

Delaware Governor Signs Bill to Restore Cannabis Sales

Delaware's Adult-Use Cannabis Sales Back On Track After Governor Signs Key Legislation

On April 24, 2025, Delaware Governor *Matt Meyer* signed a crucial piece of legislation, House Bill 110 (H.B. 110), aimed at addressing a key setback in the state's adult-use cannabis rollout. The bill amends the state's background check requirements, ensuring they align with federal standards, and lays the groundwork for the cannabis industry to begin operating as planned. This new legislation addresses a critical issue that had delayed Delaware's cannabis market, allowing the state to move forward with its adult-use cannabis program and unlock vital revenue streams for local communities.

Key Legislation to Facilitate Adult-Use Cannabis Industry Launch

Delaware's adult-use cannabis program, which was initially poised to launch in March 2025, had been delayed after the FBI rejected the state's application for a service code to conduct fingerprint-based background checks on applicants and workers in the cannabis industry. This delay left the Delaware Office of the Marijuana Commissioner (OMC) unable to proceed with issuing licenses, leaving businesses and consumers in limbo.

House Bill 110 is the solution to this delay. By amending state code to clarify who would be subject to background checks, the bill brings Delaware's laws into alignment with federal standards for the background check process. With the passage of this bill, the state can now proceed with securing the necessary FBI service code, allowing the OMC to conduct the required checks on applicants for cannabis business licenses. This step will pave the way for Delaware to officially launch adult-use cannabis sales.

Governor's Statement on Legislation: Economic Growth and Public Safety

Governor Matt Meyer expressed his strong support for H.B. 110, emphasizing the positive economic impact that Delaware's legal cannabis industry will have on the state. In his signing statement, Meyer stated that the cannabis industry would not only create "good-paying jobs" but also generate crucial revenue for the state to fund essential services such as education, healthcare, and housing.

The governor also noted the importance of ensuring that the background check process is carried out with integrity and transparency. By aligning Delaware's practices with federal standards, H.B. 110 helps safeguard public trust while ensuring that the adult-use cannabis industry is regulated fairly and equitably. Meyer's commitment to getting the state's cannabis market up and running is clear, and he has promised to continue pushing for quick action to launch the industry.

Delaware's Journey to Adult-Use Cannabis Legalization

Delaware has faced several hurdles in its path to adult-use cannabis legalization. Although former Governor John Carney allowed complementary cannabis legalization bills to go into effect in April 2023, the rollout has been slow. The state's Office of the Marijuana Commissioner held a lottery in late 2024 to award conditional licenses to cannabis businesses, including cultivators, manufacturers, and retailers. However, without the FBI-approved background checks, those licenses could not be fully issued, causing delays in the state's planned March 2025 sales launch.

In early January 2025, Delaware's former marijuana commissioner, Rob Coupe, resigned, further complicating the timeline. Despite these challenges, Governor Meyer remained committed to moving the state's cannabis industry forward, and H.B. 110 is a significant step toward achieving that goal.

Federal Bureaucracy and State Innovation: Governor Meyer's Criticism

In his State of the State address on April 10, 2025, Governor Meyer voiced frustration with the federal bureaucracy that has delayed Delaware's adult-use cannabis program. The FBI's rejection of the state's background check application was seen by many as an example of federal overreach stifling state-led innovation.

Meyer has been outspoken in his criticism of federal agencies that he believes are obstructing Delaware's efforts to establish a legal cannabis market. "The FBI's insistence that Delaware's original recreational marijuana law is insufficient is just another egregious example of federal bureaucracy stifling state-led innovation," he stated. Despite these setbacks, Meyer remains resolute in his commitment to getting the adult-use industry up and running as soon as possible.

Key Details of H.B. 110: Background Checks and Licensing Requirements

House Bill 110 amends Delaware's cannabis laws by updating background check requirements to ensure that they align with federal standards. This legislation ensures that the state can obtain the necessary service code to conduct fingerprint-based background checks on individuals involved in the cannabis industry.

The background checks will be required for a wide range of individuals, including:

Applicants for cannabis establishment licenses: Those applying for licenses to operate cannabis establishments will be subject to background checks to ensure that they meet the state's standards for legal operation.

Employees, contractors, and volunteers: Any person who works at or for a cannabis establishment, whether compensated or not, must undergo a background check before beginning their work.

Directors, officers, and agents: Individuals who serve in leadership roles or represent cannabis businesses will also need to complete background checks.

Major shareholders: Anyone who owns 10% or more of a licensed cannabis establishment or applicant business will be required to undergo a background check.

This comprehensive approach ensures that individuals involved in Delaware's cannabis industry are properly vetted, safeguarding the integrity of the industry and protecting public trust.

What's Next for Delaware's Adult-Use Cannabis Industry?

With the passage of House Bill 110, Delaware is now closer than ever to launching its adult-use cannabis market. The next step is for the Delaware Office of the Marijuana Commissioner to obtain the necessary

service code from the FBI, enabling the state to conduct the required background checks. Once the checks are complete, Delaware will be able to issue licenses to cannabis businesses and officially launch the adult-use cannabis market.

Governor Meyer and the OMC have vowed to continue pressing for swift action to get the industry up and running. Meyer has stressed the importance of ensuring that Delaware's cannabis industry is launched with integrity and fairness, and he remains optimistic about the industry's potential to provide economic benefits for the state.

A New Era for Delaware's Cannabis Industry

Delaware's adult-use cannabis industry has faced numerous challenges on its road to legalization, but with the signing of House Bill 110, the state is poised to take a significant step forward. The legislation will ensure that the state's cannabis market is launched in a way that aligns with federal standards and protects public safety. As Delaware prepares to open its adult-use cannabis market, the economic and social benefits of this new industry are clear—creating jobs, generating revenue, and providing safe, legal access to cannabis for adults.

With the state now in position to move forward, all eyes will be on Delaware as it prepares to launch one of the newest adult-use cannabis markets in the country. The future looks bright for Delawareans, as the state is set to reap the rewards of this groundbreaking new industry.

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