






City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Date: May 2, 2017
To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilwoman Suzie Price, Third District 
Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce, Second District 
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Seventh District 
Subject: Penalties for Illegal Medical Marijuana Dispensaries

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council requests the City Attorney report back within 30 days with a draft ordinance allowing the City to apply penalties on property owners and to shut off utility services to unlicensed and illegally operating marijuana businesses.

INTRODUCTION:

With the passage of Measure MM, medicinal marijuana operations have begun to be permitted in Long Beach. Prior to the passage of Measure MM, it was repeatedly noted that the City expects an influx of unlicensed and illegally operating marijuana businesses throughout the City. It is imperative, therefore, that the City establish impactful penalties that can be utilized to control these illegal operations.

The City of Long Beach supports businesses that legally operate within its borders which includes medicinal marijuana businesses that are operating under the established city approved laws and regulations. Such businesses are expected to comply with an established permitting, licensing, and approval process in order to operate a legal marijuana business in the City. Long Beach is committed to providing an environment where these legal establishments can operate successfully. This recommended action is not intended to impact legally operating and compliant businesses.

However, the city needs adequate and effective tools to discourage and quickly shut down illegally operating businesses which allows the city to protect legally operating businesses as well as business patrons and the impacted communities.

Several municipalities have already taken similar steps to address this issue with criminal penalty authorization, nuisance abatement, substantial civil fines, and utilities disconnection for unauthorized marijuana businesses.¹

Long Beach needs enforceable tools that reduce the likelihood of having illegal marijuana operations. Adoption of such an ordinance is necessary to limit the number of illegal businesses that would drain limited city resources.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to report back and prepare an ordinance as a result of the recommended action.

¹ http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2017/17-1100-S2_misc_12-23-16.pdf