed cannabis market is experiencing stable prices, increased industry value, and growth in the number of licensed operators. These developments further strengthen the state's legal market and demonstrate the importance of continued enforcement efforts to protect both consumers and the industry.

The Cannabis Task Force: Enhancing Collaboration and Enforcement Coordination

The California Cannabis Task Force, established in 2022, continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening collaboration between state, local, and federal agencies. The task force includes key partners such as the Department of Pesticide Regulation, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. These efforts aim to disrupt the illegal cannabis supply chain, protect the environment, and ensure that cannabis products sold in California meet strict quality standards.

Governor Newsom Takes Action to Address Health Risks from Hemp Products

In addition to combatting illicit cannabis, Governor Newsom has also taken action to address health risks posed by intoxicating hemp products. In September 2025, emergency hemp regulations were introduced to protect consumers from potentially harmful hemp-based food and beverage products containing detectable levels of THC. These new regulations prohibit the sale of such products to individuals under the age of 21 and align hemp product sales with restrictions currently seen in the legal cannabis market. Since the regulations went into effect, state agents have visited over 9,000 locations and seized 7,000 hemp products from 141 violators.

Ongoing Commitment to Strengthening California's Legal Cannabis Market

Governor Newsom's recent announcement highlights the continued success of California's efforts to eliminate illegal cannabis operations and protect public health. With an estimated \$316 million worth of illegal cannabis seized in just the first few months of 2025, the state's commitment to maintaining a safe, regulated cannabis marketplace remains steadfast. Through ongoing enforcement and strategic regulatory actions, California aims to build on its progress and ensure that the legal cannabis industry continues to thrive.

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