



State of New Jersey
CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION
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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

DIANNA HOUEYOU, *Chair*
KRISTA NASH, *Commissioner*
MARIA DEL CID-KOSSO, *Commissioner*
SAMUEL DELGADO, *Commissioner*
CHARLES BARKER, *Commissioner*
CHRIS RIGGS, *Acting Executive Director*

NEW JERSEY CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING

Date: Thursday, October 17, 2024

Commencing at 11:00 a.m.

1 COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

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3 DIANNA HOUEYOU, Chair

4 SAM DELGADO, Vice Chair

5 KRISTA NASH

6 MARIA DEL CID-KOSSO

7 CHARLES BARKER

8 DANIEL SAID, Board
Secretary

9

10 ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP PRESENT:

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12 CHRISTOPHER RIGGS, Acting Executive Director

13 WESLEY MCWHITE, Director, Office of Diversity, and
14 Inclusion

15 TONI-ANNE BLAKE, Director of Communications

16 DAVE TUASON, Chief Counsel

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1 REGISTERED SPEAKERS PRESENT:

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3 TAUHID CHAPPELL

4 NIKOLAUS OPALENIK

5 THOMAS NORCIA

6 VINCENT MANN

7 LEO BRIDGEWATER

8 TODD JOHNSON

9 MICHAEL ODENWALD

10 MARCUS LUCE

11 SAMUEL REICHBART

12 EDWARD LEFTY GRIMES

13 DAMON HANCHELL

14 PENNI WILD

15 ROZ MCCARTHY

16 SEPHIDA ARTIS-MILLS

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1 CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. Time is
2 11:08, and I'm calling this meeting to order. Welcome
3 to the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission's
4 regular meeting here on October 17th. Mr. Saeed, can
5 you please read the notice of the public meeting?

6 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman, this is a
7 regularly scheduled meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis
8 Regulatory Commission's 2024 annual meeting schedule.

9 Adequate notice of this meeting has been
10 provided in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer
11 Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of the meeting was
12 provided to the Asbury Park Press, Bergen Record,
13 Courier-Post, Star Ledger, and the Trenton Times on
14 December 12, 2023. The agenda and information
15 regarding the in-person meeting and the ability to live
16 stream was also posted on the CRC website.

17 The meeting time and location has also
18 been posted on the website of the New Jersey Cannabis
19 Regulatory Commission and with the Office of the
20 Secretary of the State.

21 CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Saeed. Can you
22 please take a roll call?

23 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

24 COMM. CHARLES BARKER: Present.

25 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-

1 Kosso?

2 COMM. MARIA DEL CID-KOSSO: Present.

3 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

4 COMM. KRISTA G. NASH: Present.

5 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

6 VICE CHAIR: Present.

7 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

8 CHAIR: Present.

9 THE SECRETARY: We now have a quorum.

10 The first order of business is for the
11 Commission to go into executive session to discuss
12 legal matters and litigation and investigation updates.
13 These are discussions that are not shared with the
14 public. We believe the executive session should take
15 about 45 minutes.

16 CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Saeed. Is there a
17 motion to go into executive session?

18 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairwoman, I move that
19 we adjourn to executive session.

20 CHAIR: Is there a second?

21 COMM. BARKER: Second.

22 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Barker.
23 Is there any discussion on this motion? Hearing no
24 discussion, all those in favor, say aye.

25 VICE CHAIR: Aye.

1 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Aye.

2 COMM. NASH: Aye.

3 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

4 CHAIR: All those opposed, say nay. Any
5 abstentions?

6 Motion passes. So as Mr. Saeed mentioned, we expect
7 the executive session to last about 45 minutes. We
8 will leave the live stream running during that time.
9 So we can expect to resume the public session at, we'll
10 say 12 o'clock, the top of the hour. Thanks,
11 everybody.

12 (Executive Session)

13 All right. So we are back. I won't even
14 bother with the gavel. Time is 12:34, and we will
15 resume the public portion of this meeting. Mr. Saeed,
16 can you please announce the next item?

17 THE SECRETARY: The next item on the
18 agenda is approving the minutes of the Commission's
19 open session held -- public session held on September
20 19.

21 The minutes have been shared with the
22 members of the Commission prior to this meeting.

23 CHAIR: Thank you. If there are no edits
24 to the meeting minutes of the open public session, I
25 will ask for a motion.

1 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Madam Chair, I move
2 to approve the minutes of September 19th.

3 CHAIR: Is there a second?

4 COMM. BARKER: Second.

5 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Barker.
6 Is there any discussion on this motion? Hearing none,
7 all those in favor, say aye.

8 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

9 VICE CHAIR: Aye.

10 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Aye.

11 COMM. NASH: Aye.

12 CHAIR: All those opposed, say nay. Any
13 abstentions? Motion passes.

14 THE SECRETARY: The next item on the
15 agenda is the Chair's report.

16 CHAIR: All right. So I first want to
17 start off with -- to start today's Chair's report by
18 actually opening the floor for Commissioner Barker to
19 say brief -- brief remarks.

20 COMM. BARKER: Very briefly. I just want
21 to thank -- I just want to thank you all. I want to
22 thank the people. You know, we've read the news. This
23 may very well be my last in-person meeting. And so
24 with that said, I really, really want to thank the
25 people. I want to thank the people watching, the

1 advocates. I want to thank the people that come in
2 week after week and let us know of your concerns.

3 You let us know what we're doing right.
4 You let us know what we're doing wrong. And it has
5 been a real joy, a real pleasure to serve you. I thank
6 the administration. I thank my fellow colleagues in
7 the team that I've been privileged to work with. It
8 has truly been an honor. So excited for this
9 opportunity and excited for future opportunities to
10 come.

11 And so to the advocates, to the
12 stakeholders that made this opportunity possible, thank
13 you, salute, and this isn't the last of us. So take
14 care, everybody. God bless.

15 (Applause)

16 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Barker.
17 And so, yeah, so the -- the process for -- the
18 nomination process for a new appointee has begun, but
19 we don't know how long it will take, but we are
20 grateful to the time that Commissioner Barker, you have
21 served on the Commission. And so, we will savor the
22 moments that remain.

23 So thank you for your service to the state
24 of New Jersey and to the cannabis industry. Are there
25 any questions or additional thoughts that other

1 commissioners wish to share?

2 VICE CHAIR: I'd like to share.

3 Commission Barker, I know you and I have been at the
4 opposite end of the policies a lot -- a lot of ways,
5 but I just want you to know that I know for a fact that
6 I've made a friend for life. So thank you.

7 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Commissioner Barker,
8 I just want to say, you know, good luck with everything
9 and thank you for your service to the -- to the state
10 and the people. You know, we -- we had similar policy
11 ideas and we worked in committees together. So it was
12 a pleasure working with you. And I just wish you the
13 best of luck.

14 COMM. NASH: Commissioner Barker and I
15 have worked together since we began, as I have with all
16 the Commissioners, and I consider him to be a good
17 friend.

18 I love someone that has the passion that
19 he does and speaks up for people that may not have a
20 voice, and that's really important in this industry
21 because it's still really -- it's changing and I -- and
22 I -- we'll credit Wes and his team for changing what
23 this industry looks like here in New Jersey, and it's
24 phenomenal.

25 But sometimes we have to be called out on

1 things that we could do better, and I think Charles did
2 a good job of doing that, and who better than someone
3 who is a person of color, a black man.

4 I can't argue with that. And I'm -- I'm
5 so glad that you were able to serve for the time that
6 you did. And I'm very sorry that you won't be here
7 anymore.

8 CHAIR: Yes, Chris. Director Riggs.

9 DIR. CHRISTOPHER RIGGS: Commissioner
10 Barker, on behalf of the CRC, thank you for your
11 service to the state of New Jersey. Personally, I'm
12 not sure that the Mets are better than the Phillies,
13 but that is what it is. Anyway, you've been a
14 tremendous advocate for -- for folks in New Jersey and
15 you've done some good work as a commissioner and you
16 should be proud of that.

17 So thank you for that and good luck in the
18 future.

19 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. And
20 yes, Commissioner Barker, I'll -- same, I'll echo the
21 sentiments of our vice chair. You know, we don't --
22 you and I have found ourselves on the opposite sides of
23 issues, our fair share of issues, but we've also found
24 ourselves on the same side of some very pointed matters
25 where we both felt very strongly that we were trying to

1 push the industry in the right direction.

2 So I thank you for your patience through
3 some of my long -- long spiels and talks about how the
4 state government works and how -- the ins and outs of -
5 - of the work that we do, and wish you all the best for
6 whatever comes next, whenever that time comes. But we
7 will -- as I said before, we don't know how long the
8 process for bringing on a new commissioner will take,
9 but we will continue to relish and savor moments that
10 we do have.

11 COMM. BARKER: Thank you.

12 (Applause)

13 CHAIR: All right. So turning to -- back
14 to cannabis, specifically, I want to address last
15 week's court ruling concerning intoxicating hemp
16 products. So on September 12th, 2024, Governor Murphy
17 signed into law a bill regulating the production and
18 sale of certain intoxicating hemp products.

19 The new law made it immediately -- I'm
20 sorry, the new law immediately made it unlawful to sell
21 or distribute a product intended for human consumption
22 that contains THC in any detectable amount to anyone
23 under the age of 21 years of age. Yes. Other
24 provisions of that law regulating -- relating to the
25 regulation of intoxicating hemp products were scheduled

1 to take effect on October 12, this past Saturday.

2 Due to a court order issued on October 10
3 in the Loki Brands, LLC case, the state is unable to
4 begin enforcement of these provisions at this time.
5 However, the provisions for prohibiting sale of those
6 products to individuals under 21 years of age remain in
7 effect.

8 The court's decision is still being
9 reviewed, and the Commission will provide updates to
10 the public on any further development -- any further
11 developments as they become available.

12 Switching gears to our registration
13 clinics, our patient registration clinics. So thanks
14 to our Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Patient
15 and Customer Service team, current and prospective
16 patients and caregivers can once again get on-site
17 assistance with enrollment in the Medical Cannabis
18 Program at any of our MCP registration clinics.

19 Services at these registration clinics
20 include first time registration, renewing your
21 registration, care -- creating patient or caregiver
22 logins for the MCP portal, and payment. Three -- three
23 clinics will be held in October. November 13th in
24 Newark. There'll be a clinic on November 15th in
25 Atlantic City, and November 19th in Trenton.

1 If you've submitted your registration or
2 renewal and are waiting for program approval, you can
3 visit any of these clinics to expedite the process and
4 have access to a digital ID card. And if you attend
5 the clinic at the Trenton location, you have the option
6 to obtain your physical card as well.

7 Details on the clinic locations and what
8 to bring with you are on our website, nj.gov/cannabis.
9 From there, you go to the resources tab and click on
10 MCP registration clinics.

11 Please stay tuned to our website and
12 social media for future opportunities for in-person
13 services -- in-person services regarding the medical
14 cannabis program. Lastly -- yes. Lastly, I want to
15 invite two special guests to talk -- to come forward
16 and talk about the -- their exciting news, bringing a
17 state organized technical assistance program to life.

18 So three years ago, the NJ-CRC joined
19 forces with the New Jersey Business Action Center to
20 form an interagency work group to come up with
21 effective solutions for offering comprehensive business
22 development support to individuals who wish to
23 establish a cannabis business, but maybe don't have a
24 lot of experience in entrepreneurship or in working in
25 the formal economy.

1 Yesterday, members of that interagency
2 work group got together to unveil the Business Action
3 Centers Training -- Cannabis Training Academy. So I
4 want to invite Penni Wild, director -- sorry, deputy
5 executive director of the Business Action Center and
6 Tauhid Chappell, executive director of the Cannabis
7 Training Academy to come forward and talk about the
8 amazing resource that they've put together for a
9 current and our aspiring cannabis entrepreneurs.

10 (Applause)

11 MS. PENNI WILD: Got to be green. All
12 right. Here we go. Good morning. Thank you,
13 Chairwoman Houenou and all of the commissioners and the
14 CRC team, without whom this would not have been
15 possible. So thank you for all your support. And on
16 behalf of the lieutenant governor and Secretary of
17 State Tahesha and Melanie Willoughby, who's the
18 executive director of the New Jersey Business Action
19 Center, good morning.

20 My name is Penni Wild. I'm deputy
21 director, as you said, and I'm with Tauhid Chappell,
22 our inaugural executive director of the Cannabis
23 Training Academy. It's been a long road, and we are
24 excited to announce that New Jersey's first Cannabis
25 Technical Assistance Program, educational program is

1 now live, open for registration, and people are going
2 through it now, as we speak.

3 We're going to give a brief overview of
4 the academy and encourage everyone to sign up and start
5 learning about the industry and New Jersey's licensing
6 application process. So it's our honor and privilege
7 to be designated by you for this educational home for
8 applicants and licensees in the great Garden State.

9 We appreciate your trust and all of your
10 support that you've provided as we've designed this
11 training and stood it up. There's so many people from
12 the Governor's Office and the Secretary of State's
13 Office, to industry groups, business organizations, and
14 advocates that if we took the time to thank everyone,
15 we would use up all of our time here.

16 So if anyone missed yesterday's hearing
17 and the shout out that so many of you gave at the
18 launch, then I encourage you to visit the recording at
19 the Department of State's YouTube channel.

20 And our goal this morning, again, is to
21 give you the core curriculum of the academy, a quick
22 overview, and I will hand it over to Tauhid to kick
23 that off.

24 MR. TAUHID CHAPPELL: Thank you, Penni.
25 Hello, everybody. Oh, mic is working. The purpose of

1 the CTA's core curriculum is to educate the general
2 public about New Jersey's cannabis industry and
3 specifically about the state's cannabis application
4 process. We're offering more than 60 courses that help
5 inform people about the myriad of necessary documents,
6 forms, and necessary steps you'll need to take or
7 accomplish in order to be considered for a license.

8 Again, as mentioned, this is an online, no
9 cost program that you can pick up anywhere, anytime, on
10 your phone, on your laptop, on your tablet, and you can
11 go through our video and PowerPoint modules and learn
12 about the application process. And as people can see -
13 - oh, you can go back Wes, sorry. As you can see here
14 on -- for those that are watching on YouTube, we have
15 more than 10 levels and 60 courses sprinkled throughout
16 our technical assistance program.

17 We take students through a myriad of
18 different topics and themes from municipal laws and
19 site control, all the way through labor union
20 documentation, and of course, most importantly, SOPs.

21 MS. WILD: So anyone who is a New Jersey
22 resident age 21 plus can register at no cost for the
23 Cannabis Training Academy. The core curriculum of the
24 academy is made up of a combination of videos,
25 PowerPoints, quizzes, text scripts, and audio files

1 associated with each. And in a support for a call to
2 really support impact zones, the Governor's Office
3 helped elevate the need for more education that would
4 help prospective impact zone applicants and impact zone
5 communities.

6 So for people who've completed Levels 1
7 through 3, and want to go deeper into the licensing
8 process, they can opt in to do so. And in the portal,
9 there's a very short questionnaire that asks an
10 individual to attest to the fact that they are, in
11 fact, living in an impact zone, plan to locate their
12 business in an impact zone, or hire from an impact
13 zone.

14 And we include links to your site to help
15 understand people -- to understand, what is an impact
16 zone? Do I qualify? And what is it?

17 MR. CHAPPELL: So I'll show just a brief -
18 - brief glimpse of what the inside of the technical
19 assistance portal looks like. When a person registers,
20 they will be given a whole bunch of information, a
21 whole bunch of content that is at their disposal.
22 Here's the homepage here. You will be able to access
23 the courses directly by clicking on the "My Courses" at
24 the top of the navigation bar.

25 You can also click on the big graphic

1 there to get into the actual course materials. And
2 then we're also supplementing the technical assistance
3 with a bunch of other things, including webinars,
4 virtual and in-person events, surveys, and newsletters
5 as well. And this is -- right here is just a very
6 brief preview of inside of the "My Courses" page where
7 we tell people exactly how they need to get into the
8 content.

9 It's super simple. You're able to click
10 on a video, watch the video, go to the next course, and
11 continue through the levels. And right here we soft
12 launched the academy yesterday. So we have five levels
13 that are ready for public consumption. All these
14 levels are very pertinent to the application process
15 and help people understand to a T what they need to
16 know before they go into the actual process of applying
17 for a cannabis license.

18 Again, Levels 1 through 3 are for
19 everybody and anybody who's a New Jersey resident, ages
20 21 years and older, and then if you are able to qualify
21 yourself as a qualified student, you get access to
22 Levels 4 through 10. So right now we have our first
23 five levels, and that's about eight hours of content.

24 If you sat there and watched it, you'll
25 have the whole day there. So there's plenty of it

1 there for you.

2 MS. WILD: We're hoping that people may be
3 able to have the application in front of them and kind
4 of go side by side. So when you go through the
5 business plan, that is just the heart and soul of your
6 business when you're setting your vision and your
7 mission and how you want to give back to the community
8 where you want to locate, like, all of that is going to
9 take time.

10 And then we'll also have live Q&As. So
11 when people get stuck along the way, they'll be able to
12 talk to a human. So you won't just be lost in online
13 world. And we're also going to have updates that are
14 done in webinars. So as things come out, as the rules
15 change, it takes time to actually build a course, so
16 we'll be able to have webinars with some of you that
17 may be able to help explain a process or procedure
18 along the way.

19 So we have the live Q&As, and then we will
20 also have the modules in Spanish. And it does take
21 about a month after everything has been produced and
22 uploaded for all of that translation to happen to all
23 the materials. That will be available too.

24 MR. CHAPPELL: And this is just a quick
25 breakdown again of the first five levels. We have 27

1 courses, more than 40 videos, more than eight hours of
2 content. Every single level has supplementary
3 materials that includes additional information
4 pertinent to each course, as well as text scripts and
5 audio files. For those that need to read or have
6 trouble seeing, they can also listen to all the videos
7 as well.

8 We have knowledge checks and quizzes to
9 test your comprehension, and then with all of the text
10 scripts that are associated with each video, that's
11 more than 200 pages of reading material. So people
12 will be informed and should feel prepared by going
13 through this technical assistance program.

14 And then finally, we wanted to be very --
15 very intentional about the instructors that we've
16 worked with to help us produce this material. We --
17 when we were doing a call out for instructors to help
18 us produce this -- the course materials, we received
19 more than 250 applications and we whittled it down to
20 25 instructors to help us on board this initial core
21 curriculum.

22 And right here, we know that data is
23 important, we know that diversity is important, and we
24 know that local is important too. So here's just a
25 quick slide to show the breakdown of the final first

1 cohort of instructors. We really look forward to not
2 only in -- establishing and continuing the core
3 curriculum, but offering more educational material and
4 bringing on future instructors to help us teach as the
5 laws and the regulations evolve.

6 So we're committed to diversity and equity
7 here, just like the CRC and the Governor's Office, and
8 this is our work and our progress.

9 MS. WILD: So we're really excited to be
10 able to offer this. It is made in New Jersey by New
11 Jersey for New Jersey, and being from New Jersey, we're
12 kind of excited about that. So that's a brief glimpse
13 of what's available to the Cannabis Training Academy.
14 We encourage people to go and register. For those of
15 you watching or in the room, there's a QR code that'll
16 take you right there.

17 Otherwise, you can go to njcta.nj.gov. Go
18 in, start learning. And we are open for business. So
19 thank you so much, commissioners, leadership, and
20 staff. It's been because of you that we've been able
21 to bring this to life. Thank you.

22 MR. CHAPPELL: Thank you.

23 (Applause)

24 CHAIR: Thank you both so much for -- for
25 your work, your dedication, your blood, sweat, and

1 tears that went into this. You know, I know it was a
2 multi-year process. And so I'm really thrilled that
3 you all were able to unveil this yesterday and offer
4 this remarkable resource and tool for people that --
5 that I know is going to be a game changer for the
6 cannabis industry in New Jersey.

7 So congratulations again to you all and
8 the work that you've done, and I'm happy to have been -
9 - played a very small part in getting -- and getting
10 this conversation going by watching you all see it
11 through, and it brings me joy that we're -- that we're
12 finally here, able to -- to have students go through
13 the portal now.

14 So congrats.

15 MS. WILD: Thank you.

16 CHAIR: And I'll turn it over to my vice
17 chair, Delgado, who also served on the business
18 development work group with me. Yeah.

19 VICE CHAIR: I'm excited, and I invite you
20 and welcome you to come back and give us updates maybe
21 once or twice during the year.

22 MS. WILD: You bet.

23 VICE CHAIR: All right. Thank you.

24 MS. WILD: Absolutely. Look forward to
25 that.

1 CHAIR: Thank you so much. You have a
2 question -- question from the Board.

3 COMM. BARKER: I might've missed it, and
4 so I think it's worth repeating. How -- how much does
5 this cost?

6 MS. WILD: Oh, it would be no cost.

7 COMM. BARKER: Oh, thank you.

8 MR. CHAPPELL: No cost.

9 COMM. BARKER: Okay.

10 MR. CHAPPELL: No cost.

11 CHAIR: Yes, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso.

12 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Thank you, Madam
13 Chair. Well, I want to thank you and your team for
14 getting this off the ground. I know it's not an easy
15 task. But yesterday was a big day for -- for you guys
16 and your team.

17 So congratulations. And also when Wesley
18 gave me like the -- the -- the bare -- the bare bones
19 of what this was going to look like, he mentioned --
20 no, I asked you, I think, is it going to be translated
21 in Spanish? And then he said, they're already on it.
22 So I'm not surprised that you guys are doing that
23 already. Just keep in mind that maybe the translation
24 is going to be instead of 30 minutes, it might turn
25 into an hour because (inaudible).

1 MS. WILD: Oh yeah.

2 MR. CHAPPELL: Oh yeah.

3 MS. WILD: We had to slow down the way
4 that people spoke and they said the slides are going to
5 be 40 percent more.

6 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Right.

7 MS. WILD: So yeah. Thank you.

8 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: I totally get that.

9 But again, thank you for your partnership along with
10 EDA. I think there was somebody here in the audience
11 from EDA. Thank you for being great partners.

12 COMM. BARKER: Thank you very much.

13 MS. WILD: Thank you.

14 MR. CHAPPELL: Thank you.

15 COMM. NASH: I just want to jump in for a
16 quick question.

17 CHAIR: Commissioner Nash.

18 COMM. NASH: I also want to congratulate
19 you. I know it was a monumental task. I remember
20 early on there was a lot of public comment about
21 needing technical assistance, and we listen here at the
22 Commission and hence we have this wonderful program.
23 And again, thank you for educating the soon to be
24 entrepreneurs.

25 MR. CHAPPELL: Thank you, Commissioner.

1 MS. WILD: And thank you for really being
2 committed to making this happen. I said to Wesley
3 yesterday that I know that -- you know, even before he
4 officially started, he was like, this is going to
5 happen. So thank you for keeping that in the front of
6 your heart and your mind and really making sure that
7 we're able to support people.

8 CHAIR: Thank you, and congratulations to
9 you all again.

10 MR. CHAPPELL: Thank you.

11 THE SECRETARY: The next item on the
12 agenda is the Executive Director's report.

13 CHAIR: Director Riggs, the floor is
14 yours.

15 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and
16 it's certainly a tough act to follow. Penni and
17 Tauhid, congratulations. Really important to get that
18 education out to the New Jerseyans that need it.

19 This is a quarterly data meeting, so you
20 guys are going to be hit with a lot of data here on
21 sales and pricing, and then I'm going to kick it over
22 to our Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Director
23 McWhite, to talk about some of the demographic data.
24 so next -- next slide, please.

25 Updates on dispensary openings. As you

1 can see, we've got new recreational and adult-use
2 dispensaries opening. Over 170 medical and
3 recreational dispensaries are open in all of New
4 Jersey's counties.

5 So we have more opening. Leave that slide
6 up for just a second longer. Licensing update for
7 total licenses approved. This is as of October 11th of
8 2024. We've received a little over 2,700 applications
9 that have been submitted. 2,100 of those applications
10 have been approved. There's 112 applications that are
11 under review in our Office of Licensing. 336
12 applications are pending resubmission following a cure
13 because they had some issue or concern with their
14 application.

15 128 applications are under review in the
16 Office of Compliance and Investigations. As of October
17 11th of 2024, we've awarded 1,508 conditionals, 387
18 conditional to annual conversions, 213 annual licenses,
19 79 alternative treatment centers have expanded. So
20 there's a total of 309 operating licenses in AU and
21 permits in medical that have been issued.

22 Today up for consideration, we have 16
23 conditional applications, eight conditional annual
24 conversion applications, eight annual applications, two
25 expanded alternative treatment centers, and seven

1 annual renewal applications.

2 And now I think -- oh, and we don't want
3 to forget about our patients. We always give an update
4 on our patient enrolls and things like that. So as of
5 October 15th of 2024, we have a little over 70,000
6 patients enrolled in the program, a little less than
7 5,000 caregivers, and a little over 1,500 doctors
8 enrolled in the medical program. Now on to the data
9 update for sales and pricing.

10 So this is the last four quarters of
11 sales. In medical and recreational, you see the chart
12 on the side and the chart on the right side. Sale --
13 notably, sales in Quarter 2 of 2024 were up 44 percent,
14 year over year from Quarter 2 of 2023. So we had a big
15 increase. Sales in Quarter 2 of 2024 are up 15 percent
16 from Quarter 1 of 2024.

17 So the market is still growing, sales are
18 still going up. This is the adult-use sales by month.
19 We have the previous 12 months up -- up on the screen.
20 August 2024 was the highest month of sales on record.
21 So we had the highest month of sales this August, just
22 last -- in August in the end of the summer. August
23 2024 was up 47 percent over August 2023.

24 This slide shows the adult-use bud and
25 flower pricing per gram. Prices in August of 2024 were

1 down 14 percent from a year over year in August 2023.
2 Prices in August 2024 were down 2.4 percent from prices
3 in July. So the prices do continue to drop.

4 Medical bud and flower pricing per gram.
5 Notably here, you're going to see that in August of
6 2024 medical prices drop below 10 for the first time.
7 So medical prices per gram are now below \$10, which is
8 a 2.6 percent reduction from July of 2024. And this is
9 just the chart that shows, you know, the types of
10 products and the sales mixed by product category.

11 As you'll see, bud and flower still
12 dominate the market at 40 percent sales, and then vape
13 carts come in second. Edibles are staying pretty
14 stagnant even though we've, you know, opened up -- sort
15 of we've opened up our regulations to allow for more
16 products. They're still -- it's still staying about
17 the same.

18 So we'd like to see that percentage kind
19 of go up when more products are available. And that is
20 all I have on the data and -- for sales and pricing.
21 So I'm going to kick it over to you, Director McWhite,
22 to talk about some of the demographic data.

23 DIR. WESLEY MCWHITE III: Thank you. My
24 favorite time of the year, quarterly reports, quarterly
25 data reports. But for maybe just a few minutes, we did

1 want to share some information and some -- some
2 knowledge with you all.

3 So New Jersey's cannabis industry stands
4 as a model of what inclusion and opportunity can look
5 like. Our policies reflect the values of fairness,
6 ensuring that small businesses and historically
7 underserved and underrepresented communities have a
8 real shot at success here in New Jersey.

9 These numbers we share are accurate, are
10 real people, dreams, and goals, and show plenty of
11 success in areas of opportunity. So I really wanted to
12 take the time to acknowledge that building such an
13 inclusive market comes with challenges, and we want
14 these challenges to inspire collaboration, and
15 challenges that are often rooted in systemic barriers,
16 access to capital, navigating difficult municipal
17 approval processes, and the litany of barriers external
18 to the CRC.

19 But that's the mission of the CRC and the
20 Office of Diversity and Inclusion to recommend and
21 implement unified policies, practices, and procedures
22 that promote the participation from under and
23 underrepresented communities in the cannabis industry.

24 We could point to the largest state-funded
25 grant program and the nation powered by New Jersey

1 Economic Development Authority, or first of its kind
2 free technical assistance program you just heard about,
3 just as two examples of the state's investments that we
4 have made so far to see a more diverse and inclusive
5 market. So why all of this?

6 We personally want to continue to invite
7 stakeholders, those that we've engaged with and those
8 that we have not just yet, to support local and small
9 businesses, often in ways the CRC cannot, and offer
10 thoughtful, data driven solutions, and together we can
11 continue to shape an industry that reflects the
12 diversity of New Jersey and provides lasting benefits
13 for all communities.

14 And as always, the full -- full quarterly
15 report will be uploaded to our website in the coming
16 weeks. And for those that I hope this invite reaches,
17 let's do this -- continue to do this together. Amen?
18 Amen.

19 All right. So let's get started. Awardee
20 application data. Thank you. Director of
21 communications, Toni-Anne Blake, thank you so much.
22 All right. So between Quarter 2, our awardees awards
23 by class and application types between Quarter 2 and
24 Quarter 3, we've seen an increase in the number of
25 approved annuals, conversions to annuals, and approved

1 conditionals across the board for every class type.

2 The most significant increase has been
3 cultivators, with an increase of 34 awarded annual
4 awardees from quarter -- from -- thank you, from 38 --
5 from 38 in Quarter 2 to 72 here in our Quarter 3 data.
6 So we saw a jump of -- of 34 additional awarded
7 cultivators between last quarter and this quarter.

8 Manufacturers, with an additional 45
9 between the last quarter and this quarter, from 30 in
10 Quarter 2 and 75, as you can see here in Quarter 3.
11 And wholesalers and distributors have seen a slight
12 increase. And the most significant increase, I'm sure
13 if you all have guessed, is retailers. Annual awardees
14 with an additional 101 awardees, going from 107 Quarter
15 2 to 208 in Quarter -- Quarter 3. And really
16 encouraged to seeing more testing approvals going out
17 the door as well.

18 Awards by class and application types is
19 just a percentage breakdown. So 54 percent of our
20 annual awards have gone to retailers, 19 percent have
21 gone to manufacturers, just a little under 19 percent
22 to cultivators. And we're going to continue to keep an
23 eye on this so we can see how the industry is shaping
24 up.

25 As always, our diversely owned business

1 and social equity business awardees. An additional
2 nine social equity business awardees have been made
3 between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. An additional 44
4 diversely owned businesses have been awarded, an
5 increase from 376 from Quarter 2 and 420. We didn't do
6 that on purpose. From Quarter 2 to Quarter 3.

7 Percentages remain steady at 70 percent
8 for diversity owned businesses and 16 percent for
9 social equity businesses quarter to quarter. A very
10 key slide that we want to continue to show. So this
11 slide continues to show with this data chart to ensure
12 that licenses in key populations are being approved at
13 or similar rates that applications are applying.

14 So when they come in, they go out. And in
15 this chart, we see that this data is consistent with
16 the same rates among approvals or at a narrow margin.
17 So as we said earlier, when they go in, they do -- they
18 do go out.

19 Approved -- awards by social equity
20 status. Approved social equity straight to annuals
21 increased by three from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3.
22 Approved social equity conversions and annuals and
23 approved conditionals have increased between Quarter 2
24 and Quarter 3, increasing the total number of social
25 equity awardees so far from 468 to 495.

1 And we're really -- really encouraged
2 about those that have been most impacted by a previous
3 cannabis laws, and those that live in those
4 neighborhoods, economically disadvantaged areas are
5 still taking advantage and still applying for cannabis
6 licensure in New Jersey. So I want to encourage --
7 continue to encourage them.

8 Majority ownership awardees with prior
9 marijuana convictions between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3.
10 We've seen an increase across the board among approved
11 annuals, approved conditionals, and an additional 29
12 awardees overall with prior convictions between Quarter
13 2 and Quarter 3.

14 Diversely owned businesses awardees by
15 application type between quarter 2 and quarter 3 that
16 we -- there have been an additional 88 diversely owned
17 businesses awarded, seeing an increase across the board
18 under annuals, conversions, and approved conditionals.

19 Among our impact zone businesses, we have
20 seen an increase from 849 to 908 between Quarter 2 and
21 Quarter 3, and an increase of an additional 59 impact
22 awardees across approved annuals, conversions to
23 annuals, and approved conditionals. Our annual license
24 awardees distribution by county, Vice Chair Delgado's
25 favorite slides, top three, Burlington, Atlantic, and

1 Union County, same as last quarter, and conversions,
2 Atlantic, Essex, and Hudson are seeing our top three
3 for those conversions as well.

4 Quarterly data benchmarks, my fav. So we
5 continue and consistently surpass our statutory
6 benchmarks by over 30 percent for minority owned, and
7 now 29 percent women and disabled veteran owned, 65
8 additional minority owned awardees and an additional 32
9 women or disabled veteran awardees from last quarter to
10 this quarter -- or Quarter 2 to Quarter 3.

11 This is a quick breakdown of the
12 certification types against license types. Even when
13 you factor in, you know, things like expanded ATCs,
14 we're still maintaining a diversity, which you'll see
15 in a couple more slides. But we want to continue to
16 monitor disabled veteran owned businesses and pulling
17 them out, even though the statute combines them.

18 We want to continue to see exactly how
19 many disabled veteran owned businesses are being
20 awarded against -- well, not against, but separate from
21 women, that is a request that they made years ago now,
22 that we continue to honor. But as you see, there is
23 still overlap in the market minority owned and disabled
24 veteran owned conversions.

25 There are minority owned, women owned, and

1 disabled veteran owned businesses, are continuing to
2 make it through the process as well. And we're really
3 -- really excited to see this level of diversity, and
4 we're going to continue to grow from here. According
5 to MJ Business Daily's annual DEI report, the national
6 average of majority minority owned cannabis businesses
7 has seen a 4 percent decrease, and a majority owned
8 cannabis -- women owned cannabis business nationally
9 has seen a 6 percent in a decrease.

10 So while New Jersey has consistently seen
11 an increase in diversity with 42 percent of our annual
12 license awardees to minority owned businesses, 19
13 percent is the national average. So we're surpassing
14 the national average where we stand today. Among
15 women, a 16 percent national average in ownership, but
16 New Jersey is seeing 44 percent of our annual awardees
17 awarded so far awarded to majority women owned
18 businesses.

19 And while the state of diversity
20 nationally is experiencing a decreased diversity in
21 majority business ownership, awardees here continues to
22 soar above those national averages, and we're really
23 proud of that. Even with, as we said, expanded ATCs,
24 we still surpass our statutory benchmarks at 25 percent
25 over -- surpassing the benchmark with expanded ATCs

1 over 25 percent and 32 percent respectively.

2 So as the numbers of awardees and
3 potential dual identifications increase, this is a more
4 accurate way of communicating the data going forward,
5 as we've done all this year so far and some of last
6 year.

7 Additional eight Asian annual license
8 awardees have been awarded, an additional 17 black or
9 African American awardees have been awarded, an
10 additional 11 Hispanic or Latino annual awardees have
11 been awarded.

12 Measures of success, 10 percent of black
13 business ownership among all businesses in New Jersey.
14 Is -- it's 10 percent. So 10 percent of all businesses
15 in New Jersey are black owned, but here we have awarded
16 17 percent of our annual licenses to majority black
17 owned businesses. 10.9, about 11 percent, of New
18 Jersey's businesses are Asian owned.

19 Here we have awarded 13 percent of our
20 licenses to majority Asian owned businesses, and 16
21 through -- 16.3, a little over 16 percent of New Jersey
22 businesses are Hispanic or Latino owned. 12 percent of
23 our annual licenses have been awarded to majority
24 Hispanic or Latino businesses. But even with that 12
25 percent, we're surpassing population numbers as well,

1 or trying to meet them as much.

2 So when you're measuring equity, you're
3 measuring diversity in the space. It's really hard to
4 get consistency across the board about what -- some of
5 these measures of success, and so we want to continue
6 to monitor, you know, really how many businesses of
7 certain groups are in New Jersey, and how many awardees
8 that we've given out.

9 And as you can see, we're even surpassing
10 some of our all-around business numbers. And hopefully
11 we're seeing an increase in diversity. We are seeing
12 an increase in diversity among just businesses in
13 general in New Jersey, and we're really proud of that.

14 So this is a breakdown of operational
15 businesses licensed under the CREAM Act. We've seen an
16 increase across the board among operations among
17 cultivators, manufacturers, retailers, and testing
18 laboratories, increase across the board for operational
19 businesses, among impact zone businesses, those with
20 previous marijuana convictions, micro businesses,
21 social equity, and diversely owned businesses.

22 New this quarter, 16 additional impact
23 zone businesses, 13 additional women owned businesses,
24 five additional majority owners with previous marijuana
25 convictions, and 30 diversely owned businesses have

1 opened up their doors since quarter -- between Quarter
2 2 and Quarter 3. So congratulations to them.

3 And lastly -- well, not lastly one more.
4 Our doors, operational business licensed under the
5 CREAM Act, we want to continue and monitor our
6 certifications. So as you can see, 27 percent of our
7 certification so far are women business enterprises, 20
8 percent of minority business enterprises, and the rest
9 of the breakdown there as well.

10 This is the last slide. So operational
11 businesses licensed under the CREAM Act, 19 of them are
12 black owned, 21 of them are Asian owned, these are all
13 majority, and 24 are Hispanic or Latino majority owned.
14 And so we continue to see folks of all different types
15 of backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses and
16 neighborhoods, whether impact zones or EDAs, license
17 types, as well.

18 Businesses are getting open, and we're
19 going to continue to work hard as we can to support
20 businesses that are still struggling to -- to open
21 their doors and get across the finish line. So that is
22 it for me. And then I turn it back over to the Chair.

23 CHAIR: That's it? Director McWhite,
24 thank you so much for -- for that thorough rundown.
25 Feel like we're drinking from a fire hose with data

1 here, which is a good thing, which is a good thing.

2 So thank you to you and also to our
3 director of the Office of Business and Data Analytics.
4 Shout out to that team for all of the number crunching
5 that they do to make this report out possible and to
6 make it a reality for us to show that we are beating
7 the statewide average when it comes to some of these
8 majority -- I'm sorry, minority owned businesses, even
9 among those businesses that are operational, it looks
10 like.

11 So total awarded businesses were beating
12 those -- we're beating those statewide averages for two
13 out of the three -- two out of the three particular
14 categories that you had noted, Director McWhite, Asian,
15 black, or African American, and then Hispanic or
16 Latino, and then even among our operational businesses.
17 I love to see that. Love to see that.

18 So thank you to your team, the ODI team
19 for all their work. And Director Riggs, thank you for
20 all the effort that staff have put in to make these
21 things a reality, right? Are there any questions for
22 Director Riggs? No?

23 VICE CHAIR: I just want to ask.

24 CHAIR: Oh, Vice Chair Delgado.

25 VICE CHAIR: And all this could be seen on

1 our website, right? Thank you. Thank you. On a very
2 robust website.

3 DIR. RIGGS: And on a very quick
4 turnaround.

5 CHAIR: Wonderful. Thank you so much.
6 All right. If there's nothing further on the Executive
7 Director's report -- Commissioner Barker?

8 COMM. BARKER: A brief statement.

9 CHAIR: Mm-hm.

10 COMM. BARKER: I'm adding up the
11 percentages, and I don't think this is an indictment on
12 -- on our team or -- or the industry. I just think we
13 can do better. I'm looking at the numbers. You add up
14 operational business licenses, majority owners of
15 American Indian native, 1 percent, majority ownership
16 Asian, 13 percent, majority ownership Black or African
17 American, 12 percent. You can add all four of those
18 minority categories black African American, Hispanic.

19 Let's add that in there. 15 percent.
20 That's 5, 4 -- 1, 2, 3, 4 minority categories, black
21 African American, American Indian, Native Americans,
22 Hispanics. Those are the primary groups that we said
23 we want to see benefit from this. You can add up every
24 percentage, and it's still less than the majority white
25 representation in this industry.

1 And so I do believe we can do better. 40
2 -- across four different categories of minority
3 representation, we're at 41 percent ownership. We said
4 three years ago we were going to try to prioritize and
5 ensure that this industry is led by those who have been
6 most harmed. And so I do hope, and I -- and I do --
7 and I will say to your credit, Director McWhite, the
8 numbers have been increasing, and to the team, the
9 numbers have been increasing, but I do believe we can
10 do better.

11 Again, I'm okay with comparing this to
12 businesses, I'm okay with comparing this to population,
13 but we legalized because people were in prison. We
14 didn't legalize because people were needing new
15 business opportunities or because of the population.
16 We legalized because there were certain groups that
17 were imprisoned that sadly are -- there are people
18 still in prison.

19 And so I'm hoping that we continue to
20 operationalize more black and -- black and brown
21 businesses, more native American -- native businesses,
22 because I think that's the real purpose of what we're
23 trying to do. Thank you.

24 CHAIR: Thank you. With that, we'll move
25 on to the next agenda item.

1 THE SECRETARY: The next item on the
2 agenda are the committee reports.

3 CHAIR: All right. So we'll first hear
4 from the Permitting and Licensing Committee. So I will
5 turn it over to that committee chair, Commissioner Del
6 Cid-Kosso.

7 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Thank you, Madam
8 Chair. Just wanted to provide the Board and the public
9 with a quick update on some of the extension requests
10 that we received for the month of September, with Issue
11 23, Conditional Extensions.

12 Next slide. So on May 16th, we held a
13 statewide hearing to learn from licensees and
14 applicants about ways to improve our current licensing
15 and permitting processes, and we had a pretty good
16 turnout on that day. The following month, this
17 Committee provided an update to the board and the
18 public.

19 And we're not done here. We want to host
20 at least three focus groups with licensees and
21 applicants next month. We already have some dates
22 available, but please stay tuned for more details. The
23 goal here is to wrap up these conversations before the
24 end of the year so the Committee can review and
25 evaluate any potential changes needed to streamline and

1 improve our application and licensing processes.

2 Next slide. Just want to provide an
3 update in terms of the medical rewrite proposal. So in
4 -- in advance of that, this committee has been tasked
5 to spearhead policy discussions regarding the
6 implementation of institutional caregivers, and last
7 month, the committee met with stakeholders of the
8 Department of Health, which is a licensing agency --
9 agency for many of these facilities, that includes
10 hospitals, nursing homes, long term care facilities.

11 And with those -- throughout those
12 discussions, we identify some legal hurdles that we
13 still need to resolve. Next steps for this committee
14 is to address those legal concerns, continue
15 stakeholder engagement, and schedule private roundtable
16 discussions.

17 So the committee to do that, there are
18 outstanding items that the committee still needs to
19 address. We are recommending that decisions related to
20 language and policy regarding caregivers be postponed
21 until those outstanding items are resolved. As many of
22 you know, the Jake Honig Compassionate Use Medical
23 Cannabis Act was signed into law by Governor Murphy
24 five years ago.

25 And I'm thrilled that we are having these

1 long overdue discussions, but before we put pen to
2 paper, it is the committee's priority that we get this
3 right, and by doing so, we must engage caregivers and
4 facilities in these initial conversations. Thank you,
5 Madam Chair.

6 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Del Cid-
7 Kosso. Are there any questions from the Board
8 regarding the Permitting and Licensing Committee's
9 report?

10 Hearing none, we will then turn to the
11 Public Engagement and Education Committee. The floor
12 is yours, Commissioner Barker.

13 COMM. BARKER: I'm going to start us off,
14 and I'll turn it over to Commissioner Nash. I'll be
15 very brief with you. In the spirit of trying to get
16 more information, collaborate with our stakeholders, as
17 you may know, we're trying -- we hosted roundtables
18 primarily to discuss the medicinal cannabis market in
19 New Jersey.

20 Commissioner Nash and I, we held our
21 roundtable discussion on September 25th -- we held our
22 roundtable discussion on September 25th. The primary
23 purpose of our roundtable was to focus on the patient
24 experience, the business experience, and the health
25 care provider experience in the medicinal marketplace.

1 Participants in our roundtable were patients, were
2 business owners, they were advocates, and there was one
3 healthcare provider.

4 I do want to put a pin in that. A few
5 speakers touched on this at our last meeting, and I
6 think it's worth repeating. We definitely need
7 collaboration on this. You know, we've hosted these
8 roundtables. I think, Commissioner Nash, correct me if
9 I'm wrong, I think we had 6' or 7,000 surveys answered.
10 We reached out -- let me put a pin in that, step back.
11 I believe we reached out to the entire patient
12 community.

13 Out of that, we received 6' to 7,000
14 survey responses. And we're still going through that.
15 We reached out to those 6' or 7,000 survey respondents
16 to see who would be interested in joining the
17 conversation. We had 10 people on the call. And so we
18 definitely would love, in another conversation, if
19 we're fortunate to have it, to have some more
20 stakeholder representation, advocacy groups, some MSO
21 representation.

22 We also want more small business
23 representation across different categories, small --
24 social equity, diversely owned, impact zone. That will
25 help give us a more diverse -- that will help diversify

1 the information we're receiving. On the call, some
2 dynamic issues and questions were raised, right,
3 primarily the price of cannabis.

4 We hear time and time again, patients
5 cannot afford their medicine. And so that was a big
6 topic that came up. We discussed the discounts being
7 offered and the ranges of discounts being offered.
8 Some -- you know, very few, but some above 30 percent,
9 which is well received, others saying they barely get
10 10 percent. So that was something that we took into
11 consideration.

12 Another big pinpoint was the variety of
13 the medicine. A lot of patients -- the few patients
14 that were on the call and the healthcare provider, they
15 did touch on the fact that there aren't enough products
16 that speak to a patient needs. A lot of patients
17 sometimes need low THC high CBD or high CBN or high CBG
18 or other cannabinoids.

19 They're concerned that they're not seeing
20 that, and so they asked that that be added. Do we
21 limit or expand ATCs? That was a big topic of
22 conversation that came up. Some businesses that were
23 on the call that were expanded ATCs wanted satellite
24 operations. They wanted vertical. So these were
25 things that were helpful for us to process and to

1 continue to process.

2 Wholesale prices. One -- one particular
3 business owner shared how prices are too high for them.
4 Another business owner shared that prices were -- were
5 reasonable. So we would like to hear from more
6 business owners. I don't wanna just take those two to
7 inform our decision. Stakeholder groups, we would love
8 to hear from you that represent group of different
9 businesses.

10 Education and knowledge. That was another
11 great idea shared, even to the extent that one person -
12 - one patient represented that they would like better
13 assistance from their bud tenders. They didn't feel
14 like some of the -- some of their experiences, the bud
15 tender was knowledgeable enough on their particular
16 condition or their particular need.

17 That was a pinpoint. Other ideas,
18 consolidating the market, getting rid of the dual
19 supply chain. That came up. So we want to continue to
20 think through that. Eliminating patient only hours
21 came up. Expediting the approval process. And so
22 these are things that we're still processing. We're
23 still reviewing the surveys.

24 Again, that was a lot of data.
25 Commissioner Nash will touch on some of that in a

1 second. And so we hope to continue the conversation,
2 potentially host another roundtable. We've already
3 shared preliminary guidance with our legal counsel, but
4 we hope to circle back with them after a conversation
5 with more stakeholders with a more complete
6 recommendation memo.

7 And with that, I'll turn it over to
8 Commissioner Nash for some data comments.

9 COMM. NASH: Thank you, Commissioner
10 Barker. So we -- to start off, Commissioner -- Vice
11 Chair Delgado and I held a roundtable on September 5th
12 through another committee, and one of the questions was
13 whether the three-ounce allotment for medicinal
14 patients was sufficient.

15 And so what I've learned between the two
16 roundtables, the one that we just held in September --
17 I'm sorry, October -- September 25, and this September
18 5th, is that it depends who you ask. So the -- we had
19 almost 10 percent respondents from patients, which I
20 think is a really significant number of surveys.

21 And as Commissioner Barker stated, we're
22 still going through these very thoughtful comments from
23 people who took the time to complete the surveys.
24 Given that this is influencing our medicinal rules,
25 we're trying to be thoughtful and not just throwing out

1 numbers or recommendations without having more
2 substantive data and conversations.

3 So for instance, the question and the
4 surveys for the September 25th roundtable included
5 questions, is the three-ounce allotment for patients
6 just enough or more than I need, or not enough? And 70
7 percent of those 6,100 people said that it's just
8 enough or more than I need. However, during the
9 roundtable and the surveys for our other committee that
10 Vice Chair Delgado and I held on September 5th, the
11 predominant answer was it's not enough.

12 So we need to have -- flesh that out more
13 and understand like what -- what is the right amount,
14 right? So I think speaking to some more advocacy
15 groups and others to really help inform us is going to
16 be important here. I'm not going to go through all the
17 questions, but just wanted to add to what Commissioner
18 Barker said about why we're not making the
19 recommendation at this time.

20 Chairwoman?

21 CHAIR: Thank you very -- very much to
22 both Commissioner Barker and Commissioner Nash. Are
23 there any questions from the Board regarding the Public
24 Engagement and Education Committee's report?

25 All right. Hearing none, thank you again,

1 and we will move forward.

2 THE SECRETARY: The next item on the
3 agenda, we have the Award for Independent Study.

4 CHAIR: All right. So for this, I will
5 actually turn it over to Vice Chair Delgado to give a
6 summary of the recommendation for awarding the contract
7 for the independent study of the Commission.

8 VICE CHAIR: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.
9 Wes, we got it? We have more. Thank you. So statute
10 requires that the Commission to contract with a public
11 research university to conduct an independent study of
12 the Commission and its activities.

13 For those that like to quote the statutes
14 up on -- up on the screen there, the study must include
15 a review of the following; the New Jersey Cannabis
16 Regulatory Commission's organization, the New Jersey
17 Cannabis Regulatory Commission's regulations and
18 enforcement activities, the overall effectiveness of
19 the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission as a full
20 time entity, and whether the regulation and oversight
21 of the medical cannabis or personal use of cannabis
22 could be more effectively and efficiently managed
23 through, one, reorganization of the New Jersey Cannabis
24 Regulatory Commission, two, consolidation of the New
25 Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission within the

1 Department of Health or another executive branch
2 department, conversion to a part time commission, or,
3 three, the transfer of some or all of the New Jersey
4 Cannabis Regulatory Commission's operation elsewhere
5 within the executive branch.

6 So that's what the study entails. A
7 summary of our evaluation and -- and for the review --
8 summary of the review goes as follows. So on March
9 19th, 2024, the audit committee issued a Request for
10 Information, RFI, to solicit interest from all eligible
11 institutions to conduct a study of the New Jersey
12 Cannabis Regulatory Commission as required by law.

13 Under the statute, there are five entities
14 that are considered public research institutions in the
15 state of New Jersey. They are Rutgers State University
16 of New Jersey, Rowan University, the New Jersey
17 Institute of Technology, Montclair State University,
18 and Kean University in Union, New Jersey.

19 Eligible institutions are permitted to --
20 were permitted to submit written questions about the
21 RFI until 2 p.m. on April 8th. On April 9th, the audit
22 committee notified the eligible institution that the
23 deadline for submitting the request was being extended.
24 So we extended it to 2:30 p.m. on April 15th. The
25 committee received a total of 28 questions by April

1 15th -- by the April 15th deadline and subsequently
2 provided written responses to the submitted questions
3 to all eligible participants on May 10th 2024.

4 The deadline for -- to submit final
5 proposal was by 12 p.m. on June 7th, and the committee
6 received three proposals from the submission deadlines.
7 No submissions were received from the other two
8 remaining eligible institutions. We received the
9 submissions to the RFI for the following respondents;
10 New Jersey Institute of Tech -- excuse me, Technology,
11 NJIT, Rowan University, and Rutgers University.

12 Those were the three that we received
13 submissions. Up on the board, you see the scores of --
14 of the -- that we -- we -- how we scored it utilizing
15 four criteria. Criteria A was -- had a weight of 10,
16 and criteria was the qualification and experience.

17 Criteria B was experience with similar
18 project with a weight of 30. Criteria C was ability to
19 meet the needs of the study with a weight of 50. And
20 Criteria D was pricing with a weight of 10. You'll see
21 the total scores. New Jersey Institute of Technology
22 had a total score of 890, Rowan University 815, and
23 Rutgers 740.

24 So with that, the award recommendation
25 after completing a thorough review of submission of

1 proposals, the audit committee recommended that the
2 Commission contract with New Jersey Institute of
3 Technology to conduct the independent review of the
4 agency required by statute. That concludes my report.

5 CHAIR: Thank you very much, Vice Chair
6 Delgado, and thank you for your -- your leadership on
7 this particular matter and in this particular project.
8 Getting the ball rolling on this item was a priority of
9 yours. And so I want to acknowledge that and thank you
10 for keeping the pressure on us to move that forward.
11 And I'm happy that we are here today, finally ready to
12 recommend an award to get this study going.

13 So thank you, Vice Chair Delgado. Are
14 there any --

15 VICE CHAIR: (Interposing) Okay. Thank
16 you, and thank you for your leadership because you
17 certainly were there with me alongside. Thank you.

18 CHAIR: Mm-hm. Are there any questions
19 from the Board about the -- this recommendation from
20 the Audit Committee?

21 All right. Hearing no questions, is there
22 a motion on this matter?

23 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Madam Chair, I move
24 to approve the award independent study of commission
25 activities to NJIT, a public research university.

1 COMM. NASH: I'll second that.

2 CHAIR: Moved by vice -- I'm sorry, moved
3 by Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso and seconded by
4 Commissioner Nash. Is there any discussion on this
5 motion?

6 Hearing none, Mr. Saeed, can you please
7 call the vote?

8 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

9 COMM. BARKER: Abstain.

10 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
11 Kosso?

12 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

13 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

14 COMM. NASH: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

16 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

18 CHAIR: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

20 The next item on the agenda is the
21 consideration of applications for ownership changes.

22 CHAIR: Great. Director Riggs, I'll turn
23 it over to you to describe those applications for
24 ownership change.

25 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We

1 have four ownership changes before you today. We have
2 -- these applications have been received and reviewed
3 by the Office of Compliance and Investigation.

4 Acreage CCF New Jersey, LLC is
5 transferring their ownership. Altius NJ is a change in
6 ownership structure. Hamilton Farms, LLC is a change
7 in ownership structure, and Nova Farms Woodbury, LLC is
8 a change in ownership structure. Each of these
9 entities has satisfied the regulatory requirements for
10 an ownership change.

11 All the owners and individuals that were
12 required to be investigated were investigated and
13 vetted by our Office of Compliance and Investigations,
14 and therefore they have been deemed qualified to be in
15 the cannabis industry, and now we're recommending that
16 these ownership changes be approved.

17 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. Just a
18 point of clarification. I believe in the materials I'm
19 looking at, and maybe I missed it because what I'm
20 looking at might be an outdated item, I see ownership
21 change applications for two additional -- two
22 additional businesses. No problem. Great.

23 DIR. RIGGS: Apologies for the slides. We
24 also have NJ Green Care and Denver Cole Farms that have
25 been reviewed and vetted by the Office of Compliance

1 and Investigations and are recommended for approval.

2 CHAIR: Okay. So those -- those
3 additional two are -- are still being recommended?

4 DIR. RIGGS: Yes.

5 CHAIR: All right. So Denver Cole Farms
6 and NJ Green Care, LLC are still being recommended for
7 approval?

8 DIR. RIGGS: That is correct, Madam Chair.

9 CHAIR: That brings us to -- to six. Any
10 other -- are there any other questions for Director
11 Riggs?

12 Hearing no further questions, is there a
13 motion on this matter regarding the six? Yes, the six
14 -- six applications for an ownership transfer. Is
15 there a motion on that matter?

16 COMM. NASH: Madam Chair, I move to
17 approve the ownership changes for the six applicants
18 set forth in the resolution.

19 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Nash. Is
20 there a second?

21 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

22 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
23 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion to
24 approve the ownership change for six -- the six named
25 businesses?

1 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Saeed, can you
2 please call the vote?

3 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

4 COMM. BARKER: Abstain.

5 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
6 Kosso?

7 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

9 COMM. NASH: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?
11 Chairwoman --

12 VICE CHAIR: (Interposing) Yes.

13 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

14 CHAIR: That was a resounding yes from
15 Vice Chair Delgado.

16 VICE CHAIR: I didn't have -- I didn't
17 have my microphone on.

18 CHAIR: Okay.

19 VICE CHAIR: I had to do it a second time.

20 CHAIR: I appreciate the effort to make
21 sure that those folks at home can hear us. I really do
22 appreciate that. My vote is yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

24 The next item up for consideration is the
25 adult-use cannabis business conditional license

1 applications.

2 CHAIR: All right. Director Riggs, the
3 floor is yours.

4 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
5 Today we have 16 conditional licenses up for
6 consideration and recommended for approval; two
7 cultivators, one wholesaler, two distributors, and 11
8 retailers. These license -- these --

9 CHAIR: (Interposing) Sorry, Commissioner
10 Barker raised something with me, raised a -- a point of
11 clarity with me. Apologies for interrupting you,
12 Director Riggs.

13 Mr. McWhite, I need to -- I want to confer
14 with you very quickly on the -- the slides for this
15 item. So if you'd bear with us just one moment. At
16 home, we'll just need one brief second to -- to refresh
17 the -- the material. So bear with us. And then we
18 will resume the summary from Director Riggs on the
19 applications received. Thank you, Commissioner Barker.

20 Round of applause for our folks handling
21 the technology today and all of the issues that we've
22 been facing. Really appreciate it.

23 (Applause)

24 We appreciate your time and your patience.
25 Oh, yes, great. Fantastic. We're back. Thank you

1 again, Director McWhite, for your -- your experience
2 and your expertise in handling these technological
3 curveballs that we throw at you each and every board
4 meeting we appreciate it.

5 (Applause)

6 Director Riggs, apologies for the
7 interruption. Thank you for your patience. You can
8 resume the -- your summary.

9 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and
10 thank you, Wesley, for fixing that issue.

11 We have 16 conditional licenses up for
12 consideration and recommended for approval today; two
13 cultivators, one wholesaler, two distributors, and 11
14 retailers. These licenses have been through the
15 licensing process and followed our regulations.

16 They've been given a priority assignment.
17 Our licensing team confirms that each application is
18 assigned to its appropriate review level, diversely
19 owned business status, social equity business status,
20 taxes, residency, if required, and cures are sent if
21 they do not qualify. That priority is verified through
22 that cure process and through the -- reviewing the
23 documentation.

24 After that, a completeness review is
25 conducted to confirm that all required documents are

1 submitted and that the application is deemed complete.
2 We confirm that not only is the document filled out,
3 but the required information is on the document itself.
4 So the substantive information is -- is satisfied --
5 regulatory compliant and the application is scored, and
6 if the application receives a sufficient score, it is -
7 - it is recommended to this Board for approval.

8 And for the conditional licenses, we are
9 recommending that these 16 be approved by the Board.

10 CHAIR: Thank you very much, Director
11 Riggs. Are there any questions from the Board?
12 Hearing no questions, is there a motion on this matter?

13 COMM. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move that we
14 approve the consideration of conditional license
15 applications.

16 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second. Second.

17 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
18 Kosso. Thank you. Is there any discussion on this
19 motion? Hearing no discussion, Mr. Saeed, can you
20 please call the vote?

21 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

22 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

23 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
24 Kosso?

25 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

2 COMM. NASH: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

4 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

6 CHAIR: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

8 The next item up for consideration is the
9 adult-use cannabis business conversion license
10 applications.

11 CHAIR: Director Riggs, the floor is
12 yours.

13 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. So
14 the -- there are eight total. We will take them in two
15 to separate votes because I believe we have a recusal
16 for one of the applications.

17 They're -- so before the entire Board
18 right now there are seven conditional annual conversion
19 licenses, two cultivators, two manufacturers, two
20 retailers, and one delivery license. These have
21 followed the similar conditional licensing process that
22 I just outlined.

23 However, they also went through a
24 qualification review where the individual's financial
25 sources and any other vendor contractor management

1 services agreements were reviewed by our Office of
2 Compliance and Investigation for regulatory compliance.

3 They have been deemed satisfied on the
4 background checks that are reviewed to ensure that the
5 owners and persons of interest are qualified to be in
6 the cannabis space. That has been conducted by our
7 Office of Compliance and Investigation. Quality
8 control was done by our Office of Licensing, Office of
9 Compliance and Investigation, and our Chief Counsel's
10 Office.

11 And now we are making a recommendation to
12 the Board to approve these seven conditional to annual
13 conversion licenses.

14 CHAIR: Thank you very much. Are there
15 any questions from the Board regarding the -- the set
16 of seven applications to convert from a conditional to
17 an annual license? Hearing no questions from the
18 Board, is there a motion on this matter?

19 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Madam Chair, I move
20 to adopt this resolution considering the applications
21 to convert from conditional to annual Class 1, Class 2,
22 Class 5, and Class 6 licenses.

23 CHAIR: Is there a second?

24 VICE CHAIR: Second.

25 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Barker.

1 Is there any discussion on this motion? Hearing no
2 discussion, Mr. Saeed, can you please call the vote?

3 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

4 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

5 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
6 Kosso?

7 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

9 COMM. NASH: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

11 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

13 CHAIR: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

15 The next item on the agenda we have
16 consideration of the conversion for Triple G Farms,
17 LLC.

18 Commissioner Nash has recused herself from
19 this conversion application for Triple G Farms, LLC due
20 to an ongoing professional relationship. On account of
21 her recusal, she will step out of the room while the
22 Board considers this particular application.
23 Afterward, Commissioner Nash will come back in and
24 we'll take up the next order of business.

25 CHAIR: Director Riggs, the floor is yours

1 to provide a summary of this conditional to convert --
2 sorry, conditional to annual conversion.

3 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. This
4 -- this license followed the same process that I just
5 outlined for the seven other licenses, and staff has
6 reviewed and is satisfied that the application
7 satisfies our regulations and we are recommending that
8 it be approved. Thank you.

9 CHAIR: Thank you very much. Are there
10 any questions from the Board regarding this
11 application? Hearing none, is there a motion on this
12 matter?

13 I will again ask for a motion on this
14 matter as --

15 VICE CHAIR: (Interposing) Madam
16 Chairwoman, I move that we -- I move the consideration
17 of application to convert from conditional to annual
18 license for Triple G Farm, LLC -- OZ, LLC.

19 CHAIR: Vice Chair Delgado moves to
20 approve the application. Is there a second?

21 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

22 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
23 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion?
24 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Saeed, can you please call
25 the vote?

1 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

2 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

3 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
4 Kosso?

5 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash is
7 recused. Vice Chair Delgado?

8 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

10 CHAIR: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

12 The next item up for consideration is the
13 Adult-use Cannabis Business Annual License
14 Applications.

15 CHAIR: Director Riggs, the floor is
16 yours.

17 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Same
18 licensing process was filed -- followed for
19 conditionals and the conversion to annual licenses.
20 Same process is followed. The most important two
21 pieces here are that the application underwent a
22 qualifications review, the individuals were deemed
23 qualified to be in the cannabis space.

24 Any financial source agreements or vendor
25 contractor agreements were vetted for regulatory

1 compliance. Background checks were completed and
2 reviewed to ensure that the owners and persons of
3 interest are allowed to be in the cannabis space and
4 the law allows for that. Quality control was
5 conducted.

6 And we are now recommending that these
7 license applications be approved by the Board. There
8 are seven total license applications. Not eight,
9 seven. Sorry about all the numbers today, but it is
10 seven.

11 CHAIR: It's all right. It's okay. Thank
12 you. Thank you, Director Riggs.

13 Are there any questions from the Board?
14 Hearing none, is there a motion on this matter?

15 COMM. NASH: Madam Chair, I move to
16 approve the annual license applications for Class 1, 2,
17 3, 4, and 5 and testing laboratory licenses presented
18 here today.

19 VICE CHAIR: I second.

20 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Nash and
21 seconded by Vice Chair Delgado. Is there any
22 discussion on this motion?

23 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Saeed, can you
24 please call the vote?

25 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

1 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

2 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
3 Kosso?

4 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

6 COMM. NASH: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

8 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

10 CHAIR: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

12 The next item up for consideration are the
13 expanded alternative treatment center certifications.

14 CHAIR: Director Riggs?

15 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
16 I think we have the number right on this one. So
17 there's two. There's two expanded ATCs. They're up
18 for consideration and recommended for approval today.
19 We have Acreage CCF New Jersey, Class 5 retailer in
20 Collingswood, New Jersey, and Aunt Mary's Dispensary,
21 LLC, which is a Class 1 cultivator in Franklin
22 Township.

23 Both of these entities have requested to
24 be approved as an expanded ATC. They've provided
25 zoning and municipal approvals as required by law and

1 regulations, and all labor requirements have been met
2 by these entities.

3 As required by law, both of these entities
4 have certified that they have sufficient quantities of
5 medical cannabis and medical cannabis products
6 available to meet the reasonably anticipated needs of
7 registered qualifying patients in accordance with the
8 law, and therefore we are recommending that both of
9 these entities be approved.

10 And I do know that they will be separate
11 votes, but we're recommending approval for both. Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIR: Thank you very much. So we'll
14 start -- we'll take them in turn. So but before we do,
15 are there any questions from the Board regarding either
16 of these two certifications?

17 Hearing no questions, as it pertains to
18 Acreage CCF New Jersey, is there a motion?

19 COMM. NASH: Madam Chair, I move to accept
20 the certification for the ATC Acreage CCF New Jersey to
21 expand operations to the AU personal cannabis market.

22 CHAIR: Is there a second?

23 VICE CHAIR: I second.

24 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
25 Kosso (sic). Is there any discussion on this motion to

1 accept the certification?

2 Hearing none, Mr. Saeed, as it pertains to
3 Acreage CCF New Jersey, can you please call the vote?

4 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

5 COMM. BARKER: Abstain.

6 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
7 Kosso?

8 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

10 COMM. NASH: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

12 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

13 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

14 CHAIR: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Motion passes.

16 CHAIR: All right. We'll next turn to
17 Mary's Dispensary, LLC. Is there a motion on that
18 matter?

19 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairwoman, I move that
20 we accept the certification for Alternative Treatment
21 Center -- for Mary Dispensary, LLC to expand operations
22 to the adult personal use cannabis market.

23 CHAIR: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado. Is
24 there a second?

25 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

1 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
2 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion?

3 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Saeed, as it
4 relates to Aunt Mary's Dispensary, LLC, can you please
5 call the vote?

6 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

7 COMM. BARKER: Abstain.

8 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
9 Kosso?

10 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

12 COMM. NASH: Yes.

13 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

14 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

16 CHAIR: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

18 The next item up for consideration is the
19 Adult-use Cannabis Business Annual License Renewal
20 Applications.

21 CHAIR: Director Riggs?

22 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We
23 have seven adult -- adult-use licenses that are up for
24 renewal today that are recommended for renewal. They
25 have followed our licensing process initially, have

1 been deemed and -- satisfied that process and have been
2 deemed regulatory compliant. The licenses are
3 effective for one year from the date of issuance and
4 are required to be reviewed annually.

5 All of these entities have provided --
6 provided the required documentation for renewal. This
7 documentation has been reviewed and vetted and approved
8 by the Office of Compliance and Investigations. And
9 again, I make this pitch every public meeting, but we
10 need to ensure that all material changes are submitted
11 prior to coming up for renewal.

12 If you have a change in your business
13 structure, if you're changing your canopy, if you're
14 changing the layout of your business, please make sure
15 you submit that information to the Office of Compliance
16 and Investigation when it happens, and do not wait
17 until renewal. But with that said, I am recommending
18 that the seven entities that are up for renewal are
19 approved and renewed for their annual license. Thank
20 you.

21 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. Are
22 there any questions from the Board? Hearing no
23 questions, is there a motion on this matter?

24 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Madam Chair, I move
25 to adopt the renewal of adult-use cannabis business

1 licenses and expanded ATCs.

2 CHAIR: Is there a second?

3 VICE CHAIR: I second.

4 CHAIR: Is there any discussion on this
5 motion?

6 COMM. BARKER: Just a brief discussion,
7 Madam Chair.

8 CHAIR: Commissioner Barker?

9 COMM. BARKER: I just want to echo
10 Executive Director Riggs in his remarks and also add to
11 please submit your documents in a timely manner. There
12 are deadlines, and we ask that you adhere to the
13 deadlines and submit your information in a timely
14 manner. Thank you.

15 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Barker.
16 Is there -- is there any further discussion? Hearing
17 none, Mr. Saeed, can you please call the vote?

18 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

19 COMM. BARKER: Abstain.

20 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
21 Kosso?

22 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

24 COMM. NASH: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

1 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

3 CHAIR: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

5 The next item on the agenda, we have
6 cases, claims, and petitions.

7 CHAIR: Director Riggs, the floor is
8 yours.

9 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and
10 since cases and claims are handled by an attorney, I'm
11 going to turn it over to our Chief Counsel, Dave
12 Tuason, to discuss it.

13 MR. DAVE TUASON: So these are our
14 recommendations for rehabs for employees or owners for
15 both ATCs and cannabis businesses. We have two
16 individuals, their employees are -- like to be
17 employees of an ATC and one for AU.

18 Each of them have received notice that
19 they have a -- received a disqualifying conviction
20 under the enabling statute and our regulations, and
21 each of them are given the opportunity to challenge the
22 accuracy of those convictions or demonstrate rehab.
23 All three have shown rehabilitation through clear and
24 convincing evidence, and we are recommending approval
25 of all three individuals.

1 Please note there will be two separate
2 votes, one for the ATC employees and one for AU. The
3 reason for that is because there's a different standard
4 elaborated in the statute for medical versus adult-use.
5 And with that, I turn it back to you, Madam Chair.

6 CHAIR: Thank you, Chief Counsel Tuason.
7 One quick question. For the individual requesting a
8 determination of rehabilitation for the adult -- on the
9 adult-use market side, that person is just an employee?

10 I remember there was a question about
11 whether this person was an -- only an employee or an
12 employee and also prospective owner. We resolved that
13 issue?

14 MR. TUASON: Yeah, this -- this -- that
15 individual will -- will be -- is looking to be an owner
16 in -- in the cannabis -- as a cannabis business.

17 CHAIR: So it's not -- it's not an
18 employee? This is purely for ownership purposes?

19 MR. TUASON: That's correct.

20 CHAIR: All right. Great. Thank you very
21 much. Any other questions for -- from the Board? All
22 right. If there are no further questions, we'll take
23 this in -- we'll take these two items in turn, because
24 as Chief Counsel articulated, they have different
25 standards under the law.

1 So we will first start with the ATC
2 employee ID cards. Is there a motion on the matter of
3 the two requests for determination of rehabilitation
4 for the two ATC employee ID -- ATC employees?

5 COMM. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move to
6 approve the request for determination and
7 rehabilitation.

8 CHAIR: Moved -- moved by Commissioner
9 Barker. Is there a second?

10 COMM. NASH: Second.

11 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

12 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Is
13 there any discussion on this motion as it pertains to
14 the two ATC employees?

15 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Saeed, can you
16 please call the vote?

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

18 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

19 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
20 Kosso?

21 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

23 COMM. NASH: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

25 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

2 CHAIR: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

4 CHAIR: Okay. And so we'll now turn to
5 the one individual requesting a determination of
6 rehabilitation on the adult-use side. Is there a
7 motion as it pertains to that matter?

8 COMM. BARKER: Madam Chair, I move that we
9 approved the request for a determination of
10 rehabilitation on the adult-use side.

11 VICE CHAIR: I second.

12 CHAIR: Thank you. Is there any
13 discussion on this motion? Hearing no discussion, Mr.
14 Saeed, can you please call the vote?

15 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

16 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
18 Kosso?

19 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

21 COMM. NASH: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

23 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

25 CHAIR: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

2 Next item on the agenda, we have
3 consideration of enforcement actions.

4 CHAIR: Director Riggs, I'll turn it over
5 to you to describe the matter, the -- the violation for
6 which that was cited and which we are considering
7 today.

8 DIR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
9 Green Medicine NJ, LLC is -- was issued a notice of
10 violation for failing to adhere to the requirements
11 imposed by regulations and its own standard operating
12 procedures for processing cannabis free of foreign
13 matter.

14 There was an anonymous complaint filed
15 that indicated that there were hair and bugs in the
16 cannabis that was cultivated at Green Medicine New
17 Jersey, LLC. Our Office of Compliance and
18 Investigation did a very quick investigation and got in
19 -- got onto it very quickly, took random samples from
20 other dispensaries.

21 It was determined that the lot and batch
22 numbers were compromised. We issued -- we issued a
23 recall of those lot and batch numbers that were
24 potentially compromised. Green Medicine followed their
25 standard operating procedures on the recall process.

1 However, this is still a regulatory violation as they
2 must produce cannabis that is free of foreign matter
3 and bugs and aphids and hair and the cannabis is not
4 free of foreign matter.

5 Therefore, we are recommending an
6 enforcement action to the Board at this time.

7 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. Are
8 there any questions from the Board? Well, not a
9 question, I do want to note -- thank the staff and
10 Director Urbish and his team for their rapid and in-
11 depth response to this particular matter. It's not
12 something that I take lightly, having bugs in the
13 products is -- should be treated as -- to reflect the
14 disgusting nature that it is. All right. So with
15 that, is there a motion on this matter?

16 I will make a motion. I move that we --
17 that the CRC impose a sanction of \$7,000, again, screen
18 Medicine NJ in consideration of the -- the nature of
19 this violation. I do want to also note the -- it looks
20 like the business did have -- did make a good faith
21 effort to -- to correct the issue.

22 However, with the record showing that --
23 with the compliance and investigations record showing
24 that the -- there was an entire room that needed to be
25 destroyed -- that had plants that needed to be

1 destroyed to address this prevailed -- this -- this
2 issue, and I do also want to note for the record what
3 the testing laboratory noted here.

4 The testing laboratory after testing the
5 sample products noted these observations suggest a
6 significant amount of pests were present throughout the
7 cultivation process. And I want to underscore that
8 because I want our cultivators to know this is not
9 acceptable.

10 All of our cannabis businesses are charged
11 with acting responsibly and making sure that they're
12 growing, producing, packaging, and selling quality
13 products. This is unacceptable to have all -- to
14 have 14 samples tested and only one comeback clean of
15 free of foreign matter.

16 That's not okay. So given the -- given
17 that I do think this matter does pose -- while it does
18 not -- it did not pose an immediate harm or threat to
19 people's health, the nature of the violation does pose,
20 I believe, an immediate harm -- I'm sorry, a -- does
21 pose a risk to the harm -- to harm the -- I'm so sorry,
22 I'm tongue -- tongue tied today. It does pose a risk
23 of harm to the health of consumers. I don't believe
24 anybody wants to open up any products and find insects
25 or human hair in their products that they're

1 purchasing.

2 So I am glad, and I thank also the
3 communications team for their swift response to get out
4 information on the product recall so that encourage
5 patients to -- I'm sorry, to encourage consumers to
6 return and eat contaminated products.

7 And yes, for that reason, I believe \$7,000
8 is a fair, reasonable, and warranted sanction or fine
9 to impose in this matter to account for the -- the
10 factors and circumstances at hand in this matter.

11 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: I second that motion
12 for the reasons you listed. I think this is definitely
13 unacceptable. It poses a risk to the health of
14 consumers, and it really shouldn't be happening in this
15 industry. It doesn't -- you know, we try to avoid that
16 in the restaurants and -- and in the food that we
17 consume. Same thing as in this industry.

18 We need to make sure that the products are
19 -- are clean and -- and that they're tested properly.

20 CHAIR: Well said, Commissioner Del Cid-
21 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion to
22 impose a fine of \$7,000 on Green Medicine NJ?

23 Hearing no discussion, Mr. Saeed, can you
24 please call the vote?

25 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Barker?

1 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

2 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
3 Kosso?

4 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

6 COMM. NASH: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

8 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

10 CHAIR: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

12 Next item on the agenda, we have the open
13 public comment period.

14 CHAIR: Thank you. Now, as we open the
15 floor to public comments, I want to reiterate, as we do
16 at every board meeting, that members of the public can
17 submit public comments during or after this meeting in
18 writing via our website nj.gov/cannabis/meetings. The
19 deadline for submitting written comments for today's
20 meeting is 5 p.m. tomorrow, Friday, October 18th.
21 Written comments will be made public.

22 Speakers today will be limited to three
23 minutes. As we have over the last couple of meetings,
24 we will start with the registered speakers who are here
25 in person, and then we will turn to those who are

1 joining us by telephone.

2 Today, we also invite the public to share
3 their thoughts on two topics in particular, both
4 centered on patient access to medicinal cannabis -- to
5 the medicinal cannabis market and that touch on the --
6 the findings and highlights that our Public Engagement
7 Committee -- Public Engagement and Education Committee,
8 and previously our Product Safety Packaging and
9 Labeling Committee have -- have explored.

10 So first is ATC ownership. There
11 currently is a limited number of ATC Serving patients.
12 Are adult-use businesses interested in expanding to
13 serve medical patients? Should vertical integration be
14 allowed for all of our ATCs? And should there be
15 limits on the number of location -- the number of
16 locations allowed for each ATC.

17 The second topic is regarding patient
18 purchase limits. So patients are currently allowed to
19 purchase up to three ounces of medicinal cannabis.
20 Should this allotment be changed? How much is a
21 reasonable allotment? How much is unreasonable? And
22 can higher purchase limits affect product prices for
23 patients?

24 So we invite individuals to include in
25 their comments, remarks on these two topics to help the

1 Commission decide how it should shape its rules and
2 regulations as we -- as we near the -- the closure of
3 trying to wrap up our medical rules rewrite. So with
4 that said, Mr. Saeed, we'll call on our speakers, three
5 at a time. When it is your turn to speak, please come
6 down and just make sure that the light on the
7 microphone is green, and then you are good to go.

8 You'll have three minutes, and your time
9 will be monitored on the clock over here. And when you
10 hear the -- your three minutes -- when you're three
11 minutes are up, you will hear the beep of the clock of
12 the alarm, and so that will be your signal to just wrap
13 it up. Okay?

14 So Mr. Saeed, can you please call on our
15 first speakers?

16 THE SECRETARY: Thank you, Chairwoman. As
17 a reminder, public speakers during this afternoon's
18 public comment period will be limited to three minutes.
19 Please be respectful and concise during your comments.
20 The first person on the list is Nikolaus Opalenik.

21 MR. NIKOLAUS OPALENIK: Good afternoon.
22 My name is Nikolaus Opalenik. For nearly six years,
23 I've relied on medical cannabis to manage my
24 conditions, but I've witnessed the program's ongoing
25 shortcomings and its failure to adequately serve the

1 patients it was designed to help. I have suffered over
2 a dozen concussions, one of which caused a subarachnoid
3 brain hemorrhage, which left me -- which left me with a
4 50/50 survival prognosis.

5 On top of that, I have four fractures in
6 my spine, which cause a host of issues with my back and
7 mobility. As a result, pain is a constant part of my
8 life ranging from migraines, light, and noise
9 sensitivity, to mobilizing back spasms. Traditional
10 medication, while significantly more affordable due to
11 insurance, was not effective and left me with a slew of
12 side effects worse than the conditions themselves, such
13 as painful severe acne, memory loss, hair loss,
14 personality changes, and a path towards addiction.

15 Fortunately, medical cannabis has been the
16 answer for me. It allows me to manage my pain,
17 migraines, and other symptoms without the debilitating
18 side effects of traditional medications. Most
19 importantly, it lets me feel like myself again.
20 However, the introduction of recreational cannabis
21 sales has complicated the situation.

22 Instead of improving access to reducing
23 costs, we continue to face the same challenges,
24 particularly with allotments and high prices. The
25 current monthly allotment system is severely

1 restrictive and leaves many patients without enough
2 medication to manage their conditions. Medical
3 patients should have an unlimited allotment, or at the
4 very least, equal to that of the recreational users,
5 which I believe are allowed to purchase one ounce per
6 visit.

7 It makes no sense that those of us using
8 cannabis for medical purposes face stricter limitations
9 than the recreational users. There's also a
10 significant issue with the distribution of the
11 dispensaries. There are far more recreational
12 dispensaries than medical dispensaries. Even worse,
13 some of the dispensaries that sell both have confusing
14 menus where medical patients are forced to browse both
15 sides just to find the selections that help them.

16 The rise of recreational-only brands adds
17 to this frustration, and it seems the focus is shifting
18 away from patient care. It makes no sense that I must
19 drive past three, four, or even five recreational-only
20 dispensaries to get to a medical dispensary that offers
21 less products and brands. Recreational brands should
22 not be prioritized over patient care, and medical --
23 medical menus need to be clear and comprehensive.

24 Every dispensary and every brand in the
25 state should be required to serve medical patients, and

1 all pricing should be regulated to ensure affordability
2 for patients. We shouldn't have to pay different
3 prices depending on which type of dispensary we visit,
4 and medical pricing should not be influenced by market
5 fluctuation or corporate profit margins.

6 This is where the Commission must step in
7 to ensure that prices are controlled and fair for all
8 medical patients. Compared to other states, our prices
9 are extremely high, placing a heavy financial burden on
10 patients. For some of us, like myself, this means
11 spending 25 percent of our monthly income on a medicine
12 that has been life changing in its effectiveness.

13 I am fortunate enough to have a well-
14 paying job, yet I still struggle to afford my medicine
15 due to these needlessly high prices. It is simply
16 unsustainable. The Commission needs to step up and
17 become an advocate for our patients. We need a medical
18 cannabis program that is affordable, accessible, and
19 truly patient centered.

20 Please take time and action to implement -
21 - implement the necessary reforms and support the
22 people who rely on the program. Thank you all for your
23 time.

24 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
25 list is Thomas Norcia.

1 MR. THOMAS NORCIA: I'm Thomas Norcia.
2 I'm from Grow Works. I'm back again, guys. I don't
3 even know where to begin here this time, you know.
4 Access to metric, it's key right now. We have products
5 that are going to expire. You guys have expiration
6 dates. Some of us were harvesting September. We're
7 already 45 days in. If we get access to metric even
8 tomorrow, by the time we get packaging going with that
9 on there, by the time we get lab tests, we're months
10 out.

11 You know, it's critical. We need it now.
12 You know, we can't drag it on. The USDA, you know,
13 they brought this up to Jeff Brown two years ago; he
14 laughed at it. It's not really a laughing matter.
15 Hemp doesn't -- it doesn't seem like a laughing matter
16 now, right? You know, I could just go on and on. It's
17 -- it's -- it's just crazy.

18 A few months ago, you guys just brought
19 this up, the aphids. You guys had John Kerr from USDA
20 go into that place. You guys contacted him to talk
21 about aphids in your program, but yet you won't talk
22 about the USDA hemp program. There was one meeting
23 since -- I brought this up over 120 days ago, you guys
24 had one meeting with the USDA.

25 So it's not acceptable. You know, it's

1 not acceptable -- acceptable at all. You know, are
2 your inspectors not educated properly? How do they not
3 know what aphids are? Why does the USDA have to come
4 in to check for aphids? No, your -- your labs should
5 have found the aphids, to be completely honest. Why
6 didn't the labs find the aphids?

7 It's because certain labs get paid to not
8 find aphids. Is that how things go? You know -- you
9 know, there's been mold, fungus, pests in your guys'
10 markets, and it's medical wreck. We're hemp growers.
11 I haven't had an aphid in five years. I haven't -- I
12 don't have mold. I know what I'm doing. I'm
13 experienced. There's lack of experience.

14 There's lack of education. It's kind of
15 sad. You know, the state and you guys failed to
16 recognize that program. Now this is going to be a
17 forced issues with getting us together. If you guys
18 are understaffed and underfunded, stop accepting
19 applications until we could figure all this out. You
20 know, it's a little bit crazy.

21 The last two times I was here, you know,
22 it's -- I was told by you guys someone would reach out.
23 Nobody has reached out to me. I check my e-mail every
24 day, check for phone calls every day. No one has
25 reached out to any hemp grower or manufacturer

1 directly. And one meeting with -- with John Kerr,
2 USDA. It's not acceptable.

3 You know, if you guys are responsible for
4 us, you guys are going to have to do something at one
5 point. You guys put out a statement that saying like,
6 it's kind of illegal, but there's no enforcement. So
7 we're licensed. Now, what do we do? Go against what a
8 law is because there's no enforcement? You guys are
9 putting us in a very rough situation where our products
10 are going to expire.

11 Then what do we do? I just grew two acres
12 of CBD. What do -- I don't know which direction to go
13 in right now. I should already have it packaged ready
14 to go and out the door, which I had buyers, but with
15 psychoactive hemp bill in full spectrum, now I don't
16 know which way to go with it. This causes problems,
17 and not just hemp, in your guys' market too you got
18 people bringing stuff in and out of the state,
19 psychoactive hemp and was to control products so that
20 it wasn't out of state and it was lab tested.

21 Well, now people even in your program are
22 just bringing stuff over state lines into the state, as
23 what's going to happen in this bill. So just think
24 about that. I reached out. You guys have my name.
25 You have my number. If you guys need proper education,

1 do reach out anytime. I've e-mailed you guys I can't
2 even tell you how many times over the years.

3 I stopped this year. You know, come out
4 to our sites, come -- come see the hemp program,
5 experience what we're doing. See what we're doing.

6 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
7 list is John Kulin. Next person after that is Robert
8 Crigler. Next person on the list is James Schon. Next
9 person is Brian Cooper.
10 Next person is Sean Mack. Next person on the list is
11 Oscar Carrillo. Next person is Alan Trzuskoski.

12 The next person on the list is Tauhid
13 Chappell and Melanie Willoughby, but I know they spoke
14 already. The next person is Vincent Mann.

15 MR. VINCENT MANN: Good afternoon. My
16 name is Chief Vincent Mann, and that is actually who's
17 sitting before you today. I am also the co-founder of
18 the New Jersey Hemp Growers Association. We have
19 actively 18 licensees who are engaged with us. One of
20 the things that is something that has been repetitious
21 from the hemp growers, from the hemp industry, who is
22 actually those who are licensed in the state of New
23 Jersey, is that we need to have access to the metric
24 system.

25 We need to be able to have our products

1 grown, tested, packaged the same way that they are in
2 the cannabis industry. We need access to that. We
3 need to be able to -- Commissioner Barker earlier when
4 we were driving here, we were listening to comments in
5 the -- in the truck, and one of the things that he had
6 brought up, we know for a fact because when we talk
7 about medicinal medicines, it truly is the hemp.

8 It is -- it is our hemp plants that are
9 high and other cannabinoids. Unlike THC that is grown
10 in the state of New Jersey, which is simply grown high
11 levels of THC and are missing those other very
12 important things, which is a benefit. So when you have
13 -- in this system, when a manufacturer wants to grow or
14 wants to produce something that is a one to one THC and
15 CBD, where are they getting that from?

16 You should be directing them and telling
17 them that they have to buy that from the people who are
18 growing within the state of New Jersey. Also as an e-
19 mail that was actually sent to Wesley on behalf of the
20 New Jersey Hemp Growers Association, I'm just going to
21 read this one part here where it says, however, we will
22 provide recommendations for shaping your eventual
23 regulations on intoxicating hemp businesses.

24 The current situation requires immediate
25 attention as stated in S32 and 35. Open quote, "The

1 Cannabis Regulatory Commission may take any
2 anticipatory administrative action in advance, as shall
3 be necessary for the implementation of this act", close
4 quote. To ensure that there is a legal hemp industry
5 to regulate in 180 days, the CRC must issue temporary
6 permits to New Jersey Hemp Program license holders so
7 that they can continue to selling their full spectrum
8 CBD products.

9 Hemp farmers cannot afford to wait until
10 this year's harvest at the risk of expiring due to
11 delayed regulations. These farmers and businesses have
12 remained federally and state compliant prior to the
13 CREAM Act, and are not producing synthetic, nor are we
14 producing intoxicating products, and need protection
15 now.

16 The CRC has the authority to take
17 immediate action, and we urge you to do something
18 immediately. So knowing that you have these certain
19 authorities, it would be who all of us, and looking
20 towards the future of working together with the hemp
21 industry, the licensees in the state of New Jersey,
22 having this meeting with us, regardless of whatever
23 legislation may possibly be out there, because we're
24 not talking about the legislation, right?

25 We're talking about making it so that our

1 medicinal products are available, not just to other
2 retailers, but to this gentleman that was sitting in
3 the back that testified earlier, right?

4 They deserve this medicine that we grow.
5 And obviously, I appreciate it. I don't want to go
6 over too far, even though there's not too many other
7 speakers. So thank you.

8 (Applause)

9 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
10 list is Patrick Duff. Next person after that is Leo
11 Bridgewater.

12 MR. LEO BRIDGEWATER: Good afternoon,
13 everyone. My name is Leo Bridgewater. I'm here today
14 because I'm a bit disturbed. I don't normally come out
15 to these things a lot, but when the time comes, I do
16 feel like this is one of those times. When I got into
17 this for advocating for this, Commissioner Barker was
18 one of the first people to organize a meet with Senator
19 Booker and introducing the Marijuana Justice Reform
20 Act.

21 I have seen commissioners out and about
22 doing things, and I've received phone calls. I can't
23 tell you how many phone calls I've gotten about
24 Commissioner Nash. They call her the front-line person
25 down in Camden, because the people who have worked with

1 her see her a lot. I've run into Commissioner Maria
2 Del Cid-Kosso talking to community folks.

3 I've witnessed Commissioner Houenou in the
4 parking lot of the Trenton City Hall engaging directly
5 with constituents. I ran Sam Delgado down in downtown
6 Trenton and actually stood with him while he was
7 talking to legacy folks about getting license. And
8 understand something, all of my comments are beyond the
9 CRC.

10 And I'm saying these things because this
11 body and this staff was tasked with a nearly impossible
12 feat. They were asked to build a plane, fly it, with
13 one hand behind their back, and an eye patch. And they
14 did it. Evidenced by the presentation given to us
15 about the CTA. A lot of people put their blood, sweat,
16 tears in this, and we have reached the point where you
17 see those numbers that were just provided to us.

18 The work is being done. Can it get
19 better? Yes. And I am extremely offended that with
20 all of this work as a member of the number one hardest
21 demographic of people hit by the war on drugs, which is
22 black men, the fact that there will no longer be a
23 black man on this commission, I find to be extremely
24 offensive, culturally insensitive, and tone deaf.

25 This industry was built on our backs in

1 our lifetime. We are just coming out of 25,000
2 arrested here for low level nonviolent, minor
3 possession of cannabis, and 81 percent of those
4 arrested look like me. You want to know if this
5 working? The Mercer County workhouse is closed down.
6 The Jones Family Farm has -- no longer has any inmates.

7 Raleigh is trying to redo their population
8 because, you know why? We're no longer being arrested.
9 So please, I don't want the cavalier-ness with this
10 commission to be a thing that always happens. And I
11 ask that this -- that -- that those who are listening,
12 go get registered to vote. Thank you.

13 (Applause)

14 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
15 list is Todd Johnson.

16 MR. TODD JOHNSON: Good afternoon, Chair
17 Houenou, CRC commissioners, Director Riggs, Director
18 McWhite, and CRC staff. My name is Todd Johnson, and I
19 serve as the executive director of the New Jersey
20 Cannabis Trade Association. Our membership is
21 comprised exclusively of CRC licensed cannabis
22 businesses operating in New Jersey.

23 Today, I am providing comments on the
24 social equity excise fee for 2025. First and foremost,
25 I want to express the NJ-CTA's support for the CREAM

1 fund, which is where SIF generated revenue is deposited
2 until the governor and legislature disperse funds to
3 social equity initiatives throughout the state.

4 Our association wholeheartedly supports
5 these funds being used to help right the wrongs of the
6 failed war on drugs, and we are eager to see the
7 positive impact these funds and associated initiatives
8 have on impact zones and underserved communities of
9 color. The concern I highlight today is the negative
10 impact a significantly increased SIF will have on
11 operators.

12 The current SIF is \$1.24 per ounce, and
13 for next year, you have the authority to set the SIF at
14 any level, up to \$30 an ounce. The SIF is charged
15 directly to adult-use cultivators, a cohort of
16 licensees that have faced significant challenges given
17 the capital-intensive nature of operating a cultivation
18 facility.

19 Increasing the SIF by over 2,500 percent
20 will increase costs for cultivators astronomically and
21 send a shockwave through the entire supply chain.
22 Cultivators will be forced to raise their wholesale
23 prices to offset the increased cost. Manufacturers and
24 retailers will then raise prices of cannabis products
25 sold to consumers.

1 A positive trend that we have witnessed
2 over the past 18 months is the steady decrease in
3 retail prices of cannabis, but make no mistake, a
4 drastic increase in supply side taxation will reverse
5 this trend. Raising the SIF to \$30 an ounce will
6 immediately cause average wholesale prices to increase
7 a minimum of 15 percent.

8 This would cause frustration directed at
9 the SIF and drive consumers to look for -- for cannabis
10 products that are less expensive and also less safe
11 from their unregulated market. Over the last two
12 years, 22 cultivators and over 100 dispensaries have
13 opened their doors. The vast majority are independent
14 operators, and based on the Commission's own data, 16
15 percent qualify as social equity and 70 percent is
16 diversely owned.

17 The Commission is dramatically exceeding
18 its goal of having producers reflect the diversity of
19 our state, and we congratulate you all on that. But a
20 drastic increase in the SIF will directly impact these
21 very same licensees at a time when many are struggling
22 to simply stay afloat during the difficult early days
23 of any new ventures operations.

24 The NJ-CTA commends the CRC for pausing
25 your decision today on the 2025 SIF in order to get

1 more stakeholder feedback. Our recommendation and
2 request is that for 2025, the CRC determine the desired
3 revenue for the CREAM fund, calculate the SIF freight
4 that will achieve that goal, and then increase the SIF
5 gradually.

6 Please consider the harm that raising the
7 SIF significantly and in a short period of time will
8 have on licensed operators in the regulated
9 marketplace. Even a \$1 increase in the SIF equates to
10 almost a 100 percent increase in the 20 -- over the
11 2024 rate.

12 We all want to see the positive impact the
13 CREAM fund can have on communities and individuals most
14 harmed by the war on drugs, but we don't want that
15 positive impact to have a negative impact on the
16 workers and entrepreneurs that have invested in their
17 dreams of working in New Jersey's cannabis industry.
18 Thank you very much for your time.

19 (Applause)

20 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
21 list is Roz McCarthy.

22 MS. ROZ MCCARTHY: Yeah, I was about to
23 say good morning, but good afternoon. Hi, I bring you
24 greetings. My name is Roz McCarthy, the founder, and
25 the CEO of Minorities for Medical Marijuana. This

1 organization was started in 2016 as a gateway to our
2 communities of color in understanding social justice,
3 social equity, health equity, and public policy as it
4 relates to the cannabis and the hemp industry.

5 It is my pleasure to be with you here this
6 afternoon. I have been fighting the fight, working
7 side by side with communities to make sure that we
8 create opportunity. First and foremost, let me commend
9 you New Jersey. I've been all over this country, and
10 what you're doing is incredible. I want you to keep it
11 up.

12 Stay focused. Know that what you're
13 doing, it has -- it matters, it has intentions. It's
14 not perfect, but the progress that you're making and
15 what you're doing, there's other states that are
16 looking at it. They're looking at you. I'm taking
17 this back to other states that I'm working with to help
18 them. The one thing that I want to bring to your
19 attention for today based upon your -- based upon the
20 conversation about patients, right, your -- kudos to
21 you and your -- almost did a flip.

22 Seriously. When I saw that you're doing a
23 community meeting out in the community to help patients
24 be able to get registered to get their card, it's
25 critical. The fact that you only have 70,000 patients

1 in the state of New Jersey, that is where we have to
2 really take a look at that and -- and we have to
3 breathe and try to figure out why is that.

4 And I want to tell you, M4MM has done a
5 program called Safe Access, very similar to what you're
6 doing. We've just funded it from a nonprofit
7 standpoint. The issue is with patients, and the
8 concern is that they feel disconnected and not
9 understanding what it means to come and be able to sit
10 down with a physician.

11 I think there's an access point where
12 people don't understand or don't even know what you're
13 doing. I don't know if you're utilizing your social
14 media. If you're utilizing other community partners,
15 other health care practitioners to get the word out, I
16 think building the patient population in the state of
17 New Jersey will also help you to determine what are the
18 resources and what's needed for those patients in order
19 to support them.

20 I know in my home state of Florida the
21 patients -- some of the main concerns from veterans,
22 how does this affect my -- me carrying my gun? How
23 does this affect me -- am I in a database? Will my
24 information be leaked to my employer? These are some
25 real talking points and some real education that has to

1 happen.

2 I think it's critically -- critically
3 important as well as how -- you know, how much can you
4 purchase? How much can you possess? So some of the
5 things -- and my gosh, three minutes go so fast. So
6 more connection with community, town hall meetings on
7 the benefits of being a medical patient would be --
8 would help support concerns.

9 Social media channels may be able to help
10 with outreach and education. The public engagement
11 committee that you have inside here, I think there
12 needs to be partnerships with other community
13 organizations to bring them to the table. Vertical
14 integration in my mind, stymies, product innovation,
15 and -- stymies, product innovation and can also be a
16 detriment to maintaining affordable cause.

17 Let's think about medical insurance and
18 product insurability, should be reviewed, and discussed
19 as a pathway to affordability, medical patients
20 allotment and percentage of THC should be carved out
21 and have a higher -- a higher amount than adult-use,
22 and retailers should be able to support medical
23 patients.

24 For example, in Florida it's 2.5 ounce for
25 purchasing, four ounce for possession every 35 days.

1 That's just a benchmark. I think you guys are at 2.93
2 ounces. There may be some opportunities to look at how
3 can you increase that and how can you look at the THC
4 level. Because a patient who is in hospice, in the
5 life care, their needs are gonna be very much different
6 than adult-use.

7 Thank you so much for your time and I
8 appreciate you.

9 (Applause)

10 COMM. BARKER: Ms. McCarthy, can you just
11 please submit those comments in writing for us so we
12 can have them?

13 MS. MCCARTHY: Yes.

14 COMM. BARKER: Thank you so much.

15 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
16 list is Michael Odenwald.

17 MR. MICHAEL ODENWALD: My name is Michael
18 Odenwald, Local Flower, LLC. The start of the meeting
19 and the topic of approving minutes is quite applicable
20 here. I understand that the Commission has heard many
21 a complaint on municipal challenges over its time.
22 This may be the first of its kind, not because the
23 municipality opted out three and a half years ago, but
24 how they did it.

25 My ask, I believe the CRC should consider

1 voiding their ordinance submission in 2021 based on the
2 following facts, the tough argument, having a reason to
3 look back at the meeting minutes for when they opted
4 out, I discovered there were no minutes. No Zoom
5 recordings, no public participation. Still to this
6 day, there are no approved April or May minutes in 2021
7 to be found when an ordinance was signed by the mayor
8 and the borough admin at the time.

9 This is -- clearly would have been a
10 violation of the Sunshine Law, which is intended at
11 this very purpose, which is to maintain transparency.
12 But that was three and a half years ago. With no
13 approved minutes anywhere to be found, there is a case
14 to be made that the ordinance they submitted was done
15 so under false pretense.

16 What the mayor and borough admin signed is
17 unsubstantiated if the CRC were to ask for it. I think
18 you should, based on these facts. Although they did
19 respond within 180 days, they did not submit legal
20 documents within 180 days to validate their opt-out
21 decision. My point, they opted in. You see, I did an
22 economic development for the plan.

23 Extensive data was collected to justify
24 the projections for a dispensary in town. I have asked
25 nine straight months to get on the agenda to present my

1 plan. Rejected nine times, despite nine public
2 comments. Next Monday will be Number 10. I have a
3 municipal CFO on record testifying that if the town
4 were to utilize the tax revenue for just tax avoidance,
5 a version of property tax increases, the town would not
6 to be -- need to raise property taxes for 10 years.

7 That's how significant it is. And the
8 town doesn't want to. So it's remarkable. So my -- my
9 question was, why are their convictions so strong not
10 to adopt it? Well, the mayor today is still on the
11 council. The same mayor. So those involved are good
12 people, neighbors, but they are bad municipal leaders
13 who intentionally in their deceit and submission of
14 unsubstantiated documents to a state agency.

15 For that reason, you should consider
16 avoiding their submission based on a clear case of
17 suppression. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

18 (Applause)

19 THE SECRETARY: Next person on the list is
20 Kristen Goedde. Next person after that is Marcus Luce.

21 MR. MARCUS LUCE: Good afternoon, Madam
22 Chairwoman, esteemed members of the CRC, support staff,
23 and engaged members of the public that are in
24 attendance today. My name is Marcus Luce. I'm a
25 farmer. I raise horses, hay, and industrial hemp.

1 I'm the managing partner for M&S Products,
2 LLC, a returned Peace Corps volunteer, a graduate of
3 Bellevue College, University of Washington, University
4 of Southern California, and most recently, Rutgers
5 University as part of their new cannabis law program,
6 which is a long way to say I really like going to
7 school.

8 Lastly, since 2020, I've been a compliant
9 cultivator in the New Jersey hemp program. I'm here
10 today to discuss opportunity. Like many communities
11 across the state, rural communities are in dire need of
12 economic stimulus. Farmers in such communities are
13 strongly encouraged to diversify production, to explore
14 new markets, insulate against commodity specific
15 downturns, and to improve pastureland husbandry through
16 biodiversity.

17 Diversified farms have invested heavily in
18 the industrial hemp market, are leaders in their field.
19 Ensuring the investment and example of these farmers
20 continues is an opportunity to showcase that New Jersey
21 state legislatures and regulatory bodies support their
22 efforts and encourage other farmers to follow suit.

23 As many people here today know, compliant
24 NJDA hemp program producers operate within -- within an
25 incredibly strict regulatory framework. To be

1 sustainable producers, have to be adaptive, creative,
2 and resilient to successfully grow compliant industrial
3 hemp cultivars at scale here in the Garden State.

4 As demand for legal New Jersey grown
5 cannabis continues to grow, established compliant NJDA
6 industrial hemp producers present an opportunity to
7 immediately make a positive impact on both the legal
8 medical and recreational cannabis market supply chains.
9 Therefore, I respectfully ask for your strong
10 consideration of the measures suggested by the NJ Hemp
11 Growers Association in its October 8th open letter to
12 state legislature.

13 Specifically, municipal approval exemption
14 for compliant NJDA hemp licensees, continuation of
15 sales, fast track CRC licensing, and financial relief
16 of Class 1 and Class 2 cultivation license fees for
17 compliant NJDA hemp licensees. I'm available for
18 questions if you have. If not, please let me close by
19 expressing my appreciation for this opportunity, and I
20 thank you for your time.

21 (Applause)

22 THE SECRETARY: That was the last of the
23 in-person. I'm just going to go over the names that
24 didn't speak before I move on to the virtual speakers.
25 John Kulin? Robert Crigler? James Schon? Brian

1 Cooper? Sean Mack? Oscar Carrillo? Alan Trzuskoski?
2 Patrick Duff? And Kristen Goedde?

3 So moving on to the virtual speakers.
4 The first person on the list is Justin James Leone.
5 Last four is 4147. If you're in the room, please raise
6 your hand.

7 The next person on the list is Douglas
8 Adams. Last four is 2980. If you're in the room,
9 please raise your hand.

10 The next person on the list is Edward
11 Grimes. If you're in the room, please raise your hand.
12 Last four is 0682. If you would like to speak, please
13 raise your hand.

14 Next person on the list is Jon Cohn. Last
15 four is 8083. If you're in the room, please raise your
16 hand.

17 Next person on the list is Samuel
18 Reichbart. Last four is 3654. If you're in the room,
19 please raise your hand.

20 Okay. I see you, Sam. Sam, you have
21 three minutes, and I'll give it a reminder at one
22 minute, okay?

23 MR. SAM REICHBART: Sounds good. I would
24 like to start today by thanking Commissioner Barker.
25 Thank you for your passion, thank you for always

1 speaking up for the little guys, and thank you for
2 being the only person in the CRC to show that you care
3 for patients.

4 You always made me feel heard. You're the
5 only one who ever made me feel heard, and I'll always
6 appreciate you for that. The rest of you guys should
7 know how -- honestly, how scared I am to have this
8 group of people in charge of my and many other people's
9 medicine. We're coming up on a year of me and many
10 others trying to work on the issues we see.

11 It's been nearly a year of being pushed to
12 the side and ignored, and with Barker leaving, I have
13 such little faith that things will improve. In fact, I
14 feel they will get astronomically worse with you all
15 heading the ship. I hope you guys have figured out a
16 better way to actually answer our questions and
17 concerns.

18 The only two things on your logo besides
19 your name is equity and safety. When will you start to
20 care about those things? It is exhausting coming here
21 every month and talking at you. When will someone talk
22 to us? You've already heard about the wide range of
23 issues that I and many others have brought to your
24 attention.

25 You promised us solutions were being

1 worked on and that we would get more involvement so you
2 could fix the issues that we see, then you held
3 roundtables that you denied most of us, many of us the
4 most passionate people in this state that have been
5 trying to work with you from even attending those
6 roundtables, and then you publicly announced that it
7 was a failure and no one showed up.

8 Well, maybe it was because you denied the
9 people that truly wanted to be there and truly wanted
10 to help make this program better. Because you don't
11 care to listen to us, you only care to listen to people
12 that might agree with you.

13 Truthfully, you guys failed by denying the
14 opportunity to make good on your promise of more
15 involvement. I hope you all take a moment to reflect
16 on this past year and take a moment to decide to do
17 better for patients over the course of the next year,
18 and prove my many -- many fears wrong.

19 Hope you all have the day you deserve.

20 THE SECRETARY: I see Lefty Grimes, so I'm
21 gonna give you the chance to speak.

22 MR. EDWARD LEFTY GRIMES: Okay. Okay.
23 Can you hear me?

24 THE SECRETARY: Yes, we can hear you. I'm
25 going to just give a reminder at one minute.

1 MR. GRIMES: Yes. This is Edward Grimes.
2 I'm with sativacross.org. We're a 501c3 here in New
3 Jersey fighting for cannabis patients' rights and the
4 rights of the disabled. I want to thank Commissioner
5 Barker for pushing for the Zoom access for disabled --
6 for sick, dying, and disabled people.

7 This is a huge step in making the CRC
8 patient-focused -- truly patient-focused. A lot of
9 sick -- sick, dying, and disabled people can now take
10 part. I don't have to drive an hour and 20 minutes
11 with my horrible neuropathy today, so I'm actually
12 taking less medication because of that decision that
13 you made to make a Zoom access call out of this.

14 So I appreciate that. You saved me some
15 pain today. You really did. I want to also talk about
16 disabled vets, because Mr. -- Commissioner Barker is a
17 huge -- huge advocate for vets. And as of right now,
18 there's many dispensaries that disabled vets can't
19 access, and I need the new commissioner to know this,
20 and I need all the Commissioners to know this.

21 There's no access for many people in
22 Maplewood, West Orange, Jersey City, Hoboken, Camden.
23 All over New Jersey, there's steps, and a step is a
24 wall to someone in a wheelchair. Ableism is just as
25 bad as sexism and racism, and if you can eradicate some

1 forms of sexism in the world, would you do it? Of
2 course you would.

3 If you can eradicate some forms of racism
4 in the world, would you do it? Of course you would.
5 I'm asking you to eradicate the ableism in the
6 dispensaries in New Jersey, and you have the power to
7 eradicate the ableism, at least some forms of it, which
8 is the wheelchair access. We're putting our fingers in
9 the dam, but we need you to stop the flow.

10 We're trying to donate ramps. We're
11 trying to ask people to put ramps in, but there's a lot
12 of -- a lot of places without wheelchair access. And
13 I'm going to say it here again, disability rights are
14 human rights.

15 THE SECRETARY: One minute.

16 MR. GRIMES: Disability rights are human
17 rights. There's a tax issue in the urban enterprise
18 zones. Many dispensaries are in urban enterprise
19 zones, and you get a tax break if you're in those
20 dispensaries.

21 However, if you're in a wheelchair, you
22 can't access the same tax breaks as able-bodied people
23 in urban enterprise zones. These are huge issues that
24 need to be addressed, and the CRC can address all these
25 issues. I would ask that you make a resolution right

1 now, and someone second it, to have all dispensaries
2 wheelchair accessible.

3 The ADA does not go far enough because
4 they allow buildings to be grandfathered in, and the
5 CRC has the power to override that and make sure every
6 dispensary is wheelchair accessible. Can we get a
7 resolution today to help our disabled vets? Because
8 I'm telling you, you wouldn't have your commission
9 without disabled vets fighting for your rights.

10 So we need you to fight for disabled vets
11 the way they fought for you and give them wheelchair
12 access to every dispensary. Can we get a resolution
13 today? Thank you.

14 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
15 list is Vladimir Bautista. Last four is 4950. If
16 you're in the room, please raise your hand.

17 The next person on the list is Matullu
18 Olukbala (ph). Last four is 8861. If you're in the
19 room, please raise your hand.

20 The next person on the list is Samuel
21 Hilton. Last four is 7070. If you're in the room,
22 please raise your hand.

23 VICE CHAIR: I don't see him.

24 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
25 list is Sephida Artis. Last four is 3447. If you're

1 in the room, please raise your hand. Okay. I see you,
2 Sephida. Three minutes. The floor is yours.

3 MS. SEPHIDA ARTIS-MILLS: Can you hear me?

4 THE SECRETARY: I'll just give a reminder
5 at one minute. Okay?

6 MS. ARTIS-MILLS: Can you hear me?

7 THE SECRETARY: Yes, we can hear you.

8 MS. ARTIS-MILLS: Okay. Perfect. Hello.

9 My name is Sephida Artis-Mills, and I am president and
10 co-founder of the United Empowerment Party, which is a
11 federally recognized and registered political party
12 that focuses specifically on cannabis policy and
13 legislation.

14 And today I wanted to address the
15 immediate deployment and transparent use of SIF funds
16 for the state of New Jersey. The New Jersey Social
17 equity excise fee was established to generate revenue
18 with the express purpose of promoting equity
19 empowerment in the state's cannabis industry. However,
20 while this tax revenue accumulates, it remains largely
21 unspent, preventing the fund from achieving intended
22 goals.

23 And I believe that New Jersey should
24 immediately allocate these funds to ensure that the
25 cannabis industry does not replicate the inequities of

1 other sectors. And here's why prompt and transparent
2 action is critical. I want to specifically touch on
3 transparency and SIF allocation and dedicated funding
4 and accountability.

5 A major concern is the lack of clarity
6 around why SIF funds have not yet been allocated, and
7 this raises questions about the state's commitment to
8 equity, empowerment in cannabis.

9 Transparency is crucial to building trust
10 with stakeholders and ensuring that the funds are used
11 appropriately. Stakeholders, particularly those from
12 disproportionately impacted communities, have the right
13 to know how these funds are being managed and when they
14 can expect support. The lack of transparency
15 undermines confidence in the state's ability to
16 administer an equitable cannabis program, and it is
17 also essential to include the community and the
18 planning and implementation of allocating set funds.

19 I would also suggest an oversight
20 committee that includes members that come from
21 disproportionately impacted communities.

22 THE SECRETARY: One minute.

23 MS. ARTIS-MILLS: SIF funds must remain in
24 their dedicated account and not be siphoned off into
25 other state funds or repurpose for unrelated

1 initiatives. These funds were specifically collected
2 to promote social equity, and any diversion of this
3 money would be a breach of trust.

4 Furthermore, robust mechanisms must be put
5 in place to monitor and track the use of SIF funds, and
6 detailed reports on allocation and implementation
7 should be submitted to the New Jersey Cannabis
8 Regulatory Commission regularly, ensuring
9 accountability and proper oversight of the funds.

10 Social equity is definitely not an
11 anomaly, and I feel that there should be a
12 comprehensive plan in how funds are allocated for
13 community reinvestment, especially when we're talking
14 about restoration and redemption of communities that
15 were specifically targeted and where cannabis was
16 weaponized against them specifically. Thank you.

17 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
18 list is Damon Hanchell. Last four is 952 -- oh.

19 MR. DANSON HANCHELL: Good afternoon,
20 Chairwoman Houenou, Vice Chair Delgado, Ms. -- Director
21 Nash, of course, you, Director Barker, and you, Ms. Del
22 Cid-Kosso. I've been going through the process -- I'm
23 social equity, diversity, inclusion, minority business
24 zone. I've been going through this process for three
25 years. I started three years ago, and I, you know, did

1 everything you guys asked me to do.

2 Went through all of it, I'm still going
3 through paperwork, and it's like, every time I complete
4 one task, it's like there's another task to complete.
5 You know, and I'm not financially able to do what maybe
6 most of the big companies do, hire lawyers. So most of
7 the paperwork, everything I have to do myself based on
8 my knowledge and based on the information you guys have
9 put out.

10 So at this point now, I came to a
11 roadblock. I submitted my rehabilitation
12 consideration. I was under the impression last month
13 that it would be heard, and now I'm here again, another
14 month, you know, and I don't want to make this no
15 deflection on all of the -- that you guys have done
16 already, but I just would like you guys to reconsider
17 my rehabilitation.

18 And I look forward to moving forward in
19 the cannabis industry. Thank you, guys.

20 (Applause)

21 THE SECRETARY: The next -- the next
22 person on the list is Adam Goers. Last four is 3231.
23 If you're in the room, please raise your hand.

24 That's it for the virtual speakers. I'm
25 going to go over one more time of the virtual speakers.

1 Justin James Leone? Douglas Adams? Jon Cohn?
2 Vladimir Bautista? Matullu Olukbala? Samuel Hilton?
3 And Adam Goers?

4 Chairwoman Houenou, this will conclude the
5 registered speakers we have for today's public meeting.

6 CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Saeed. And thank
7 you to everyone who shared their -- their thoughts,
8 their suggestions, and their personal experiences with
9 us today. This concludes the business that we have
10 before us today. And so with that, I move that we
11 adjourn today's meeting.

12 Is there a second?

13 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairwoman, I second
14 your motion.

15 CHAIR: Seconded by Vice Chair Delgado.
16 Is there any discussion on this motion? Hearing none,
17 all those in favor, say aye.

18 COMM. DEL CID-KOSSO: Aye.

19 COMM. NASH: Aye.

20 COMM. BARKER: Aye.

21 VICE CHAIR: Aye.

22 CHAIR: All those opposed, say nay. Any
23 abstentions? The motion passes. The time is 3:05, and
24 we are adjourned today. Thank you everyone for joining
25 us.