

Cultivating Collaboration: New Alliance of Cannabis Processors Emerges in New York

New York's cannabis processors join forces, forming an alliance dedicated to advocacy and education.

In a significant move for New York's cannabis industry, eight licensed processors have joined forces to launch the Empire Cannabis Manufacturers Alliance. This trade group aims to serve as both an advocacy organization and a reliable source of information for marijuana manufacturing in the state.

Led by Mack Hueber, president of Gen V Labs, the founding members of the Alliance share a background in New York's hemp sector. Their decision to form the group stemmed from a collective belief in the need for a larger platform to address policy issues affecting processors.

According to Hueber, licensed processors often bear the brunt of regulatory requirements set forth by the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM). These requirements include strict adherence to advertising and marketing standards, childproof packaging mandates, testing protocols, and THC potency limits per serving. Despite the significant impact of these regulations on processors, their voices are often outnumbered by licensed cultivators and retailers.

The Manufacturers Alliance, consisting of companies like Hudson Cannabis, New York Hemp Oil, Naturae, and others, has enlisted the expertise of lobbyist Kaelan Castetter to advise on legislative and regulatory matters. One of their primary objectives is to advocate for the repeal of New York's THC potency-based tax, which they believe imposes undue burdens on manufacturers.

Additionally, the Alliance seeks revisions to regulations governing packaging, labeling, and advertising, which they view as overly restrictive and burdensome. Hueber, whose company is affiliated with Beak and Skiff, emphasizes the need for regulations that strike a balance between consumer protection and industry innovation, citing alcohol regulations as a more reasonable model to emulate.

In the short term, the Alliance aims to expand its membership and advocate for legislative priorities that benefit processors. They also seek changes to rules that limit brands' ability to engage in customer education at dispensaries, believing that increased interaction between manufacturers and consumers is essential for product differentiation and consumer understanding.

Looking ahead, the Manufacturers Alliance envisions becoming a trusted resource for policymakers and regulators, offering well-informed policy proposals and fostering collaboration between industry stakeholders and government entities.

Ultimately, their goal is not only to advocate for the interests of processors but also to establish a constructive dialogue with regulators and lawmakers, positioning themselves as partners in shaping the future of New York's cannabis industry.