

California's New Cannabis Bill: A Game-Changer for the Industry

California's cannabis industry is on the brink of significant change with the introduction of a new draft bill, AB-2223, sponsored by Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry. The bill proposes a comprehensive overhaul of regulations, bringing hemp products under the regulatory control of cannabis regulators and imposing restrictions on hemp-derived intoxicating cannabinoids. Additionally, the bill introduces new standards for hemp food and beverages, including rules for serving sizes and the number of servings allowed per package.

One of the most significant changes proposed by AB-2223 is the integration of hemp products into the cannabis market. Under the bill, cannabis manufacturers and other operators would be allowed to use hemp and its derivatives, with regulations to that end required by July 1, 2025. However, these products would still need to comply with industry rules, including track-and-trace measures.

The bill also aims to crack down on so-called "synthetic cannabinoids." Operators would not be allowed to use delta-9 THC that has been converted from a hemp-derived cannabinoid, and retailers would not be allowed to sell products containing "converted delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol."

In addition to these changes, AB-2223 introduces new standards for hemp food and beverages. The bill would regulate serving sizes and the number of servings allowed per package, as well as define hemp dietary supplements, including pills, tablets, and capsules.

It's important to note that the draft proposal is still in its early stages, and some sections, including the maximum amount of THC allowed under a proposed potency cap, have been left blank. The bill could undergo significant changes before becoming law, if it advances at all.

California voters passed adult-use cannabis legalization in 2016, and the state's adult-use industry launched in 2018. With \$5.9 billion in combined medical and recreational sales in 2023, California currently operates the largest legal cannabis industry in the world. AB-2223 has the potential to further shape and regulate this booming industry, bringing hemp products into the fold and setting new standards for cannabis and hemp integration in California.

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