

Ohio's Roadmap to Legalization: Lawmaker Reveals Plans for June Start of Recreational Cannabis Sales

Ohio may see the launch of recreational cannabis sales as early as June, as regulators pursue an expedited plan for implementation while legislative efforts to revise the voter-approved legalization law face setbacks.

Under the regulatory plan, the Division of Cannabis Control (DCC) aims to grant dual licenses to existing medical marijuana operators, allowing them to serve adult consumers ahead of schedule. Rep. Jamie Callender, a prominent advocate for cannabis reform in the legislature, disclosed that the Joint Committee On Agency Rule Review (JCARR), which he chairs, is poised to approve the proposed regulations at a meeting on May 13.

The potential for retailers to obtain recreational licenses by mid-June has been highlighted by Callender, indicating a timeline that could witness legal recreational sales in Ohio before the July 4th weekend. Leveraging the existing infrastructure of medical cannabis dispensaries, the application process for dual licenses is anticipated to proceed swiftly, with approvals expected within a week of regulatory implementation.

This expedited approach to launching recreational marijuana sales is viewed as a significant step forward, particularly in light of delays that have frustrated Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. While DeWine does not personally endorse legalization, he has voiced concerns over the prolonged wait for regulated access since voters approved legalization in December.

Despite ongoing efforts within the legislature to revise the legalization law, progress has been hindered by disagreements among lawmakers. Plans to introduce comprehensive legislative changes, including expediting sales, have encountered challenges, with House Speaker Jason Stephens acknowledging a lack of consensus within the GOP-controlled legislature.

As discussions on potential amendments unfold, Minority Leader Allison Russo remains cautious about the prospect of substantial revisions. With uncertainty looming over legislative action, Russo suggests that any alterations to the law may be limited in scope.

In the midst of political discord, the impending launch of recreational cannabis sales represents a significant milestone in honoring the will of Ohio voters. While challenges persist on the legislative front, the expedited regulatory plan offers a promising pathway to meet public demand and provide timely access to regulated cannabis products.

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

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