



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Impact of Cannabis Businesses**

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas issued the following statement regarding [an ordinance](#) prohibiting all cannabis businesses and activities in the unincorporated areas of the County. The ordinance also imposes reasonable regulations on personal cannabis cultivation while businesses are further studied for potential regulation.

*Many of us here face a great task — that of implementing Prop. 64. The ban does not mean that we are reinstating the war on drugs or that we are opposing the vote of the people. We are trying to create rational, responsible, and accountable cannabis commerce. This is not a gold rush for businesses. It is the people of California calling for smart, responsible regulation of marijuana, and those who operate illegally are in direct opposition to this call for accountability, transparency, and responsibility.*

*This is particularly salient in the 2nd district, where both alcohol and marijuana businesses have operated irresponsibly for years, wreaking havoc on not only the quality of the neighborhoods, but the health and safety of our residents. We know this given our failed efforts to date to control the sale of cannabis in County unincorporated communities, which has been illegal since 2010. We also know this given our efforts to regulate alcohol sales with its well documented history of causing blight and increased crime in our disadvantaged communities.*

*The Board recognized the necessity of establishing enhanced standards of conduct for liquor stores with the recent adoption of the “Deemed Approved” Ordinance for pre-1992 liquor licenses. We can expect that the sale of cannabis will have comparable impact including increased crime, addiction and private sector disinvestment in neighborhood-serving commercial corridors.*

*And unlike alcohol, cannabis remains illegal under federal law, which adds to the difficulty of effectively regulating the business. There can be no doubt that businesses that operate outside the legal banking system and federal law and taxation regulations are particularly vulnerable to infiltration by organized crime and gangs.*

*The County needs to establish guidelines and regulations for the cannabis industry to minimize these anticipated negative impacts. We need rules focused on creating responsible and accountable cannabis commerce. Equally important, we cannot ignore the public safety and public health issues associated with cannabis. We can expect that the issues we confront as we move forward will be unique and more profound than has been the experience in other jurisdictions.*

*Likewise, we regulate personal cultivation, to the extent allowed by the law, because one’s right and choice to use marijuana does not negate their obligation to be a good neighbor. These are psychoactive substances with a pervasive odor that must be grown and kept in a responsible manner.*

*Los Angeles is not Denver or Seattle. The problems we face are far more dynamic and impactful, requiring a sustained investment of time and resources. We should look to the industry to provide the resources the County will need to address the impacts from the cultivation, distribution and sale of cannabis in those communities that allow it. The County must prepare itself, not just as it pertains to land use regulations, but in addressing the public health impacts on our youth and vulnerable populations, and with the increased resources that will be required to address the foreseeable demands places on public safety resources.*

*Legalization of cannabis in California will have a disproportional impact on low income communities and communities of color. We cannot let businesses profit off of these communities until we can effectively minimize these negative effects and regulate these businesses for the benefit of these neighborhoods.*