



For Immediate Release: 1/6/2021

GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

**GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES PROPOSAL TO LEGALIZE AND CREATE AN  
EQUITABLE ADULT-USE CANNABIS PROGRAM AS PART OF THE 2021 STATE  
OF THE STATE**

***Proposal to Create the new Office of Cannabis Management to Regulate State  
Medical and Adult-use Cannabis and Cannabinoid Hemp Programs***

***Equitable Market Structure to Invest in Individuals and Communities  
Disproportionately Impacted by Prohibition***

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced a proposal to legalize and create a comprehensive system to oversee and regulate cannabis in New York as part of the 2021 State of the State. Under the Governor's proposal, a new Office of Cannabis Management would be created to oversee the new adult-use program, as well as the State's existing medical and cannabinoid hemp programs. Additionally, an equitable structure for the adult-use market will be created by offering licensing opportunities and assistance to entrepreneurs in communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs. Once fully implemented, legalization is expected to generate more than \$300 million in tax revenue.

"Despite the many challenges New York has faced amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it has also created a number of opportunities to correct longstanding wrongs and build New York back better than ever before," **Governor Cuomo said.** "Not only will legalizing and regulating the adult-use cannabis market provide the opportunity to generate much-needed revenue, but it also allows us to directly support the individuals and communities that have been most harmed by decades of cannabis prohibition."

The Governor's proposal builds on years of work to understand and decriminalize cannabis for adult use. In 2018, the Department of Health, under Governor Cuomo's direction, conducted a multi-agency study which concluded that the positive impacts of legalizing adult-use cannabis far outweighed the negatives. It also found that decades of cannabis prohibition have failed to achieve public health and safety goals and have led to unjust arrests and convictions particularly in communities of color.

In 2019, Governor Cuomo signed legislation to decriminalize the penalties for unlawful possession of marijuana. The legislation also put forth a process to expunge records for certain marijuana convictions. Later that year, the Governor spearheaded a multi-state summit to discuss paths towards legalization of adult-use cannabis that would

ensure public health and safety and coordinate programs regionally to minimize the cross-border movement of cannabis products.

Building on that important work, the proposal reflects national standards and emerging best practices to promote responsible use, limiting the sale of cannabis products to adults 21 and over and establishing stringent quality and safety controls including strict regulation of the packaging, labeling, advertising, and testing of all cannabis products. Cannabis regulation also offers the opportunity to invest in research and direct resources to communities that have been most impacted by cannabis prohibition.

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