



State of New Jersey
CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION

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Lt. Governor

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

NEW JERSEY CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025

1 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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3 DIANA HOUEYOU, Chair Woman

4 SAM DELGADO, Vice Chair

5 MARIA DEL-CID-KOSSO

6 KRISTA NASH

7 AMELIA MAPP

8 CHRISTOHER RIGGS

9 DANIEL SAID, Secretary

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11 OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

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13 PAUL URBISH

14 DAVE TUASON

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1 CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. Welcome
2 to this meeting of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission.
3 The time is 11:01. I call this meeting into order.
4 Mr. Said, can you please read the notice of the
5 public meeting.

6 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman this is a
7 regularly scheduled meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis
8 regulatory Commission's 2025 annual meeting schedule.
9 Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in
10 accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer open public
11 meetings act.

12 Notice of the meeting has provided to the
13 Asbury Park Press, Bergen Record, Courier-Post, Star-
14 Ledger and the Trenton Times on December 12, 2024. The
15 agenda and information regarding the in-person meeting
16 and the ability to live stream was also posted on the
17 CRC website. The meeting time and location has also
18 been posted on the website with the New Jersey Cannabis
19 Regulatory Commission and with the Office of the
20 Secretary of the State.

21 CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Said. Can you
22 please take roll call.

23 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
24 Kosso.

25 MS. MARIA DEL CID-KOSSO: Present.

1 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp.

2 MS. AMELIA MAPP: Present.

3 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash.

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

16 CHAIR: Thank you, is there a motion?

17 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairwoman, I'm going
18 to (inaudible) to the executive Session.

19 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

20 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
21 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion to go
22 into executive session? Hearing no discussion. All
23 those in favor of going into executive session, say
24 aye.

25 ALL: Aye.

1 CHAIR: All those opposed say, nay. The
2 extension passes. So, as Mr. Said noted, we expect
3 to be in executive session to last approximately two
4 hours. We will leave the live stream running during
5 that time for anybody who is in the room. Our staff
6 will not be able to answer any questions about the
7 items that are on for consideration today, but we can
8 expect to resume the public session at approximately
9 1:05. Thank you, everyone.

10 (SILENT EXECUTIVE SESSION 9 to 02:25:00)

11 CHAIR: Good afternoon and welcome back.
12 The time is 1:21 and we will resume the public portion
13 of this meeting. I need a complete (inaudible).

14 THE SECRETARY: Next up on the agenda is
15 approving the minutes of both the Commission's open and
16 executive sessions held on March 18, 2025. The minutes
17 have been shared with the members of the Commission
18 prior to this meeting.

19 CHAIR: Thank you. If there are no edits
20 from the Commissioners, I will ask if there is a
21 motion.

22 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: So I move, Madam
23 Chair.

24 CHAIR: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso moves
25 to approve the meeting minutes from March 6 -- I'm

1 sorry, March 18.

2 VICE CHAIR: I second.

3 CHAIR: Seconded by Vice Chair Delgado.

4 Is there a second -- I'm sorry. Is there any
5 discussion? Hearing no discussion. All those in favor
6 of approving the March 18 meeting minutes, say aye.

7 ALL: Aye.

8 CHAIR: All those opposed say nay. Any
9 abstentions? The motion passes.

10 THE SECRETARY: The next item on the
11 agenda is the chair's report.

12 CHAIR: All right. So first, I want to
13 start off by acknowledging that next week, the
14 Commission will turn four years old. For the last four
15 years, under the leadership of Governor Phil Murphy,
16 New Jersey has been a national leader into the
17 unregulated operations that live more or less in the
18 shadows, and turning them into a legitimate, regulated,
19 above ground industry. And we did so in a way that
20 promotes diversity and inclusion, meaningful access to
21 economic opportunities, and true collaboration with the
22 public.

23 I want to thank my fellow Commissioners,
24 NJCRC staff, and staff at the Office of the Governor
25 for their hard work and commitment to these efforts.

1 As chair of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission, I
2 remain committed to the Commission's values of equity,
3 safety, and transparency into working to preserve the
4 integrity of this agency. It is not lost on me that
5 there are some individuals who would prefer to see an
6 opaque system in which competition is minimized and
7 favors are traded behind closed doors. But the law
8 requires that we operate as a public body, and so we do
9 under leadership that understands the importance of
10 transparency and properly managing expectations.

11 So we at the Commission will continue to
12 do all we can to keep New Jersey at the forefront of
13 sensible and equitable oversight of the cannabis
14 industry. As the NJCRC enters its fifth year, I'm
15 excited for what comes next, seeing even more
16 businesses realize the American dream and get to hang
17 up their shingles. So happy birthday to the New Jersey
18 Cannabis Regulatory Commission, and congratulations to
19 everyone on all that we've achieved together.

20 I now wanna turn to some industry
21 reminders. Applications for cannabis consumption areas
22 are open. Social equity businesses, diversity owned
23 businesses and all micro businesses can -- I'm sorry,
24 Social, equity, diversity owned and micro business
25 retailers can now apply for cannabis consumption area

1 endorsement. All other retailers will be able to apply
2 for cannabis consumption area endorsement starting July
3 2nd. And I also want to remind everyone that there is
4 a scam still targeting our cannabis businesses,
5 scammers are contacting employees and luring them into
6 sending money to unauthorized financial accounts.
7 Scammers are often pretending to be a manager at the
8 business, or claim to have spoken with business owners
9 and managers and then direct the employee to have large
10 sums of cash deposited into cryptocurrency ATMs, or
11 even drop off boxes of cash in new unfamiliar
12 locations.

13 So to our business owners and managers,
14 please, please, please ensure that your staff are
15 properly informed and trained on how to properly log,
16 secure, and deposit money into the proper business
17 accounts. Our businesses have lost 1000s of dollars to
18 these scams, and we wanna make sure that everyone is on
19 notice. Excuse me. So employees, please stay
20 vigilant. If you have questions about whether or not
21 you are being directed to deposit money into
22 unauthorized accounts, contact your manager or business
23 owner directly.

24 Now on a lighter note, I have invited our
25 friends and colleagues at the University Action Center

1 and New Jersey Economic Development Authority to come
2 and share updates on the successes of the Cannabis
3 Training Academy and Cannabis Grant Programs. Both the
4 Business Action Center and Economic Development
5 Authority have done incredible perkers to the NJCRC and
6 worked tirelessly to stand up programs offering
7 technical systems and funding to our cannabis
8 businesses. These programs have been examples of how
9 states can show support to the budding cannabis
10 industry. And together with the NJCRC, our three
11 agencies have worked collaboratively to make New Jersey
12 a national model of how to build a cannabis industry
13 from scratch in a way that embodies fair and meaningful
14 access to anyone who wants to participate.

15 So we'll first start by hearing from the
16 New Jersey Business Action Center. With us today are
17 Penni Wild (ph), Deputy Executive Director of Business
18 Action Center Tahit Chappelle (ph), Executive Director
19 of the Cannabis Training Academy. Please come forward
20 and share a few wonderful remarks and updates about the
21 helpful resource that is the Campus Training Academy.

22 MS. PENNI WILD: Good afternoon.
23 Chairwoman Houenou, Commissioners, CRC Executive
24 Director Grace (ph), amazing staff who without your
25 assistance, we would not be able to do the work that we

1 do. And seated guests, good afternoon. So on behalf
2 of the Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State,
3 (inaudible) and Melanie Wolby (ph), our Executive
4 Director of the Business Action Center. Thank you for
5 the opportunity to provide this update. My name is
6 Penni Wild I'm Deputy Director of the New Jersey
7 Business Action Center, which I'll share more about in
8 a moment. We're going to have some slides that can
9 just kind of run in the background, and with me is
10 Tauhid Chappelle, our amazing Executive Director of the
11 Cannabis Training Academy. And that is housed in the
12 Department of State in this discussion center.

13 Again, our overview is -- shares a little
14 bit about what we do. I can just go ahead and run
15 that, because everybody can read that. I'm just going
16 to talk about as background, the NJCRC granted NJ
17 privilege in 2022, to provide technical assistance to
18 entrepreneurs who wish to establish legal licensed
19 cannabis businesses in the state. In the adult use
20 market. And currently, cannabis entrepreneurs are
21 restricted from accessing federally funded services
22 that are typically available to regular businesses. So
23 if you want to open a gas station company, a variety of
24 different companies, you can go to something called the
25 Small Business Development Center, or score there are

1 different organizations. But because cannabis is
2 illegal at the federal level, than anybody that has
3 federal funding cannot provide services to these
4 (inaudible), and what we know is that well trained
5 entrepreneurs run safer businesses. They create jobs,
6 uplift local economies, especially in impact zones
7 hardest hit by past (inaudible) prohibition.

8 So with thousands of entrepreneurs
9 statewide interested in building legitimate, safe, and
10 successful businesses in the industry. State officials
11 saw the need to provide the right guidance, smart
12 governance, and economic empowerment. With the
13 essential education and direction, these new
14 entrepreneurs face unfamiliar regulatory requirements
15 being deceived by predatory bad actors, which we just
16 heard a little bit more about. And risk costly
17 mistakes that can set them and their communities back.
18 We know that every major government initiative that
19 changes lives, whether it's public education, workforce
20 development, or small business support exists, because
21 smart investment today leads to stronger communities
22 and a thriving economy tomorrow. And the CTA is just
23 one example where providing no cost education to
24 businesses can create a sizable return in sales tax
25 revenue that can provide a variety of public services.

1 We last launched the four -- the first
2 four levels of the Cannabis Training Academy in October
3 of 2024 and we're pleased to announce that as of today,
4 five months later, more than 1200 people are registered
5 and going through the content.

6 They learned about the process of getting a license,
7 opening their doors and building a sustainable
8 business. We host live question and answer sessions
9 with our qualified instructors, where participants can
10 gain valuable insights. And in the program, we've been
11 told is the largest government sponsored technical
12 assistance curriculum in the country, and as other
13 states start to create theirs, they're reaching out on
14 a regular basis to stand up. How you did it, can we
15 hire your instructors? We need to do this now. So,
16 it's quickly becoming a national model. So what do
17 they learn? They learned all of these wonderful
18 things. We have lots of courses online learning, Pace
19 modules. They're designed to help entrepreneurs decide
20 whether cannabis business may be right for them.

21 The most important piece that we knew
22 needed to be addressed is; is this business right for
23 me? Before you spend all your money, before you make
24 any investment. Courses include everything from
25 business plan development, aspects of cannabis

1 licensing application, and specific documents that they
2 need to have for review and consideration. So we
3 created these modules with qualified, vetted
4 instructors and mentors who are currently supporting,
5 consulting, teaching or working within the Cannabis
6 industry as successful licensed business operators.
7 (Inaudible). Keep on going.

8 MR. TAUHID CHAPPELL: Thank you, Penni.
9 Thank you, everybody from the New Jersey Cannabis
10 Regulatory Commission and everyone who is joining us
11 today for our public meeting. Just to continue what
12 Penni has been saying is that, you know, this program
13 is, again, online, no cost for those that are watching
14 on Zoom, you can join in and register at any time
15 @cta.nj.gov. We have had extreme success with our
16 program, and this opportunity here is to provide a
17 progress report on how our academy is going. Like
18 Penni mentioned, we have over 1200 registered students.
19 We've had more than a dozen different webinars
20 providing supplemental information around the Cannabis
21 Supply Chain System, including our legacy of legal
22 webinar series. And we are considering to continue to
23 program the academy where students who finish the 10
24 levels that we offer will be able to generate a
25 certificate of completion that will be able to use in

1 their NJCRC application process should they decide to
2 apply bonuses.

3 Other things that we wanted to include in
4 terms of the offerings of the program is that not only
5 do you get a mixture of Power Point presentations and
6 instructor led videos, we were also able to download
7 supplemental documents in all of the scripts associated
8 with our courses. We're trying to be as accessible and
9 available to all types of learning, and so that you
10 will make sure that all the information available if
11 you're considering going for application. I just want
12 to also mention too that, in support of the governor,
13 (inaudible) student equity in the cannabis industry,
14 our student body reflects the intention of the people
15 in the populations that we're trying to help those that
16 have been impacted the most (inaudible) drugs. Some
17 data here that you see on the slide shows that the top
18 three representations of people who self-identify.

19 Most of our students, identify as black.
20 Second population is white, and the third population is
21 Latino. One thing I'll also say is that we are working
22 to convert the entire chemistry in (inaudible) forces
23 in Spanish for Spanish speakers. And so, we really
24 want to address the fact that Spanish is the second
25 most spoken languages. So we are working to convert

1 all our courses there. Black women continue to lead
2 the representation of our student population, more than
3 51% representation are Black women. We'd like to thank
4 the sororities that probably were circulating our
5 program to the divine nine. So thank you for those.
6 And then also, we have a pretty good diverse
7 representation of student populations, mostly
8 concentration in North Jersey counties and then in
9 South Jersey in my own Council Camden and reflects on
10 the high cooperation of student representation.

11 So we are trying to be (inaudible) we're
12 trying to reach everybody (inaudible) older to
13 participate in this program, and we are making really
14 good progress in terms of our presentation. So just
15 sharing a little bit of our accomplishments, like Penni
16 said, we have done things like (inaudible) webinars.
17 We have continued to do -- we have the weekly or bi-
18 weekly instructor Q and A's, where students can talk to
19 our instructors, go deeper into the course materials,
20 and have their questions answered by people who have,
21 you know, license, or a consultant on license to get a
22 deeper expertise. And then all of this combined is
23 providing more than dozens of hours of content and
24 education material for anyone who's interested in
25 (inaudible) New Jersey, and for those that are here and

1 those that are watching.

2 I just want to also underline the fact
3 that even if you have a license currently, if you're an
4 operator, the Cannabis Training Academy is a great tool
5 education for your employees. If you want your
6 employees to understand the lesser tiers that you want
7 to get a license, this is a great opportunity to
8 establish that level of education.

9 For those that are in the process of
10 applying for a license, we provide so much more
11 information that will probably help you inform you of
12 the next steps in your license journey. And if you're
13 just a person who's interested in understanding this
14 industry, in New Jersey, the Campus Training brings a
15 lot of supplemental information so that you can
16 determine whether you want to be a worker, the
17 ancillary service provider, or actually apply for a
18 license itself. So we bring a very comprehensive
19 holistic approach to our training and education.
20 (Inaudible) @cta.nj.gov, if you're interested in
21 signing up.

22 We've been also posting focus groups for
23 our students. We want to get direct feedback from
24 students to make sure that we are meeting the needs of
25 people who would consider themselves entrepreneurs,

1 consider themselves operators, or consider themselves
2 just curious (inaudible). So I won't read the entire
3 quotes here, but as you can see in some of these
4 slides, we have done really good feedback on the
5 quality of our program. People feel empowered to make
6 good business decisions, and they feel informed that
7 they are on the right path, or they feel they may have
8 to change their path, but they've been grateful for our
9 assistance in this association. And then one thing I
10 want wanted to remind too, for those that find
11 themselves already in the process where you found your
12 conditional or you got awarded your annual, that there
13 are still a lot of gems that you may not know of, even
14 if you go through our Cannabis Training Academy as
15 well. So I implore those that are already owners,
16 check this out, and you'll learn some gems, and if you
17 think it's appropriate, send it to your lawyers as
18 well, because they're definitely to learn a lot about
19 the industry and the licensing application process too.

20 So what's next as we continue to finalize
21 the rest of the program, get our certificate of
22 completion up and running for all the students that
23 complete all 10 levels. We're also doing Spanish
24 translation of the entire site. We are also going to
25 be adding badging curriculum too that helps workers get

1 their badging process, their badging education
2 completed as well, at no cost. And we are also -- like
3 Penni mentioned, we are a national model. We have
4 advice with other states like Rhode Island, Minnesota,
5 Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania and even Colorado,
6 reach out to us and asked us, how did we do this, and
7 what does it take to provide show something like this?

8 And personally, for me, as someone who has
9 lived in five different states, has been more than one
10 occupation for more than a dozen years and has been a
11 bartender myself, or just entering Philadelphia. This
12 educational program is beyond the most comprehensive.
13 It's by far the biggest, and in my opinion, maybe some
14 biases, the most valuable in the country. So we hope
15 that people enjoy all the work that we've been putting
16 in, because this level of education is unmatched. And
17 you're going to learn a whole lot.

18 So last thing is, as always, you can find
19 us @cta.nj.gov 10 levels, 60 courses, doing your own
20 pace. We have some of the best instructors in the
21 country, 28 instructors. When we today, call out for
22 instructors to help us build the Cannabis Training
23 Academy. We had 250 people apply for their instructor
24 position, and we chose 28 of them. So you really are
25 getting some of these best people teaching the best

1 levels across the country. So with that being said,
2 Penni, I'll pass it back to you.

3 MS. WILD: We are complete. Thank you.
4 And congratulations on your anniversary.

5 THE SECRETARY: Thank you.

6 CHAIR: Thank you very much, and
7 congratulations to you all. (Inaudible) any of
8 Commissioners have a quick question that they want to
9 ask. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso.

10 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: I don't have a
11 question. It's more of a statement. I just wanted to
12 commend you for the hard work you guys have been
13 putting in the last two years, the work that you guys
14 are doing is very important, because we know that many
15 applicants that came to us at the beginning didn't have
16 the funding to hire an attorney or a lobbying firm to
17 do this type of work. And you guys are creating
18 something from the ground up. In two years, you were
19 able to put this together. So I applaud you, and your
20 team for doing this, and I hope that you continue this
21 type of mentorship that is helping many, many
22 applicants.

23 The second thing, I'm very thrilled, and
24 thank you for translating your documents into Spanish.
25 I think, that's a -- goes a long way, we have a pool of

1 applicants, and Wesley (ph) has been working with them
2 that are Latino, and I'm glad that you guys are doing
3 that outreach as well. So thank you so much.

4 MS. WILD: Thank you.

5 VICE CHAIR: Hi, Penni. How are you
6 doing?

7 MS. WILD: I'm good.

8 VICE CHAIR: I see you have 40 videos
9 here, and you have the 28 instructors. Are these
10 instructions live, or are they all on video? Or is it
11 a combination? I just --

12 MS. WILD: They've all been recorded. So
13 they're prerecorded. There are scripts that go along
14 with them. So we designed everything for visual,
15 auditory and esthetic learners. So you can read the
16 supplemental materials, you can read the script, you
17 can listen and actually print it out for yourself.

18 VICE CHAIR: Nice, and then second
19 question which is more important. The (inaudible) it's
20 not enough. You didn't say. Are you okay with the
21 academy going forward, 25.6 budget?

22 MS. WILD: We are in the process of
23 working that through, so that's where we are.

24 VICE CHAIR: All right. Thank you.

25 MS. WILD: Thanks.

1 MS. NASH: I have a statement I would like
2 to echo Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso statement, I think
3 you are doing a tremendous job. And I just want to
4 recount a conversation that I had with a public
5 commenter at one of the seat hearings, and she was
6 saying that she needed resources to be able to
7 understand the forms and how to apply, and so it was
8 really nice to be able to just refer her to CTA. I'm
9 very proud of the work that you've done, and I commend
10 you, and I thank you. Keep up the great work.

11 THE SECRETARY: Yeah. Thank you. Thank
12 you so much.

13 CHAIR: (Inaudible).

14 VICE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioners. We
15 appreciate it. Commissioner (inaudible) mentioned
16 about policy things (inaudible) we are doing just some
17 soft surveying of our instructors, and we want to talk
18 about the value of this program. Many of these
19 instructors obviously consult on the side, and they
20 offer different types of consulting services and
21 charges. But because this program is no cost, you
22 don't have to give it results directly for this initial
23 amount of training and education.

24 Some of these consultants charge well I
25 assume, well we know more than \$900 an hour, and a lot

1 of those instructors who actually do charge that too.
2 So you're bringing a lot of power people with a lot of
3 information background, and you're saving a lot of
4 money by going through these levels, because now you're
5 not starting on story zero, you're starting on story
6 five of those (inaudible). You feel informed that you
7 don't have to ask a lawyer about the laws -- the law of
8 (inaudible) rules and regulations. And so I just want
9 to point out, because this is a huge cost savings for
10 anybody who gets involved in this work.

11 CHAIR: Thank you very much. And
12 congratulations again to you -- to you both and your
13 teams for all the great work and the wonderful
14 achievements that you've been able to secure thus far.

15 MS. WILD: Thank you.

16 MR. CHAPPELL: Thank you.

17 MS. WILD: Well, thanks too, also to the
18 CRC staff and everyone has just pitched in, reviewed
19 modules made sure that everything is on point, and so
20 you're our partner, and we appreciate it.

21 MR. CHAPPELL: Thank you.

22 CHAIR: We appreciate you too.

23 MR. CHAPPELL: Thank you.

24 MS. WILD: Thanks so much.

25 CHAIR: All right. And now it's a round

1 out. Today's chair report we'll hear from the New
2 Jersey Economic Development Authority here to share
3 insights into the progress of the \$20 million grants
4 awarded this business. We have Tai Cooper, Chief
5 Community Development Officer, Jenna Jones (ph), Senior
6 Community Development Officer, and Aubrey Flanagan, and
7 Senior Advisor in Community Development. (Inaudible)
8 the floor's yours.

9 MS. TAI COOPER: You have a strong all
10 women team here.

11 CHAIR: Okay. Just turn on the
12 (inaudible).

13 MS. COOPER: I repeat you have a strong
14 all women team here. So super excited about that. You
15 just heard from our colleagues over at the New Jersey
16 Business Action Center. Before I jump on the
17 (inaudible), I want to quickly say the success we have,
18 the work we've been able to do, has been part and
19 parcel, hand in hand with back -- without back, without
20 funding for back, we cannot do what we do. So I just
21 want to stress the necessity of the partnership, the
22 necessity of the work that they're doing that's so
23 critical and free, but it is a partnership that has
24 really helped us to thrive. So just kudos to Penni and
25 the entire team over at back. Now let's start on EDA,

1 So Madam Chairwoman, thank you so much for having us.

2 And welcome Commissioner Mapp, glad to have you here.

3 Quickly, going to go over the programs
4 that we have at EDA, and again, this is going to be a
5 tag team effort. As you all know, we've received over
6 \$20 million for our pilot program to start up New
7 Jersey's recreational campus grant program for license
8 holders for their startup and operational cost during
9 the first three years of operation. This is unheard
10 of. No other state has done what New Jersey has done.
11 We're incredibly grateful to our Governor, Governor
12 Murphy, the legislature already shouted out NJ back.
13 But also equally as important is CRC and I have to call
14 out Maria (ph) and Charles (ph), because we spent, I
15 don't know how many meetings with Maria and Charles,
16 going over painstaking information about what resources
17 were needed and why.

18 So Maria, I just -- I appreciate the work
19 that you guys have done. But again, it's great to have
20 partnerships like this. So we mentioned earlier, it's
21 \$20 million that we received, and we talked about New
22 Jersey having the largest brands in the nation, and we
23 did. Jenna is going to go over doing ventures, and
24 Aubrey is going to go over (inaudible) equity. But
25 just to give you a sense of the number, we were able to

1 award brands of \$250,000 to Cannabis businesses that
2 already had site control and municipal approval, which
3 can be incredibly hard to obtain, and then proceed
4 equity. And we heard you loud and clear from the CRC.
5 We heard it loud and clear from the audience as well.
6 But especially, when it comes to we have a (inaudible)
7 equity program for social equity clients, right?

8 For social equity clients where, again
9 this is going to grant for \$150,000. And so when we
10 say New Jersey was at the forefront of this market
11 rolling ahead, we really (inaudible) and our names for
12 our cannabis brands are incredibly cheesy, and that is
13 on purpose, so I'm going to turn it over to Jenna to go
14 over our Joint Ventures Program.

15 MS. JENNA JONES: Thank you. So, hello.
16 Good -- I guess it's good afternoon, right? So I'm
17 gonna talk about the Joint Ventures grant. The Joint
18 Ventures grant is the first grant that we launched.
19 Again, we have a commitment to -- to diversity, and we
20 wanted to align this grant with, you know, the
21 commission's recognition of social equity. So the
22 Joint Ventures grant was for \$250,000. It was focused
23 more on businesses that were -- that were a little bit
24 farther along. So there were two prerequisites that
25 you had to have before you applied, which was the

1 business had to have site control and municipal
2 approval. At time of application, we did a 40% set
3 aside for social equity applicants. We did a 5% set
4 aside for impact zone. There were leadership and
5 educational requirements. We needed a tax clearance
6 certificate. Businesses must be formed after March
7 9th, 2020, and you could either have a conditional or
8 annual license to apply for the grant, and less than 50
9 full-time employees.

10 So I wanted to talk a little bit about the
11 Joint ventures applicant pool. This is something that
12 we're really, really proud of. So just to break it
13 down by the numbers, this is also self-reported. We
14 had 163 applications submitted. I -- we awarded 48
15 grants, and I think that we were oversubscribed by like
16 9:35, and it -- the application opened at 9 a.m. So --
17 so you had to be quick. So --

18 MS. COOPER: And thorough and complete.

19 MS. JONES: So we had 91 applications from
20 minority owned business enterprises, so that's 56%. We
21 had 72 applications from women owned business
22 enterprises, which is 44%. And we had 43 applications
23 from both minority and women owned businesses at 26%.
24 So that was a -- that was a pretty good representation.
25 Also we received applications from all 21 counties in

1 New Jersey. Can you go to the next slide, please?

2 Okay. So I'm gonna do the joint ventures
3 applicant award breakdown. So we had 40 applications
4 approved. The applicant self-selected as 27 of the
5 approvals of minority owned business enterprises. 20
6 were women owned business enterprises and 12 approvals
7 were both minority and women owned business
8 enterprises. And if you look at the slide before, and
9 the percentages were pretty much, you know, right where
10 we -- for percentages were pretty much right where we
11 were with the application. So it did reflect a very
12 diverse applicant pool and a very diverse award pool.
13 14 -- we had businesses that were located 14 of the 21
14 counties and just do an overview of the joint ventures
15 grantees, we had 48 awards.

16 Again, these were businesses that were
17 much farther along, they had already, you know, secured
18 site control and municipal approval. So they were
19 expected to open pretty quickly. So we had 46 grants
20 that were awarded. The total funding awarded was 11.5
21 million. The total grant funding distributed, it has
22 been 8.8 million for the joint ventures. And then just
23 to give you a breakdown of the 46 grant awardees, we
24 have 29 that are open and operating. We're pretty
25 proud of that. We're going to an opening tomorrow

1 actually, so that it'll be 30. So we have 22
2 dispensaries, three manufacturers, three cultivators,
3 and one testing lab.

4 CHAIR: And the one thing I'll -- I'll
5 just add on to that is that there're -- oh, sorry. The
6 one thing I will add on to that is that several of
7 these businesses have said, but for this support from
8 EDA, from the state, from CRC, they never would've been
9 able to open. So we talk about funding being impactful
10 and driving our economy, that's how you do it. And
11 that's what's happened with the funding that we
12 received for all of these cannabis businesses.

13 MS. JONES: And then just one last thing,
14 in terms of the 250,000, we, we did it in two
15 disbursements. So the first a hundred thousand came at
16 application when, you know, the applicant approved site
17 control, I mean, its full approval. The second 150,000
18 came -- came once businesses were open and operating,
19 because we do recognize that just because you open a
20 business doesn't mean that you're gonna bring in profit
21 from day one, especially, you know, this business
22 because it's so capital intensive. So we wanted to
23 reserve, you know, a portion of the funds to help
24 businesses kind of get started when they -- when they
25 opened. I think that's it for me. So I'll pass it to

1 my colleague, Aubrey

2 MS. AUBREY FLANAGAN: Thank you, Jenna.

3 So I'm excited to talk about the Seed equity grant, and
4 this was designed exclusively for our social equity
5 applicants. These grants provide \$150,000 in funding
6 to help our early stage cannabis entrepreneurs with our
7 startup and operational costs, similarly to the Joint
8 Ventures grant a little bit different. This grant you
9 were allowed to have no site control so you could and a
10 conditional license. To ensure that these businesses
11 were set up for long-term success, we also require the
12 completion of a technical assistance program. We'll
13 talk a little bit more -- a little bit more about that
14 later. Eligible criteria mirrored our broader equity
15 goals and applicants needed to demonstrate leadership
16 or educational qualifications, secure their tax
17 clearance at the time of their application, and show
18 that their business was formed before March 9th, 2020.
19 As I said, they also had to hold either a conditional
20 or annual license from the NJCRC and employ less than
21 50 full-time employees. Next slide, please.

22 So now we're gonna talk about our cannabis
23 technical assistance program. This was before the
24 NJPAC program was created. So we went the NJ-EDA went
25 to ACE competitive public bidding process, got in a few

1 applications and scored all of them, and landed on
2 Oaksterdam University, which is, and still is a
3 pioneering national leader in cannabis education and
4 they actually tapped into the New Jersey instructor
5 market and the champions for cannabis on the ground --
6 who's on the ground here in NJ. So we delivered and
7 created a nine week hybrid, sold online as well as in
8 person NJ focused entrepreneurship training, covering
9 business management, financial planning, compliance,
10 and risk mitigation. In this cannabis technical
11 assistance program, we offer digital resources, virtual
12 classes, in-person workshops, expert one-to-one
13 coaching, as well as networking opportunities. And I
14 will say that the coaching piece was really, really
15 prominent in our program because if you can imagine
16 going through one of the hardest things and processes
17 of your life that you had someone who went through it
18 as well on tap to help you at any point that you got
19 stuck.

20 So truly, if you ever talk to one of our
21 graduates, they'll definitely send their flowers to
22 their coach who are able to really give them the advice
23 that's necessary to be successful. All in all, the
24 program had a 100% graduation rate. Everyone got in
25 their final exams, their midterm exams, their quizzes,

1 and met with their coach as needed. So that is a
2 really fantastic stat that we have to stay with this
3 program. Next slide, Wesley.

4 Here is a quote from one of our graduates.
5 As (inaudible) would say, if not, but for this money,
6 they wouldn't have made it over the finish line. So
7 this is just a quote from Tehir Johnson (ph). He is a
8 grant recipient and the owner of Simply Pure, which is
9 located in Trenton. He -- he gave us a fantastic quote
10 during the graduation about how influential this money
11 was to really get him over the finish line, and he has
12 been a committed finisher in Trenton since then. So
13 congratulations to Tehir. And next slide, Wesley.

14 So here's our applicant pool. Similarly
15 to joint ventures, we got applications from all over
16 the state that were very diverse. So we had 110
17 applications submitted similarly to joint ventures, it
18 was oversubscribed very quickly. It was very popular
19 and it was done on a first come, first completed basis.
20 82 applications were minority owned businesses, and 37
21 were woman owned, 33 were both. The county breakdown
22 is out of 110 applications, we received submissions
23 from 14 counties so wide -- a widespread applicant net.
24 The award breakdown reflects our applicant breakdown,
25 just showing that it is indicative of the individuals

1 and businesses that have applied. The awards reflect
2 that we made 48 awards and 36 approvals went to
3 minority owned business enterprises, 10 to women owned,
4 and nine to both. Out of the 110 applications, the
5 submissions were received from 14 counties. Here are
6 outcomes for seed equity. So again, we have 48 grants
7 awarded the grant funding in total was 7.2 million, and
8 we've distributed 4.8 million in so far. So of those
9 49 grantees, nine are open and operating, seven are
10 dispensaries, one's a manufacturer and one's a
11 cultivator. And we have many in our queue, in our
12 pipeline right now working with NJ-EDA staff to get
13 their final disbursements as they go through the
14 process. So thank you. That was the end of our
15 presentation. I'm passing it back to (inaudible).

16 CHAIR: Thank you very much. Great to
17 hear the -- the wonderful breakdown from about the
18 awardees and hearing, you know, that the numbers still
19 growing of those who are opening every day, so that's
20 wonderful. Do any of the commissioners have any quick
21 questions for our partners at the Economic Development
22 Authority? Vice Chair Delgado, use the microphone,
23 please.

24 VICE CHAIR: I let you go (inaudible).

25 MS. JONES: I knew it. I knew it. It's

1 okay. I'm ready for it.

2 VICE CHAIR: Just a quick question, the 29
3 Joint Ventures that are open, nine (inaudible) we done
4 follow up like six months down the line, a year down
5 the line. How are they doing? That's what I'm asking,
6 that's the question.

7 MS. JONES: So we're going to --

8 VICE CHAIR: (Inaudible). How are they?

9 MS. JONES: No, well, 100%. And I think
10 the hardest part for them was actually getting open.
11 That's something that all of our team acknowledged.
12 Like there are so many hurdles to so many of these
13 businesses getting open. So when they do get their
14 second disbursement or their first disbursement, it's
15 after they've been open and operating. So we were
16 intentional about how we were able to fund them not
17 just with one sum up front, but making sure we spread it
18 across the lifetime of them being open after they are
19 open. We do end up going back, we've gone to a couple
20 of them already to make sure that their finances are
21 good, to make sure that they're open, they're
22 operating. That's something that will continue to do
23 and continue to track them for the next three years.

24 VICE CHAIR: I think from my point of
25 view, I would really (inaudible) commission -- but I

1 would really like to know, you know, how they are going
2 during those three years. Are they still in business?
3 Are they --

4 MS. JONES: A 100%.

5 VICE CHAIR: That's the bottom line.

6 MS. JONES: Definitely. I can say that
7 we've done site visits at all 29 that are open. They
8 also, you know, talk to us about, you know, some of the
9 issues that they're encountering, how to get traffic in
10 through, you know, in through their businesses. So
11 that's -- that's kind of the concerns right now. But
12 all of them are operating and open and they're eager to
13 keep going.

14 CHAIR: And none of them have closed yet?

15 MS. JONES: No. So there we go. That's
16 the good thing. But we'll keep track of them again for
17 those next three years, because within the first year,
18 that's when we know most businesses don't succeed as
19 within that first year. So we're following them for
20 the next three years. And again, we were intentional
21 about doing grants, not loans for this one. We may
22 have something coming down the pipeline, but for the
23 very first pilot program, we wanted to be intentional
24 about grants that couldn't be called back.

25 VICE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

1 MS. JONES: Absolutely.

2 CHAIR: And I can definitely confirm
3 for Vice Chair Delgado that all of the commissioners
4 are very interested in making sure that -- that our
5 businesses are able to succeed and thrive. So
6 absolutely, I mean, the commissioner -- Vice Chair
7 Delgado already knows, you know, we have set as one of
8 our priority -- our long term goals for this industry.
9 By 2030, we want to see at least I believe it was 30%
10 of our businesses be open for at least two years. And
11 so the resources at the New Jersey Economic --
12 Development Authority and the New Jersey Business
13 Action Center are, I believe, going to directly
14 contribute to those numbers because of the valuable
15 resources and tools that you're offering -- offering
16 our business entrepreneurs. Those tools are gonna be -
17 - are gonna give them the, the, the power to actually
18 keep their doors open and actually succeed. So we
19 would love to -- for our agencies to continue to
20 partner together and make sure that we -- we do that
21 long term follow up to make sure that our programs are
22 working as intended.

23 MS. JONES: Absolutely.

24 CHAIR: Commissioner Nash?

25 MS. NASH: Hi, I was curious, does the

1 Joint Ventures grant or even the C-equity have -- do
2 the applicants have to demonstrate financial need or is
3 there a cap on the AGI aside from the conditional
4 licensees?

5 MS. JONES: No, so for there -- there
6 wasn't anything that you had to showcase that there was
7 a need. The way that we did this, and I'll make sure
8 that my colleagues can talk to this, is that we did our
9 disbursements in sets of two for joint ventures, and
10 then in sets of four, as far as, there was four
11 benchmarks you had to raise prior to getting your
12 disbursement. We did have an educational component
13 that they had to fulfill, but recognizing, again, this
14 is an incredibly new landscape, nobody knew what the
15 costs were gonna be other than exorbitant. And so our
16 entire process was to level the playing field,
17 understanding that on especially the social equity
18 side, that there were gonna be some challenges to
19 getting funding. And that's what we heard across the
20 board from folks that were very well financed to folks
21 that didn't have any money. There needs to be
22 additional resources that are always coming in to help
23 them sustain, but we didn't put any type of barricades
24 or blockades as far as like, show us that you cannot do
25 this so that there's a true need. If we do a loan,

1 they'd have to have collateral obviously. But for a
2 grant program, we kept it to basically you're putting
3 the application forward and here's the benchmarks that
4 you have to reach before you even get any of our
5 funding.

6 MS. NASH: Thank you very much.

7 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Nash. Any
8 other -- Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso?

9 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Not a question, but
10 just a comment. I just wanna commend you and your team
11 again for working with us in partnership with
12 Commissioner Parker and I as part of -- as members of
13 the Access the Capital work group. But we do have a
14 new member for that committee and as our Vice Chair,
15 Sam Delgado, you can definitely the lookout for more
16 emails in our community. So again, thank you for
17 always being a great partner with us and I know that we
18 had so many conversations, but we were putting this
19 together, but he and your team definitely did up like
20 most of the work. So again, thank you for everything
21 you've done and this is a pilot, so hopefully we do
22 have some success in these businesses so that we can
23 make this a permanent program --

24 MS. JONES: Absolutely.

25 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: -- down the road.

1 MS. JONES: Absolutely. And I'll just say
2 this about Commissioner Maria, we were both pregnant I
3 think around the same time. So in addition to helping
4 me out cannabis, she was also really great. I was
5 going through my maternity leave, nobody needed to hear
6 that or care, but thank you.

7 CHAIR: Wonderful. Any further questions
8 or comments from the board? No. Thank you again very
9 much. And you know, once again, thank you to both
10 agencies for your commitment to helping our cannabis
11 entrepreneurs realize their dreams. Now this concludes
12 today's Chair's report.

13 THE SECRETARY: The next item on the
14 agenda is the Executive Director's report

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

17 MR. CHRISTOPHER RIGGS: Thank you, Madam
18 Chair. I promise that my executive director be as long
19 as the chair's (inaudible) but thank you (inaudible)
20 here and thank you for these are great things. I can
21 confirm that other states are looking to you guys for
22 guidance, they talk about it all the time. When me and
23 other staff members being in meetings with other
24 states, they talk about the good things that New
25 Jersey's doing. The BDA program and also BEC program,

1 so congratulations to (inaudible). Now I'm gonna give
2 my report. So updates on dispensary opening, we have
3 more than 215 medical and recreational dispensaries in
4 all 21 counties. You'll see on the right hand side
5 there, there's new recreational only dispensaries.
6 We've got some up there in North Jersey, and then some
7 in the southern part of the state down Nevada Shore.

8 As far as the licensing goes, the total
9 license is approved as of March 25th, 2025. We have a
10 little less than 29 (inaudible) have been submitted, a
11 little more than 2200 have been approved. There are
12 140 applications that are currently under review
13 licensing. 320 applications are pending and 169
14 applications are currently under review (inaudible)
15 investigations. Additional licenses recreational have
16 been approved as of March 27th, 2025, 1581
17 conditionals, 130 additional annual (inaudible), 242
18 annual licenses, 83 expanded alternative treatment
19 centers for total 348 operating licenses and medical
20 permanence of the state. And that's, you know, four
21 years into this. So happy birthday to the CRC, we have
22 303 operating businesses today and after four years you
23 know, that's pretty consistent with -- if -- if not
24 better than how other states rolled out to markets.

25 Today for consideration and recommended to

1 the board are four conditional annual conversion
2 licenses, seven annual licenses, two extended
3 alternative treatment centers, and 14 annual license
4 renewals. As always, we'll give a patient and medical
5 cannabis program update as of March 15th, 2025. The
6 total number of patients are a little over 63,000 and
7 we have 4,271 caregivers and a little over 1500 doctors
8 enrolled in the program. And I wanna thank everybody
9 that came to the medical roundtables and shared all the
10 information that they shared with us to help guide us
11 and, and setting forth some policy and setting up rules
12 for a medical cabinet program and in the helps that we
13 can improve that program.

14 And now I'm gonna turn the floor over to
15 our director of Large Unit and CRC Compliance
16 Investigation, Director Paul Urbish to talk a little
17 bit about what his unit does for CRC and gives updates
18 on what he's seeing and other things. So the floor is
19 yours.

20 MR. PAUL URBISH: Thank you very much.
21 Acting Executive Director. It a pleasure to be here,
22 thank you for having me. This is my first time with
23 the big show, so I'm honored to be here. As the Acting
24 Executive Director said, my name is Paul Urbish, I'm
25 the director of our Office of Compliance and

1 Investigations. Being that it is my first time here
2 showing -- giving the audience a little bit of an idea
3 of what we're doing in our shop. The shop is split
4 into two separate units. One is our compliance unit,
5 one is our investigations unit. Those two units are
6 headed by two people I'd like to give a shout out to.
7 Our supervisor of compliance, Ken Neely (ph) and our
8 supervisor of investigations is, Jamie Garcia (ph), my
9 job would not be possible without their guidance, so
10 shout out to them, and thank you to them.

11 The compliance office currently has 17
12 compliance officers. Their job is to assist businesses
13 in getting operational and then the monitor for
14 continued compliance with the law regulations, all of
15 the licensees and permit in the state. So that's all
16 classes, license laboratories, and all the medical
17 permit as well. Just for a little background, the
18 investigations that are conducted last year calendar
19 year 2024, we received and completed investigations --
20 557 complaints thus far in 2025, we have 129 complaints
21 received that are either finalized or under
22 investigation currently. So you know, when you're
23 shooting emails into the box trying to get things
24 taken, please understand we are reviewing and
25 investigating everything that comes in. The other unit

1 that I'm responsible for is our investigations unit.
2 Currently, there are 10 investigators in that unit.
3 They're responsible for reviewing all the owners,
4 managers, and employees for qualification to work in
5 the industry. So that's reviewing all the criminal
6 histories, all the financial histories. I'd like to
7 break it down as compliance officers are responsible
8 for making sure you maintain your qualification in the
9 industry while the investigators are responsible for
10 determining if you are qualified to operate in the
11 industry. Another thing that the investigators are
12 responsible for is conducting investigations for
13 ownership changes, financial source agreements and
14 management services contracts. I want to touch on that
15 as part of kind of my news of the day because these are
16 very important, especially with operators coming up on
17 their one year and two year anniversaries and -- and
18 changes happening, bringing financial sources and --
19 and new investors. All of your ownership changes
20 require board approval at a public board meeting via
21 meeting such as this. All financial source agreements
22 and management services contracts have been into staff
23 for approval.

24 But again, before any transaction --
25 transaction is finalized, approval has to be received,

1 whether that be at a board meeting or through staff.
2 If money is going to be changed -- changed in advance
3 of receipt of approval, we have required that the
4 contracts must contain the clause that the money will
5 be returned if approval by the CRC is not granted.
6 This is incredibly important so that we know, again,
7 that we're only allowing qualified individuals and
8 entities to operate in this industry. Again, always
9 better to ask for permission than forgiveness, that is
10 the way we're operating. So please, please, please
11 work with your investigator, work with your compliance
12 officer to submit those types of contracts and changes
13 in advance of execution and commencing those new
14 agreements.

15 Another hot topic of the day I'd like to
16 touch on is our legal impacting approvals. Recently,
17 we rolled out through the metrics seat to sale system
18 with other great partner of the states the -- the
19 ability to do all these packaging and label approvals
20 through that system. So those are submitted by your
21 manufacturers -- your cultivators into the system.
22 They're reviewed for potency, for ingredients and then
23 to ensure that the packages and the labels are in
24 conformance to the advertising marketing regulations.
25 Those are stated up there, NJC 1730-1612 and 13, and if

1 you are a manufacturer, employee, cultivator employee,
2 you're not familiar with those sessions, please review
3 them because of the number of products that we have to
4 pull up from the market and decline approval for
5 because they don't comport with packaging label
6 regulations or more than more than I would expect from
7 one, we would certainly like, and we want diverse
8 product.

9 We want a competitive market. We want as
10 much out there as we can possibly see, and not
11 complying with those regulations is only holding up
12 patients and consumers from getting new promise market.
13 One thing I did also wanna go back once -- for one
14 moment, as that flower packaging is passed through the
15 system without initial review due to the way it's set
16 up in the metric system, that does not mean that flower
17 packaging is not required to comply with (inaudible)
18 that all packaging, including flower is compliant with
19 the regulations. So please ensure, again, flower,
20 gummies, paint, hopefully one day drinks that
21 everything is in compliance with regulations.

22 So that leads to my portion. We are aware
23 of the secret shopper program, obviously that occurred.
24 News article came out a couple weeks ago run by
25 consumer advocacy group called Safe Leaf. They had

1 coordinated with one of our lessons stand assessing
2 laboratories in the state to where they had previously
3 been tested by other labs. As the article stated, I'm
4 sure you are all aware there was some challenge to the
5 accuracy of the potency on the labels and the accuracy
6 of the microbials in the flower. We have as a
7 commission requested additional information from the
8 advocacy group in order to assist in our investigation
9 that our request was declined by safely. But we are
10 currently undertaking our own investigation in
11 coordination with the Department of the Health State
12 Lab, looking into the testing practices of all of our
13 testing laboratories, ensuring their compliance, having
14 accuracy of the labels that you are purchasing at your
15 dispatchers and retailers. So that covers my portion
16 of the meeting and I'll pass it back to (inaudible).

17 MR. RIGGS: Thank you director and thank
18 you for all work you do and all your staff members do
19 obviously (inaudible).

20 CHAIR: Thank you Director Riggs. Thank
21 you, Director Urbish. And Director Urbish (inaudible).
22 A, I hope this is not the first and the only time that
23 you'll be joining us at the big show. I -- and -- and
24 I wanna underscore -- I wanna underscore your point
25 about the packaging and labeling. You know, our

1 director of communications from (inaudible) always is
2 the fastest way to get through our process is to go
3 through it right the first time. So businesses really
4 should be making sure that they are submitting
5 packaging and labels that are right the first time if
6 they are so -- we -- they are eager to get their
7 products into the market. We certainly wanna help them
8 get their -- their safe and regulated products in the
9 market, but they gotta get it right the first time or
10 they have to get it right and fastest way is getting it
11 right the first time. Are there any questions from the
12 board for Director Riggs or Director Urbish? Hearing
13 none, then we'll move on.

14 THE SECRETARY: The next item on the
15 agenda are the consideration of the committee reports.

16 CHAIR: So for our committee reports,
17 we'll start with the Public Engagement Education
18 Committee. Turn it over to vice chair -- oh, sorry.
19 Commissioner Nash, to give the -- the committee report
20 from the Public Engagement Education Committee.

21 MS. NASH: Thank you, Chairwoman. So
22 we're gonna talk about seat or social equity excise
23 fees which are imposed on cannabis cultivators, where
24 that does not include medicinal cannabis cultivation.
25 The fee is set by the commission and set -- by the

1 commission in January of 2025, and the fee is due 50
2 ounces. The funds would be used for investments in
3 social equity initiatives. The Commissioner's Public
4 Engagement and Education committee held hearings on
5 February 20th, 25th and 26th to solicit -- to solicit
6 recommendations from the public on how the CE should be
7 appropriated. And we are currently working on a report
8 to compile the recommendations and summarize it with
9 the legislature.

10 Under the law, the governor and the
11 legislature through the annual appropriations process,
12 have the sole authority to allocate or distribute
13 revenues generated from the XIC. The commission's role
14 as described in statute is to provide recommendations
15 to the governor and the legislature on how those
16 revenues should be sent. And those recommendations
17 come from the public's feedback at those currents. The
18 committee has established, has submitted recommendation
19 reports to the governor and the legislature since 2022.
20 And recommendations gathered from public hearings
21 included these initiatives. All of the recommendation
22 reports can be found on our website, on the reports
23 page, and I encourage those interested to take a look
24 at them.

25 The 2026 detailed budget recommendations

1 include appropriations for seed funds as set forth in
2 this slide. Department of Corrections (inaudible)
3 purchase of community service grants. There's
4 restorative justice initiatives or in education, the
5 JJC to support restorative and transformative justice
6 for youth. And on the next page, there are three other
7 proposed budget appropriations. So I, I will say that
8 looking back at the reports that we have submitted,
9 there's definitely some synergy between those reports
10 and what these proposed appropriations are to be
11 funded. So good things coming down the pike.
12 Chairwoman Houenou, I see back to you.

13 CHAIR: Thank you very much, Commissioner
14 Nash. And I appreciate the -- the time and energy
15 that's the committee staff included, put into
16 organizing the -- the public hearings, soliciting
17 comments and input from the public on how these monies
18 should be spent.

19 Are there any questions from the board for the
20 committee? Hearing none, and we'll move to our second
21 committee report from the (inaudible) and licensing
22 committee. I'll turn floor over to Commissioner Del
23 Cid-Kosso to provide that committee report.

24 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Thank you, Madam
25 Chair. Good afternoon everyone. I'd like to take this

1 opportunity to inform the public and also my fellow
2 commissioners on some of the items that the committee
3 has been working on in the last couple of months.
4 First thing, first, a quick update on extension request
5 for the months of January through March with Issue 50
6 conditional license extensions. The committee
7 continues to review his extension requests, but please
8 remember that applicants have to submit their request
9 15 days prior to the expiration date. That timeframe
10 gives the committee to -- enough time to review and
11 also request additional information if needed. Next
12 slide.

13 So today I'm going to report our findings
14 from last year's statewide hearing and focus groups,
15 which were held to give -- to give, to gather direct
16 feedback on improving our licensing and permitting
17 processes.

18 I wanna thank all the members of the
19 public who signed up and participated in these
20 discussions. On May 16th, 2024, the committee held a
21 statewide public hearing along with additional focus
22 groups that were held in November. We spoke to social
23 equity applicants, micro business applicants and
24 licensees, and all operational, non-operational
25 licensees. These discussions reveal that while

1 businesses appreciate their compliance officers and
2 find our application process very straightforward, many
3 are still facing challenges such as securing funding,
4 getting municipal approvals, and hiring and retaining
5 staff. These concerns align with those expressed in
6 previous board meetings and by those conditional
7 license holders request and extensions. Also, issues
8 are outside of the commission's control. The committee
9 has identified three key areas where we can make
10 improvements to help our cannabis businesses succeed.
11 We are focusing on adjusting our regulations and
12 policies to address these concerns. Next slide.

13 The first one is to allow businesses to
14 have cooperative purchase and agreements. Micro
15 businesses, we heard you loud and clear and they
16 emphasize the need for discounted wholesale prices and
17 bulk purchase and collaborations to ease that financial
18 strain, especially for our local owned businesses. In
19 addition, they recommended extended product expiration
20 dates to help retailers cut inventory costs and reduce
21 losses from expired products. Therefore, the committee
22 is recommending that the commission issues guidance,
23 allowing cooperative purchase agreements between
24 dispensaries and cultivators, manufacturers and whole
25 or wholesalers. The committee also suggests

1 collaborating with the Office of Compliance and
2 Investigations to establish guidance and review the
3 alcohol industry rules as a model, as a possible model
4 for cannabis CPAs. The committee also recommends
5 amending our adult use rules to allow extended product
6 expiration dates, but is deferring that to the product
7 safety packaging and labeling committee to determine
8 expiration timelines. Next slide.

9 Second one is rescinding our provisional
10 badging. So we learned from focus group discussions
11 and obviously from some of you at the public meetings
12 that individuals with pass convictions who received
13 provisional badges from the CRC were being terminated
14 by their employers due to unmet background check
15 requirements. Unfortunately, this is causing major
16 disruptions for both employees and employers, forcing
17 many businesses to adjust their schedule for higher
18 additional staff. Additionally, this uncertainty makes
19 it harder for businesses to hire and plan properly
20 before becoming fully operational. Recently, our
21 director of compliance and investigations reported as
22 of March 14th, individuals with no criminal history are
23 clear at the CRC in under five days. While those with
24 non-disqualifying criminal histories are clear in under
25 12 days on average. Delays are current, only

1 documentation is missing or resubmission to staple
2 leases needed. As a result, the committee's
3 recommended that the commission rules provisional
4 badges and the resolution 2024 - 99. Next slide.

5 Our third finding is given early access to
6 personal use cannabis business operational checklist.
7 So some applicants did express confusion about whether
8 certain facility features were optional or required.
9 This was concerning as they had spent money that could
10 have been otherwise saved for other expenses.
11 Additionally, the need to modify buildup plans often
12 delayed grand openings for these reasons that this
13 committee is recommended another commission shares,
14 this personal use cannabis business operational
15 checklist with applicant's early in the licensing
16 process rather than waiting until the final inspection,
17 the checklist should also be posted on the CRCs
18 website.

19 Lastly, I would like to give a huge shadow
20 and hack of thanks to all the staff that work with us,
21 with Chairwoman Houenou and I in this committee, there
22 is Director Riggs, Chief Counsel Megan and Paul Wesley
23 in our communications teams for helping us get this to
24 the finish line. And that concludes the report.
25 Unless you have anything else to add, Madam Chair and

1 I'm happy to answer any questions my colleagues may
2 have.

3 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Del Cid-
4 Kosso, and thank you to -- thank you for your
5 leadership in that committee and getting the -- the,
6 this valuable feedback for our businesses so that we
7 can make sure that we are continuing to move the ball
8 forward and make -- getting an operational campus
9 business in New Jersey a reality. Are there any
10 questions from the board for Commissioner Del Cid-
11 Kosso? Hearing none, we will move forward.

12 THE SECRETARY: The next item up for
13 consideration are amendments to the agency bylaws.

14 CHAIR: So we had the ad hoc bylaws
15 Committee review the agency's bylaws to proposed
16 recommendations for this. I'll turn it over to Vice
17 Chair Delgado.

18 VICE CHAIR: Thank you, Madam Chair. So
19 the ad hoc bylaws committee proposes changes in the
20 following areas of the Commissions bylaws for the state
21 of brevity and clarity. Best areas in meetings of the
22 mission, as I said, for the state of brevity, we've
23 shortened Section 4.04 quorum to read a total of three
24 commissioners shall constitute the -- for all meeting
25 of the commission. The quorum consist of Madam

1 Chairwoman, and the longer sentence, which I do not
2 have. But that's, that's -- the -- that's what we're
3 proposing for the (inaudible). Number 2, Committees of
4 the commission. Madam Chairwoman, the commission
5 currently has four standing committees on the Section
6 502. Standing committee shall not be subject to
7 solution unless the commission has stopped the
8 resolution Section 502 to reflect the solution of the
9 standard committee.

10 We under one audit committee, we've added
11 -- we've added a responsibility to that audit
12 committee. That the audit committee shall be
13 responsible for the development, approval of the
14 commission's budget and review, and the monitoring of
15 reducing financial statement result of an audit. And
16 three, compliance of all legal and regulatory ethical
17 requirements. We've also added an additional standing
18 committee, (inaudible) we've proposed an additional
19 standing committee the underage Concerns and Prevention
20 Fund Committee. Madam Chairwoman under Section 5.02,
21 the underage deterrence and Prevention committee, fund
22 committee that will be responsible for making
23 recommendations to the full board of commissioners on
24 appropriations of money, deposited in the underage
25 deterrence and prevention accounting to fund private

1 for profit and non-profit organizations and county and
2 missile programs and services that are designed to
3 improve and support youthful community activities to
4 divert and prevent persons other 18 years of age from
5 activities associated with consumption cannabis items.
6 That concludes our recommendation, Madam Chair Woman.

7 CHAIR: Thank you, Vice Chair Delgado.
8 Are there any questions from the board regarding the
9 proposed amendments that we have before us to the
10 agency's bylaws? Hearing no questions. Is there a
11 motion on this matter?

12 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairman and I move
13 that we approve the proposed amended changes to our
14 bylaws.

15 MS. NASH: Second.

16 CHAIR: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado and
17 seconded by Commissioner Nash. Is there any
18 discussion on this motion? Hearing none, Mr. Said,
19 can you please call the vote?

20 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
21 Kosso?

22 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

24 MS. MAPP: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

1 MS. NASH: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

3 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou

5 CHAIR: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. The
7 next item up for consideration are Applications for
8 ownership changes.

9 CHAIR: Director Riggs, if you can please
10 provide us a summary of the applications for an
11 ownership change.

12 MR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
13 before I provide a summary, you know, more ownership
14 changes, more opportunities for financing, all that
15 stuff, it's gonna start happening more and more.
16 Majority ownership restrictions or restricted two
17 years. Some businesses are gonna be operational for
18 two years and we're gonna start (inaudible) transfer to
19 business. Under long regulations, any sale or transfer
20 or equity in the business require for approval.

21 Today, we have nine cannabis businesses
22 that are opposing transfer and ownership through Lou
23 Varus, Divine Garden, Zena and Jenin, Teachers Garden,
24 LLC, Atlantic Flower, LLC, Somerset Green, LLC, Rooted,
25 LLC, Pantheon, LLC, Earth and Ivy Lakers, LLC. Each of

1 these entities has satisfied regulatory requirements
2 for an ownership change. All owners and individuals of
3 diverse interest, they're required to be investigated.
4 (Inaudible) we're investigating (inaudible) by officer
5 compliance and investigations. These individuals
6 (inaudible) be qualified to -- for that equity state
7 (inaudible) market. Therefore, we are recommending
8 that these ownership transfers be approved by the
9 board. Thank you.

10 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. Any
11 questions from the board for Director Riggs? I hear no
12 questions from the board. Is there any motion on this
13 matter?

14 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairman, I move that
15 we approve the request for transfers change of the nine
16 -- ownership change of the nine mentioned businesses by
17 the acting executive director.

18 CHAIR: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado. Is
19 there a second?

20 MS. MAPP: I'll second.

21 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Mapp. Is
22 there any discussion on this motion? I hear no
23 discussion. Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

24 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
25 Kosso?

1 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

3 MS. MAPP: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

5 MS. NASH: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

7 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou

9 CHAIR: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. The
11 next item on the agenda is the consideration of adult
12 use Cannabis business conversion license applications.

13 CHAIR: Thank you. Director Riggs, the
14 floor is yours to provide a summary of the applications
15 to convert from a conditional to an annual license.

16 MR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Today
17 we have four conditional annual conversion licenses
18 before the board, three retailers and one wholesaler.
19 These licenses follow the licensing process given a
20 priority assignment where we've confirmed that each
21 application is assigned to the appropriate view level.
22 As outlined in our regulations, we look at person known
23 business status, taxes, residency required, and that
24 are sent out needed prior, that priority was then
25 verified. We confirmed that the appropriate

1 documentation was submitted to support the priority
2 that they identified themselves as. And cures are also
3 sent as something is needed. And the application goes
4 through what we call completeness review. That's when
5 the licensing confirms that all required documents have
6 been submitted. That means the application is deemed
7 complete and we confirm not only that they've been
8 submitted these documents, but we also confirm that all
9 the required information has been out.

10 These documents, the applications are
11 stored. These documents are reviewed to ensure the
12 applicant has submitted sufficient information to
13 satisfy all the requirements, regulations, and that
14 there is an application acceptance. And we go over to
15 the office Compliance investigation, legal
16 qualification review, where individuals, financial
17 sources, any other agreements that review for
18 regulatory compliance. Background checks are conducted
19 and reviewed to ensure that any owners versus an
20 interest are qualified and to be market. Lastly,
21 there's quality control review done by office
22 licensing, officer compliance and investigation in our
23 legal team. And then we're making recommendations to
24 the board. All these applications have been reviewed,
25 scored are now recommended for legal by board. Thank

1 you.

2 CHAIR: Thank you. Director Riggs, are
3 any questions from the board for Director Riggs? There
4 are no questions from the board. Is there a motion on
5 this matter?

6 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairman, I move that
7 we accept the consideration of applications to convert
8 from conditional to renewal. Class three cannabis
9 wholesaler and Class 5 cannabis retailer as detailed by
10 the executive director.

11 CHAIR: Is there a second?

12 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

13 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
14 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion to
15 accept the applications? Hear no discussion.
16 Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
18 Kosso?

19 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

21 MS. MAPP: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

23 MS. 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. The
4 next item on the agenda is a consideration of adult use
5 cannabis business annual license applications.

6 CHAIR: Thank you. Director Riggs, the
7 floor is yours.

8 MR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll
9 be brief. There are seven annual applications up for
10 consideration. Three manufacturers, one retail, and
11 three cultivators. These have followed the exact same
12 way as the same process as the conditional conversion
13 applications. All the applications have been reviewed,
14 scored, and are now recommended for approval by the
15 board. Thank you.

16 CHAIR: Thank you. Are there any
17 questions on the board for Director Riggs? Hearing no
18 questions, is there a motion on this matter?

19 MS. NASH: Madam Chair, I move to approve
20 the resolution for consideration of an annual license
21 application to request one, two, and five retailer
22 licenses.

23 CHAIR: Moved by Commissioner Nash. Is
24 there a second?

25 MS. MAPP: I second.

1 CHAIR: Vice Chair Delgado, I believe back
2 to it first. Is there any discussion on this
3 motion? I hear no discussion. Mr. Said, can you
4 please call the vote?

5 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
6 Kosso?

7 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

9 MS. MAPP: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

11 MS. NASH: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

13 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

15 CHAIR: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. The
17 next item on the agenda are the consideration of
18 expanded alternative treatment center certifications.

19 CHAIR: Thank you. Here we have two ATCs
20 -- sorry, expanded ATC certifications starting with
21 Columbia Care. Director Riggs. I'll give it to you to
22 provide a summary.

23 MR. RIGGS: Thank you. Columbia Care has
24 a classified retailer on the black horse bike in
25 landing New Jersey. The address is located on the

1 slide and they're looking to expand into East Market.
2 They have provided sufficient zoning. This approval
3 confirmed that the labor requirements are met and as
4 required by law, they have certified that they have
5 sufficient quantities of medical cannabis and medical
6 cannabis products available to meet the reasonably
7 anticipated needs of registered qualifying patients.
8 Therefore, since they satisfy the regulations and
9 statute, we are recommending approval of Columbia
10 Care's application to expand the adults market. Thank
11 you.

12 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. Are
13 there any questions from the board for Director Riggs?
14 There are no questions. Is there a motion on this
15 matter?

16 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairwoman, I move that
17 we accept the certification for alternative treatment
18 center Columbia care to expand operations to the adult
19 personal use cannabis market that's detailed by the
20 Executive Director.

21 CHAIR: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado. Is
22 there a second?

23 MS. MAPP: I second.

24 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Mapp. Is
25 there any discussion on this motion to accept the

1 certification? I hear no discussion. Mr. Said,
2 can you please call the vote

3 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
4 Kosso?

5 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

7 MS. MAPP: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

9 MS. NASH: Abstain.

10 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

11 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

13 CHAIR: Abstain.

14 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. The
15 next item on the agenda. We have consideration of an
16 expanded alternative treatment center application for
17 GSCC management, LLC. Commissioner Nash has recused
18 herself from this expansion application for GSCC
19 management LLC due to an ongoing professional
20 relationship. On account of her recusal, she'll step
21 out of the room while the board considers this
22 particular application. Afterward, Commissioner Nash
23 will come back in and will take up the next order of
24 business.

25 CHAIR: Thank you. Director Riggs, the

1 floor is yours.

2 MR. RIGGS: Thank you Madam Chair. GSCC
3 management has the Class one cultivator license and is
4 requesting adult use of approval on Quarry Road in
5 Oxford, New Jersey. They've required they have
6 requested and receive zoning administrative approvals
7 and we ensure labor requirements are met as by law
8 certified. They have sufficient funds, medical
9 cannabis and medical cannabis products available to
10 meet the reasonably an needs of registered qualifying.
11 Therefore, we are recommending that GSCC management be
12 approved to stand (inaudible) market. Thank you.

13 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. Are
14 there any questions from the board? Hearing No
15 questions, is there a motion on this matter?

16 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairwoman, I move the
17 certification for times treatment center, GSCC
18 Management, LLC, to expand operations in the adult
19 personal use cannabis market is detailed by the
20 executive.

21 CHAIR: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado. Is
22 there a second?

23 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

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

1 accept the certification? I hear no discussion.

2 Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

3 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-

4 Kosso?

5 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

7 MS. MAPP: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash has

9 recused.

10 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

11 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

13 CHAIR: Abstain.

14 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. The

15 next item on the agenda is the consideration of the

16 adult use cannabis business. Annual license renewal

17 applications.

18 CHAIR: Thank you. Director Riggs, can

19 you please provide a summary of those applications to

20 renew their annual license?

21 MR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. There

22 are 14 renewals up for consideration today. As, as

23 three and each of the other entities listed as one

24 license that is up for renewal for renewal similar to

25 licensing process that these licenses are for one year

1 commission and are required to be reviewed and reviewed
2 annually. These entities have provided the required
3 documentation for review for review and or for renewal.
4 The documentation has been reviewed and approved by the
5 office's compliance investigations. They have provided
6 additional support and approval if required, the first
7 year of operations for an alternative treatment center.
8 And therefore we're recommending that all 14 of these
9 licenses be renew by the court today. Thank you.

10 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. Are
11 there any questions on the board hearing? No
12 questions. Is there a motion on this matter?

13 VICE CHAIR: Chair, I move that we accept
14 the resolution of the 14 adult cannabis business
15 licenses as the Biden Acting Executive

16 CHAIR: Moved by Vice Chair Delgado. Is
17 there a second?

18 MS. NASH: Second.

19 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Is
20 there any discussion on this motion? I hear no
21 discussion. Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

22 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
23 Kosso?

24 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

1 MS. MAPP: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

3 MS. NASH: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

5 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

7 CHAIR: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. The
9 next item for consideration are the determination of
10 rehabilitation applications.

11 CHAIR: Thank you. I'll turn the floor
12 over to Chief Council Tuason (ph) to provide a summary
13 of this application for determination of
14 rehabilitation.

15 MR. DAVE TUASON: Thank you, Madam Chair.
16 For the board's consideration as one application for
17 rehabilitation this individual is a PC employee. This
18 individual perceived notice that criminal history check
19 revealed a disqualifying conviction. This individual
20 is given the opportunity to challenge the accuracy of
21 the criminal histories, results or request
22 rehabilitation. They did submit an application for
23 rehabilitation and staff believes that this individual
24 met all eight factors under the statute and the rights
25 and recommend approval, thank you.

1 CHAIR: Thank you, Chief Council Tuason.
2 Are there any questions from the board? Hearing no
3 questions, is there a motion on this matter?

4 VICE CHAIR: Madam Chairwoman, I move that
5 we approve the approval of request for termination of
6 rehabilitation by alternative Treatment Center
7 employees as detailed by the chief counsel.

8 CHAIR: Is there a second?

9 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Second.

10 CHAIR: Seconded by Commissioner Del Cid-
11 Kosso. Is there any discussion on this motion to
12 approve the request? I hear no discussion. Mr. Said,
13 can you please call the vote?

14 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
15 Kosso?

16 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

18 MS. MAPP: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

20 MS. NASH: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

22 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

24 CHAIR: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. The

1 next item on the agenda is the consideration of
2 requests for rule waivers.

3 CHAIR: I'll turn the floor back over to
4 you Chief Counsel Tuason to provide summary of the
5 requests for regulatory rule waivers.

6 MR. TUASON: Thank you, Madam Chair.
7 Today the board will be considering two rule waiver
8 requests -- next slide, please. It is the docketed as
9 WR012 and WR013. The entity names are Treehouse Co-op
10 dispensary and Green haven. They both have the same
11 request to waive the retail storage requirements to
12 allow for storage of canvas merchandise behind the
13 sales counter. The standard is a very strict standard
14 to waive a regulatory requirement. So the board has to
15 determine whether the waiver request would meet the
16 regulatory requirements under 17 column 30 -- 3.7. The
17 three factors are that a waive would be necessary to
18 achieve the purpose of the act which is our enabling
19 statute and clean act. The second is it's necessary to
20 provide access to cannabis items to consumers and would
21 not create a danger to the public health, safety or
22 welfare. So the applicable -- the applicable
23 regulation at hand that the board should consider is
24 under 1739.12, which describes storage, cannabis
25 storage must have adequate security. And typically
in, in a

1 dispensary, they have storage in a bulk area that's
2 separate from the cannabis counter.

3 So the board should determine whether
4 these waiver requests would meet that regulatory
5 standard or if not, it would be willing to waive the
6 regulation based on those factors under 3.7. And that
7 Madam Chair, I'll turn it back over to you.

8 CHAIR: Thank you, Chief Counsel. Are
9 there any questions from the board?

10 MS. NASH: Yes.

11 CHAIR: Commissioner Nash.

12 MS. NASH: I wanted to know the pictures
13 that were posted look like open shelving. And my
14 vision, what was described in the SOP was with the LOF
15 last case with lock on. And so (inaudible), the
16 difference between what was described and what we saw
17 in the pictures?

18 MR. TUASON: Well, we did have some
19 outreach through our investigations team to both
20 entities. That was what the board had received those
21 photos were, were the extent of what they had given.
22 So it was that -- that kind of shelving that they
23 described, they didn't -- they did say it would be
24 locked. It would be locked. But, you know, the, the
25 board should determine whether it would need regulatory

1 requirements, which is adequate security and you know,
2 generally that adequate security would mean it would be
3 a separate location.

4 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Nash. Any
5 other questions for Chief Council? Is there a motion
6 on this matter and what this will be -- we'll consider
7 both of the waiver requests together.

8 MS. NASH: Madam chair, I move to deny
9 those waiver requests.

10 CHAIR: Commissioner -- Commissioner Nash
11 has moved to deny the waiver request. Is there a
12 second? I will second the motion. Is there any
13 discussion on this motion to deny the waiver requests?

14 MS. NASH: Yes.

15 CHAIR: Commissioner Nash.

16 MS. NASH: So we -- as Chief Council
17 weighed out there are certain bonds or regulatory
18 requirements, whether the waiver is necessary to
19 achieve the purpose of the act. Is it necessary to
20 drive access to cannabis items to consumers? And that
21 it does not create a danger to public health, safety or
22 welfare. So it's not necessary to have this -- this
23 type of storage to achieve the purpose of the act, nor
24 is it necessary to be able to provide access to
25 consumers. And I don't -- and I think it, it does

1 create a danger to public health, safety or welfare of
2 the employees. What I saw was an open shelf and no
3 locks on it and I think somebody just pop across the
4 counter and, and smash and wrap. So that is my reason
5 for, for my denial motion.

6 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Nash. I
7 agree with you. I believe that the waiver requests do
8 not -- they fail to articulate a necessity to meet the,
9 the purposes of the Cream Act. They also fail to
10 demonstrate that it, that a waiver is necessary to
11 provide access to consumers as both of these businesses
12 are currently selling cannabis products to consumers.
13 And I believe the -- the requirements under Rule 9.12
14 are there for a reason. And it is to make sure that
15 our, our businesses are operating in a secure fashion.
16 We have businesses -- cannabis businesses across the
17 country have experienced break-ins and -- and thefts.
18 And so the -- by putting products out in the open with
19 no real guardrails or real barriers that aren't -- that
20 can be easily overcome by just hopping over a counter
21 at top height bear single high wood barrier just is not
22 sufficient to actually provide security for these
23 regulated products. So I'm supportive of denying the -
24 - these waiver requests. Any further discussion on
25 this motion?

1 MS. MAPP: So I see --

2 CHAIR: Commissioner Mapp. Yes.

3 MS. MAPP: I see the issue as temptation
4 and public safety awareness -- oh, sorry. I see the
5 issue as temptation, public safety awareness and easy
6 access to customers. Why is it that -- that an
7 organization cannot go back where they're supposed to
8 go into the state and get the product and have it open
9 to, you know, for others to come and take? So that's
10 my reason for (inaudible).

11 CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Mapp. Any
12 further discussion? Hearing no further discussion,
13 Mr. Said, can you please call the vote?

14 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
15 Kosso?

16 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: Yes. Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

18 MS. MAPP: No. To deny -- to deny -- I
19 will deny, yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Okay. Commissioner Nash?

21 MS. 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 to deny the
2 waiver request is approved. The next item on the
3 agenda are; The Consideration of Notices of Enforcement
4 Actions.

5 CHAIR: And here we have, one, notice of
6 enforcement action that's on the agenda today. For
7 those following from home, we did have an agenda change
8 yesterday. So on our website, we did have two other
9 notice of violation that were initially one to consider
10 the full at full dose. So we consider that future
11 board meeting. So for today, we will consider end of
12 the 207S24. So I'll turn over to the Director Riggs to
13 provide a summary of the violation that was cited.

14 MR. RIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. So
15 Garden Society Investigation 207S24, they were issued
16 in the end of (inaudible) on 20th of 2024. Essentially
17 it was a violation of 40 badging that will determined
18 that an individual did not go through the badging
19 process and had been employed by the entity without
20 going through the proper channels and doing background
21 checked by the CRC. And it was even further -- you
22 know, they self-reported this violation, which stemmed
23 from this employee that was not badged, was selling
24 illegal marijuana -- unregulated marijuana to other
25 employees in the advocacy. And the business self-

1 reported.

2 They did tell us that this individual was
3 caught doing this, needed to be terminated. And -- and
4 during the investigation, our investigators determined
5 that when they were going to deactivate the badge for -
6 - for this individual, they were not in our system. So
7 then it was issued for failing -- to the entity for
8 failing to make sure that their employees properly went
9 through the process to have their employees background
10 check and being qualified to indicate marketplace.

11 So therefore, there is an enforcement
12 action before you, and our regulations determined that
13 failing to properly have employees badge would be a
14 Category 4 Violation, which is 44 today. Thank you.

15 CHAIR: Thank you, Director Riggs. Are
16 there any questions from the board for Director Riggs?
17 Hearing no questions, is there a motion on this matter?
18 I will move. I'll make a motion to impose a penalty of
19 \$8,000 on the Garden Society, LLC.

20 VICE CHAIR: (Inaudible).

21 CHAIR: Seconded by Vice Chair Delgado.
22 Is there any discussion on this motion? I'll note that
23 I agree with staff's interpretation that -- or staff's
24 view that this particular act counts as a Category 4
25 Violation. The penalty -- I believe that the penalty

1 should be reduced from our starting point of \$10,000 to
2 account for the self-supporting. I am -- I've
3 recognize the response, the quick response that this
4 employer had to correct the issue dealing with the --
5 the employees on -- at an administrative level, and
6 then also self-support to the commission. I already
7 gave the credit for that.

8 Also, I appreciated the effort for the
9 business to amend their SOPs, their internal SOPs, for
10 hiring new employees to make sure that they have a step
11 that explicitly calls out a need for making sure that a
12 perspective new employee would be -- has I've said in
13 (inaudible), gone through the background check process
14 or alternatively given an provisional batch. But
15 still, this employer had a few employees that had not
16 gone through the -- the badging process, good
17 background check process as required. For that reason,
18 \$8,000 is a reasonable and justified penalty for this
19 business. Is there any additional discussion on this
20 motion? Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Said, can
21 you please call the vote?

22 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Del Cid-
23 Kosso?

24 MS. DEL CID-KOSSO: No.

25 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Mapp?

1 MS. MAPP: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Commissioner Nash?

3 MS. NASH: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Vice Chair Delgado?

5 VICE CHAIR: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Chairwoman Houenou?

7 CHAIR: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes. The
9 next item on the agenda, we have the open public
10 comment period.

11 CHAIR: So as we begin our open public
12 comment period, I will remind folks as I do in every
13 board meeting that you can submit public comments
14 during or after this board meeting in writing via our
15 website nj.gov/cannabis/meetings. The deadline for
16 submitting -- for submitting written comments for
17 today's board meeting is 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, Friday,
18 April 4th. Written comments will be shared with the
19 commission members and will be made public. Speakers
20 will be limited to three minutes. We have our timer
21 here that will beep once your time is up. If you hear
22 beep, just please wrap up your comments so that we can
23 ensure that everybody who has registered to speak has
24 an opportunity to do so.

25 Mr. Said will call out the names of our

1 registered speakers. When it is your turn to speak, we
2 ask that you come down at the microphone, just tap the
3 button that says push. Push one time so that you see a
4 green light, and then the microphone is on and you
5 will have the floor. Mr. Said, can you please call
6 on our first speakers?

7 THE SECRETARY: Thank you, Chairwoman. As
8 a reminder, public speakers during this afternoon's
9 public comment period will be limited to three minutes.
10 Please be respectful and concise during the comments.
11 I will start with the in-person, the people that signed
12 up to speak in person. The first person is Reginald
13 Green (ph). The next person is Alan Truhkoski (ph).
14 Next person is Thomas Norcia (ph). Just state your
15 name and place.

16 MR. THOMAS NORCIA: My name is Thomas
17 Norcia from Well Works New Jersey (Inaudible)
18 Association. Honestly, I don't know where to start
19 right now. I'm gonna start with, a reading
20 (inaudible). Hey, this is an e-mail from you. Diana,
21 this is an e-mail from you. Right here is an e-mail
22 from John Kirk (ph) from the Hemp program. Based on
23 your guys' definitions, you're allowing your operators
24 to break the New Jersey State law. It's clear as day
25 right here. We had meetings with Department of

1 Agriculture and you guys a day apart for that reason.
2 You guys submitted something that were voiced to them
3 that it -- it is from your disability in your program.
4 That's not happening. It's not happening. Here's a
5 list. I know (inaudible) you.

6 These are all different brands. I'm
7 reading this to you guys today. These are brands that
8 all remain second derive products over state lines.
9 They're not regulated from partner of agriculture.
10 I've been bringing this up for months now, guys. It is
11 pathetic. You know, these are what's in the products.
12 You can't tell me that they're getting this from your
13 THC material. It's not happening. You're continuing
14 to allow 'em to break the laws. Here's the website.
15 You're doing department of agriculture. All you gotta
16 do is click it. Here are the applications, rules,
17 regulations for all of it. You guys bridge, you should
18 know this stuff by the back of your hand, regardless if
19 it's you or John Kirk. Me and Chief Mann just sat with
20 John Kirk before here. We speak with these guys
21 regularly. You guys are not putting the voice out into
22 the state to get us into the metric that we need to be.
23 This is a bit pathetic at this point. Just wait.
24 Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. We are more regulated than
25 you are welcome.

1 Our products are more compliant than some
2 of yours. The only thing my products don't have on is
3 a metric number. You know, it -- it is not fair, the
4 situation we in. You guys just continue it letting
5 these people bring this stuff over state lines. You
6 have regulatory commissions. When are you gonna
7 regulate it? When? Well, we sit here and don't have
8 access to our products. You know, speak to legislative
9 leadership to get this go through. You guys clearly
10 aren't because I've had hundreds of e-mails in the last
11 few weeks. We've met with so many people, it's
12 ridiculous. And none of them know the situation we're
13 in. They're clueless. So I spend an hour educating
14 people in our meeting before we even get to do
15 anything. You guys are not reaching out to the right
16 people to do this stuff the right way. We've seen
17 several drafts of the Psychoactive Hemp Band Bill. It
18 is pathetic of what we're seeing. It's pathetic that
19 we're six months into the Psychoactive Hemp Band Bill
20 and they're clueless to the New Jersey Hemp Program.
21 The New Jersey Hemp program was not breaking laws.
22 Stuff coming over state lines is breaking laws. The
23 stuff in gas stations at smoke shop is breaking laws.
24 90 percent it's still there. There's a liquor store in
25 my town, selling hemp beverages. I can't sell my own

1 products properly. It's beyond pathetic.

2 THE SECRETARY: 10 seconds.

3 MR. NORCIA: 10 seconds. I'm speaking for
4 38 hemp growers that couldn't be here today. It's a
5 bit pathetic. You look at your lobbyists, come on
6 here, exceed three minutes and they keep going. And
7 another thing, your lobbyists, your lawyers working
8 with these leadership people are clueless. Who's lying
9 in their pockets. That's who they're speaking with.
10 They're clueless. The drafts that we are seeing right
11 now are insane. Kevin Bin Hicks Bill (ph) A5068, is
12 the only one that makes sense to us. Act guys. Do
13 something. If you are a regulatory commission
14 regulate. Riggs, I'm gonna hand this to you
15 personally.

16 MR. RIGGS: I got it. I'll take it on,
17 sir. Thank you.

18 MR. NORCIA: (Inaudible).

19 THE SECRETARY: So I will say there's an
20 issue with the clock. So I'm gonna use my phone to
21 show you guys that there's a -- a three minute timer.
22 The next person on the list is Jessica Marie Villar
23 (ph).

24 MS. JESSICA MARIE VILLAR: This is all?

25 CHAIR: Yeah. Go ahead.

1 MS. VILLAR: I'm Jessica Marie Villar,
2 majority owner and CEO of (inaudible) dispensary.
3 I'm here today to discuss cannabis educational and
4 community events that my dispensary would like to
5 support. We have previously sponsored educational
6 events and did everything we could do to try and do
7 our due diligence to make sure these events were
8 compliant with state regulations.

9 Moving forward, we'd be grateful to be
10 able to engage in conversation CRC to confirm the
11 following compliance protocols for product sampling and
12 event sponsorship to avoid any possible violation
13 notice. We'd also be grateful for the opportunity to
14 provide feedback to the CRC based on business and
15 consumer feedback we've received regarding the benefits
16 of these types of events and how we can improve them.
17 We want to sponsor events in line with what we've seen
18 in many other licensed cannabis businesses across the
19 state sponsor and participate in including events I've
20 seen, CRC Commission, Nurse Attendance Support.

21 Faith Five River (ph) started for the
22 purpose of being a harm reduction resource. Part of
23 the mission of Faith Five River is to reduce FFA around
24 cannabis and cannabis consumption in order to promote
25 the safer alternative. And the vast majority of

1 cannabis events in the state, there is free alcohol
2 available and regular alcohol consumption. Plainly
3 allowing (inaudible) alcohol consumption while not
4 permitting cannabis consumption results in the CRC
5 endorsing alcohol as the only acceptable standard for
6 cannabis industry events. This precedent only serves
7 reinforce a harmful stigma that hurts industry and
8 frankly does not make sense. An issue that was
9 highlighted in the violation notice my dispensary
10 received was that sampling with the purpose of business
11 promotion is not allowed, but bringing cannabis to an
12 event to consume should in and of itself be considered
13 unlawful business promotion.

14 It's just like any other event I go to
15 when needs some early; I bring some good meat to smoke.
16 It would be like me telling a -- it'd be like telling a
17 CEO of Budweiser that if they're hosting a barbecue,
18 they're not allowed to bring a cooler of Budweiser to
19 consume because it's considered promotion of the
20 business. I'm a cannabis activist, a medical patient,
21 and a regular cannabis consumer. It goes against
22 everything I stand for to (inaudible) cannabis and tell
23 me that I'm not allowed to consume weed from my store
24 in the same way that an alcohol distributor consumes
25 alcohol. To tell me I cannot bring cannabis to an

1 event that I sponsor forces my cannabis consumption
2 back into the shadows.

3 I'm a cannabis advocate and a consumer.
4 As of the vast majority of people I deal with in this
5 industry, cannabis advocates benefit from being able to
6 talk about, see, smell, touch, and try the cannabis
7 products we are discussing. My standards for my
8 dispensary is that I won't sell products that I won't
9 smoke myself. Having the ability to experience the
10 products we're selling is critical. The better quality
11 products and consumer safety.

12 As the industry is expanding, it's
13 important that CRC is giving clear guidance, setting
14 reasonable standards, and supporting the licensed
15 businesses that are trying to navigate this new
16 landscape. We ask that you improve us in the
17 conversation and we'll be grateful to receive your
18 guidance and or feedback instead of having to fear
19 punishing. We're all trying to figure this out in the
20 first years of our businesses being open at the
21 beginning stages of the industry and the state. By
22 working with us, you can come together to set
23 reasonable standards that help the industry work better
24 and benefit the public at large. I really appreciate
25 the opportunity to schedule a follow up conversation to

1 make sure everything we're doing is in compliance,
2 especially with all of the events for the high holiday
3 as well. So thank you so much for the time. I really
4 appreciate what you're doing. Thank you.

5 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
6 list is Van Rider (ph).

7 MS. VAN RIDER: Good afternoon,
8 Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to speak
9 today. My name is Van Rider. My pronouns are
10 (inaudible). I'm here to urge the commission to hold
11 purely accountable for its failure to comply with New
12 Jersey's cannabis laws and labor protections, starting
13 with denying the issue of any temporary worker badges
14 in the future.

15 New Jersey's cannabis industry was founded
16 on a commitment to fair labor practices, worker
17 protections, and corporate accountability. Granting
18 any temporary badges undermines that foundation,
19 opening the door to worker exploitation, job
20 insecurity, and lower workplace standards. The people
21 who keep this industry running deserve stability, full
22 fair protections, and the opportunity to build
23 meaningful careers, not to be treated as disposable.

24 It has been years since Curly (ph) was
25 instructed to secure union contract within 200 dates.

1 Since then, conditions has only worsen, hours have been
2 cut, schedules constantly disruptive and mass layoffs
3 of appended lives. Employees face unfair and illegal
4 scheduling practices while contract negotiations remain
5 stagnant. Instead of bargaining in good faith, Curly
6 seek to strip away longstanding protections and refuses
7 a fair wage increase. Many workers have run years
8 without a raise and just this week more were abruptly
9 let go. Denying them the ratification, bonuses they
10 rightfully earn upon ratification of a union contract.
11 Enough is enough. Curly must be held accountable to
12 the laws and regulations set forth by the state of New
13 Jersey. I urge the commission to deny any requests for
14 temporary worker badges in the future. Doing so will
15 help ensure that the workers who remain can fully
16 utilize every tool at their disposal to push Curly to
17 the bargaining table in true and good faith.

18 Additionally, I call on the commission to
19 take meaningful action to enforce compliance. Curly
20 must be held to the same standards as every other
21 operator in the state. New Jersey's Cannabis industry
22 should be a model for fairness and equity. We cannot
23 allow corporations to cut corners and disregard
24 workers' rights. The integrity of this industry and
25 the well being of the people who power it depend on your

1 leadership. Thank you.

2 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
3 list is Chief Vincent Mann (ph).

4 MR. VINCENT MANN: Good morning. Good
5 afternoon. It's been a long ride. Rule 80, shut down.
6 I'm just gonna direct all my comments directly to this
7 side of this table. And I'm glad that you're here, Mr.
8 Irish. So what you heard from TJ was that there
9 continues to be the unlawful, right, used the CBD
10 distillate. In this e-mail, I'm not gonna say who's
11 from, I'm just gonna read it. This was the explanation
12 that was given to us from council.

13 The commission has permitted CBD
14 distillate to be used as an ingredient and cannabis of
15 used products, so long as the product is derived from
16 cannabis. So I'm letting you all know right now on
17 this record that if you did not take the steps to hold
18 those people who are using hemp derived products in
19 their cannabis products that are being sold, that we
20 will take action further. There is no reason
21 whatsoever that we get a definition that explains to us
22 what the definition of hemp medical cannabis, which is
23 not cannabis and hemp that's not cannabis, you can't
24 call the sun the moon. We are entitled as people who
25 are living in the same boundaries as everybody else, to

1 have the right to, to prosper, to benefit. And yet you
2 guys are sitting on your hands allowing these companies
3 to get away with it. And it's illegal. They do not
4 have a hemp license, it's illegal for them to use hemp
5 derived products. Outside of the fact that your law
6 states it is illegal. It's illegal. It is illegal.
7 It is illegal. You all know my e-mail address. You
8 all have access to my phone number. Same thing with
9 TJ. You heard him. We're going around having to be
10 politicians. We're not politicians.

11 It's crazy when you have to have a farmer
12 coming from Sussex, New Jersey, the furthest point
13 north, to have to drive all the way down here so our
14 voices can be heard. We have to take away the comings
15 from our farm to go meet with senators and assembly
16 people, and yet our voices are still not heard. We
17 were never a part of any legal action against the state
18 of New Jersey or this commission. And if you guys do
19 the right thing by holding those people accountable
20 under your law, then that will not happen. It has to
21 stop. Thank you.

22 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
23 list is Kristen Goody (ph).

24 MS. KRISTEN GOODY: Good afternoon
25 commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to speak

1 today. My name is Kristen Goody. And I'm here as the
2 chair of the New Jersey 10 Business Association's
3 Laboratory Testing Committee.

4 First, we wanna congratulate and thank you
5 for issuing state specific testing guidance. While
6 there's still a lot of work to be done, this is a
7 significant step towards harmonizing testing practices
8 within New Jersey. However, we must go further.
9 Today, I'm here to highlight a critical issue, the
10 urgent need for robust laboratory governments to
11 prevent fraud and safeguard of, of public health. THC
12 inflation and the underreporting of product
13 contamination are widespread issues across nearly all
14 cannabis markets. And as recent public reports has
15 shown New jersey's no exception. To address this, we
16 urge the commission to prioritize the following 10 key
17 components of the Laboratory Oversight Program. One,
18 public data transparency. Regularly release available
19 testing data to promote accountability. Two, data
20 evaluation and statistical analysis. Establish a
21 program to analyze data across laboratories, flagging
22 inconsistencies in THC concentrations and failure
23 rates. Three, ethics and data integrity training.
24 Mandate training for all lab workers and
25 implement anonymous reporting mechanisms. Four,

1 qualified oversight. Hire at least one chemist and one
2 microbiologists to audit license laboratories and
3 ensure appropriate testing methods are used. Five,
4 unannounced lab audits. Conduct surprise inspections
5 to detect fraud and uphold data integrity. Six,
6 Laboratory monitoring. Monitor laboratory proficiency
7 by reviewing proficiency testing results and SOPs to
8 ensure accuracy and reliability. Seven, defined
9 quality standards. Establish clear parameters for
10 quality assurance, quality control, calibration and
11 detection limits. Eight, inter laboratory testing
12 program. Measure variability and ensure consistency in
13 results across state licensed laboratories with round
14 robin testing. Nine, secret shopper testing.
15 Implement a post compliance testing program to verify
16 product accuracy and safety with off the shelf testing.
17 Ten, reference laboratory. Designate an independent
18 reference lab within the state DOH labs or through an
19 RFP process for qualified alternatives.

20 Together these measures form a
21 comprehensive laboratory governance framework that
22 procures fraud and promotes accurate testing and
23 protects public health. Without them lab shopping will
24 continue undermining consumer trust and compromising
25 safety. We urge the commission to act swift -- swiftly

1 and decisively to implement these recommendations. The
2 integrity of our market and well being of consumers and
3 patients depend on it. Thank you.

4 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
5 list is Samuel Rykler (ph). That's it for the in-
6 person. I'm gonna move on.

7 MR. NICHOLAS POWERS: No, it's not. No,
8 it's not. I'm on it. I'm definitely on it.

9 THE SECRETARY: What's your name?

10 MR. POWERS: Nicholas Powers. I have it
11 written down. I'll be really quick. It's really
12 important.

13 THE SECRETARY: I have you as an in the
14 phone.

15 MR. POWERS: No, I clicked in-person and I
16 did in phone.

17 THE SECRETARY: Your last one to do was in
18 phone, probably.

19 MR. POWERS: Okay.

20 CHAIR: Hold on. Hold on. Hold on,
21 everybody.

22 MR. POWERS: Lemme call --

23 CHAIR: Hold -- hold on. Hold on. Hold
24 on. All right. So for your awareness, for the future,
25 anybody who signs up to speak is to select in-person or

1 giving testimony via phone. Some people have
2 registered to speak multiple times. In those
3 instances, we are left to select to -- to really go
4 with the latest submission. So what has happened many
5 times in the past is that people have registered to
6 speak up -- to speak for in-person, and then later
7 they, what for -- what for word -- for any reason, are
8 joining telephonically and so they registered to speak
9 by phone. That is why your name is under our list as
10 by phone probably. Now, given that you are here,
11 you've identified yourself, we can proceed with you --
12 with accepting your testimony here today.

13 MR. POWERS: Thank you.

14 CHAIR: But for the future, make sure that
15 you -- that -- that you're selecting one or the other,
16 or else you're gonna have no choice, but to take
17 whichever was the last submission that you gave us.

18 MR. POWERS: Okay.

19 CHAIR: All right. So come -- come on up.
20 We'll have your three minutes and then we'll move to
21 those businesses that have -- I'm sorry, those
22 individuals who've registered to speak telephonically.

23 MR. POWERS: Just to clarify, on Monday at
24 9:48 when I did it, I applied for in-person, it said
25 when? March 6th, 2025. So that's why I had to do it

1 again because it end inappropriately. It gave me a
2 vast month meeting when I did it.

3 CHAIR: I understand. I understand.

4 MR. POWERS: Doesn't mean --

5 CHAIR: Okay. That makes sense.

6 Understood. Thank you.

7 MR. POWERS: Okay. I have it all written
8 down and I've practiced to be under three minutes.

9 CHAIR: If you can -- yeah, just make sure
10 that you're speaking to the microphone so our
11 sonographer can -- can pick everything. Thank you.

12 MR. POWERS: Sorry for that. My name is
13 Nicholas Powers, from (inaudible), LLC. Good
14 afternoon, everyone. Please carefully listen to every
15 word of this traumatizing life learning nightmare I'm
16 living through and think to all yourself, this is of
17 course something we can correct.

18 I'm Nicholas Powers, CEO and founder of (inaudible),
19 LLC. Three years ago when I was 21, I applied for a
20 micro class, one cultivation license and a micro class,
21 two manufacturing license. I'm a social equity New
22 Jersey born raised applicant. I was arrested twice
23 while in high school for cannabis and completed two
24 different drug rehab -- rehab programs all while being
25 in high school and working full-time hours. Both

1 arrests bankrupted me and put me in debt. No one in my
2 family even knows about these arrests. For the record,
3 that's how applied this was.

4 In March of 2022, I received both
5 conditional licenses. From then on, I spent the year
6 driving throughout the state and chewed up and spit up
7 by numerous town and landlords in New Jersey for one
8 reason or another as Wesley. And then you have heard
9 in person at all the meetings since the beginning of
10 the CRC.

11 In June, 2023, after a whole year of a
12 hundred plus hour unpaid work weeks with no other job,
13 I finally found the location and township support in
14 West Mill for dozen failures felt in as well. And I
15 applied for both micro licenses to be converted to an
16 annual license in August, 2023. I shifted on my focus
17 on raising funds, which was extremely difficult,
18 particularly for someone like me, whose family and
19 friends are working class folks with no savings and no
20 ability to invest in my dream. I grew up in a house
21 where every month, I knew today is the month because I
22 -- the cable was out and the light (inaudible) out. We
23 paid one payment on a mortgage and we foreclosed the
24 house. It took me nearly a year, but I successfully
25 raised \$3 million from over 20 investors. A condition

1 of my being able to spend the rest (inaudible),
2 however, was that I received the CRCs approval to
3 convert both licenses to annual.

4 In February, 2024, I received the CRCs
5 approval to convert from conditional to annual for both
6 micro class one and class two applications. This
7 permitted me to start spending the investors' money on
8 the cultivation and manufacturer facility. All of my
9 financial source agreements were submitted to the CRC
10 and approved. Just before -- just this week, I passed
11 all inspections needed to get my certificate occupancy
12 and have plans with my investigator to do both of my
13 financial inspection. Final inspection is this week
14 after being told all financial investigations have been
15 passed, after being spoken in at meetings like this
16 that followed all the rules.

17 To date, I spent virtually the entire \$3
18 million. And I'm literally weeks away from opening up.
19 However, two weeks ago at 11:31 p.m., the CRC e-mailed
20 me casually informing me that I need to vacate one of
21 my licenses, which is beyond stocking and gun license.
22 To just casually asking me to drop one of my license
23 after receiving approval from the CRC for both
24 licenses, spending \$3 million getting EDA grants to
25 working with all of you very closely, you suddenly

1 changed your mind and didn't even inform your own
2 investigators, your field monitors. None of you knew
3 what was going on except for licensing at 11:31 on a
4 Thursday. I thought the CRC was trying to help with
5 social equity micro applicant, and this is just -- I've
6 lost nothing to sleep this time then. And you
7 (inaudible) fully integrated micro cultivators and
8 manufacturers operate the same as myself. There's a
9 zero percent chance this is gonna go the way you said,
10 right? Or I'm gonna actually have to give away one of
11 my licenses after everything we've been through, upon
12 being approved by all of you at multiple meetings. Now
13 you changed your mind and all of a sudden, I have to
14 give up one of my licenses two weeks before my final
15 inspection.

16 My investigator doesn't know, my field, my
17 mom doesn't know, no one's investigators knows. I get
18 it. If you change the rules, that's fine, but keep in
19 mind, there's gotta be something you can do for someone
20 like me in this exact position with everything I have
21 online. Is my -- is my time up? My time is up? I
22 have -- I have a little bit more to say, but -- but I'm
23 just saying, you created the rules. You have the
24 authority to change them. Why shall I be punished? My
25 life ruined for your own mistake. That wasn't even a

1 mistake. You just changed your mind. You've allowed
2 other people to do what I'm talking about doing. Okay.
3 Well, I appreciate the opportunity to be here, and just
4 keep in mind, I was in that EDA grant and I've been a
5 part of every single aspect of what you're talking
6 about. I've lived this -- this has been my whole
7 journey, and you guys look like turning your back on
8 me, literally at the 11th hour, 59th minute. Thank you
9 guys, and I appreciate it. And sorry for the
10 confusion. So thank you guys. I trust to do the right
11 thing, hopefully praying to God and (inaudible) that.
12 Thank you.

13 THE SECRETARY: Thank you. Moving to the
14 virtual callers. The next person is James Ferrin (ph).
15 Last four of the telephone number is 7789. If you're
16 in the room, please raise your hand person. The next
17 person is Daniel McCarthy (ph). Last four is 7518.
18 All right. I see you Dan. Just gimme a second. Dan,
19 just unmute and you have the floor.

20 MR. DANIEL MCCARTHY: All right. My
21 name's Daniel McCarthy. I'm actually experiencing the
22 same situation as the last person who spoke. It's been
23 three years now that I've -- since I've gotten my
24 conditional licenses. And luckily I've been able to
25 secure a property, get municipal approval, and I'm

1 nearly completed with construction. I'm hundreds of
2 thousands of dollars invested into this, my life
3 savings. And I was granted conditional licenses for
4 micro business cultivation and manufacturing. And I
5 got the same e-mail about a week ago saying that I need
6 to only choose one of them moving forward because
7 there's been a change in the interpretation of the law.
8 I just wanna echo what the last person said. I
9 understand rules change, but to give multiple companies
10 conditional licenses, knowing that it's been allowed in
11 the past for micro businesses to operate cultivation and
12 manufacturing facilities, and then to switch it last
13 minute after the money has been invested after the
14 three years of hard work and getting approvals is
15 accomplished.

16 I hope that there's a way that people or
17 companies that have been granted a conditional
18 application licenses and have come this far in the
19 process that we will be able to open knowing that other
20 companies are actively operating cultivation and
21 manufacturing. I saw a long list, including like full
22 tilt labs, a couple other companies. So we know it's -
23 - it happened in the past. We hope that it can happen
24 for people like ourselves who have done -- followed all
25 the rules, overcame all the hurdles. I, I hope that

1 someone could be in touch from the CRC instead of just
2 the, the nameless licensing e-mail without even having
3 someone to really, you know, take accountability for
4 these decisions. It's -- it's tough getting a just a
5 random e-mail with that -- not even signed by someone's
6 name, just saying, Hey pick one of your licenses, we're
7 gonna get rid of the other one.

8 THE SECRETARY: One minute, Dan.

9 MR. MCCARTHY: I just hope that hopefully
10 we can come to a, a solution for people who've invested
11 hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars and put in
12 the time and effort to meet all of the qualifications.
13 And even being a, a social equity applicant, the -- and
14 a micro business, that's what the CRC says they're all
15 about is, you know, the little companies that have been
16 affected have been arrested for having \$5 worth of
17 cannabis going to the beach. So just hope that there's
18 a resolution that allows applicants to get their
19 conversion licenses for both manufacturing and
20 cultivation as you've done in the past. I, I
21 appreciate your time. Thank you.

22 THE SECRETARY: Thank you, Dan. The next
23 person on the list is Shiralli Patel (ph). If you're
24 in the room, please raise your hand. All right. I see
25 you Shiralli. Just unmute yourself and you have the

1 floor.

2 MS. SHIRALLI PATEL: Can you hear me?

3 THE SECRETARY: Yes.

4 MS. PATEL: Okay. Good afternoon.

5 Shiralli Patel. I'm commenting today to address the
6 CRCs position on vertical integration for micro
7 licenses, which represents a significant regulatory
8 breach of trust. For years, the CRC is explicitly
9 communicated that adult use licensees could pursue
10 vertical integration after February, 2023, as evidenced
11 by official licenses issued to micro licenses seeking
12 vertical integration, published guidance materials,
13 FAQs. The CRCs current website to date right now
14 displays a graphic specifically stating all
15 recreational license holders can have one business in
16 each class, nothing specifically about micros.

17 A few weeks ago, letters were e-mailed to
18 micro licenses that were already awarded annual
19 licenses stating based on your initial review, that
20 alone is absurd because it can't be an initial review
21 when you issue these licenses over a year plus ago.
22 Your reinterpretation contradicts your own regulatory
23 framework while you cited N.J. 17:30-6.8 U as
24 prohibitive. The CRC omits N.J 17:30-6.8 E and D,
25 which explicitly permit -- vertical integration for all

1 licenses.

2 The selective citation of regulations
3 undermines regulatory consistency and transparency.
4 The CRC has accepted and process conversion fees for
5 vertically integrated micro licenses. You've taken
6 background investigation fees, approved and processed
7 operational agreements, including financial source
8 agreements, management source agreements, all standard
9 regulatory procedures without an objection to date.
10 The commission's already permitted, to my knowledge, at
11 least two vertically integrated micro businesses to
12 become operational, full tilt labs and prolific grow
13 house, which are operational.

14 After the fact, this determination to say
15 that micro businesses conveniently cannot be vertically
16 integrated -- vertically integrated, it, it just
17 doesn't make any sense to characterize it as initial
18 reviews, to direct licensees, to abandon one license
19 with no consideration of what they've gone through. A
20 hundred percent, New Jersey owned entities, they had to
21 raise dollars. It -- it's totally inconsistent with
22 what's happening across the board. I have to have, you
23 know, and just -- I have to understand your -- like,
24 your stance on this, because right now, like I'm
25 completely mind blown to have individuals come to me

1 and say, I, I can be sued by my investors. I can lose
2 everything that I've risked. I don't understand. All
3 I can say is that your current position, it's a failure
4 of procedural due process. I urge you to immediately
5 rectify this regulatory inconsistency and to honor what
6 you've said before, which is the guidance and practices
7 and determinations you've made on awarding micro
8 licenses to be vertically integrated. It has to make
9 sense for once. Thank you.

10 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
11 list is Edward Grimes (ph). If you're in the room,
12 please raise your hand. Edward Grimes. Right. I see
13 you, Edward. Gimme a second. Just unmute yourself and
14 you have the floor.

15 MR. EDWARD LEFTY GRIMES: Good afternoon.
16 I'm Edward Lefty Grimes, from sativa cross.org. We're
17 501 C3 fighting for cannabis patients' rights on the
18 rights of the disabled. And I think there's a lot of
19 room for growth here in New Jersey in New York. They -
20 - they're talking about having kiosks for events. Like
21 if you have a, a baseball game, you can have a cannabis
22 kiosk and get, I guess, edibles and tinctures, or I
23 guess even smokeables. I'm not sure how that's gonna
24 work, but they're way ahead of us in the game here, and
25 they were way behind us in the beginning.

1 Now they're way ahead. They have
2 homegrown in New York patients with -- with horrible
3 disability -- disabilities and diseases, can grow their
4 own cannabis in New York. But here in New Jersey,
5 we're still -- we're still floundering. We need
6 specific rules for Dab Bars and for -- for private
7 events because we -- we don't wanna see people caught
8 up in -- people that are trying to follow the law,
9 people that baked by the river that are trying to
10 follow the law to the T. And, you know, I just wanna
11 make sure that everybody's doing -- doing, you know,
12 what -- what they're supposed to do. I know
13 everybody's trying to follow the law, and we know -- we
14 need to know what the laws are and these -- these
15 guidelines are. It's not a police issue. I guess with
16 the penning out of the Dabs, it's a enforcement issue
17 with the CRC.

18 So how do companies sponsor these Dab
19 Bars? I think that's the big question, is how does the
20 -- how does the company sponsor a Dab Bar legally and
21 allow us to share our cannabis? Because you're -- if
22 you're an, an employee, apparently you can't give your
23 trade samples out to the public. So if you go on a
24 blunt with someone and you put some of your trade
25 sample in, I guess that entire blunt would be illegal.

1 I don't know. These things have to be mitigated. But
2 these are the things that really don't need to be
3 medicated. I would say no, men's ray, and let's move
4 on and legalize this plant and just stop the --

5 THE SECRETARY: One minute.

6 MR. GRIMES: -- this is not how I grew up
7 smoking cannabis. But I would -- I wouldn't -- I need
8 to know parameters. It would help to have the
9 parameters that we, we need to follow. So I thank you.
10 And also, we need wheelchair access. Again, disabled
11 vets cannot get into every dispensary. I believe you
12 have some grant money. Grant money should be used to
13 have wheelchair access for every disabled vet and every
14 disabled person in New Jersey to get into every
15 dispensary. They shall grow, not old as we that are
16 left to grow old. Age shall not worry them, nor the
17 years condemn at the going down of the sun. And in the
18 morning we will remember them. Thank you.

19 THE SECRETARY: The next person on the
20 list is Chris Goldstein (ph). Chris Goldstein. Last
21 four of the telephone number is 5278. All right. The
22 next person is William Caruso (ph). Last four is 3096.
23 William Caruso. If you're in the room, please raise
24 your hand. Right. Next person is Molly Lustig (ph).
25 If you're in the room, please raise your hand. Right.

1 I see you, Molly. Just unmute yourself and you have
2 the floor. And I'll give it a one minute warning.

3 MS. MOLLY LUSTIG: Thank you so much. I
4 can -- can you hear me?

5 THE SECRETARY: Yes.

6 MS. LUSTIG: Okay.

7 THE SECRETARY: Just move on.

8 MS. LUSTIG: Great. So the micro business
9 issue, Shiralli said at all. I don't need to waste
10 anybody's time on that. Really looking for immediate
11 action on that. She characterized that perfectly well.
12 There are two things that I do wanna address today
13 really quickly. One is potential universal waiver of
14 the location change fee during a very specific time.
15 And that time period would be following approval of a
16 resolution of support for a conversion or an annual
17 license from the CRC and before a business's doors are
18 open. We are having a lot of applicants who apply to
19 the CRC with a location. We're not talking on a
20 unconditional, we're talking with a, a contract
21 purchase and sale agreement or lease agreement.

22 And for some reason, that location does
23 not pan out. And a business that's getting ready to
24 open their doors, struggling with many of the other
25 regulatory hurdles is now faced with a \$10,000 business

1 location change fee and that just puts some of these
2 operators over the edge. So I would like the
3 commission to consider that just in that short time
4 period, of course, following annual licensure, opening
5 of doors, you know, there are administrative costs that
6 would need to be accounted for in that process.. And
7 actually, I'm gonna not comment on the second one.
8 Thank you so much for your time.

9 THE SECRETARY: Okay. Thank you, Molly.
10 The next person on the list is Andrea Rabel (ph). Last
11 four is 0229. If you're in the room, please raise your
12 hand. Andrea Rabel. I'm just gonna go over the list
13 one more time. Reginald Green. Alan Truhkoski.
14 Samuel Rykler. James Ferrin. Daniel McCarthy. Chris
15 Goldstein. William Caruso. Andrea Rabel. Chairwoman,
16 this will conclude the registered speakers we have for
17 today's public meeting.

18 CHAIR: Thank you. And thank you to
19 everyone who shared their -- their thoughts, their
20 suggestions, their recommendations, and their
21 experiences.

22 As a reminder, anybody can submit written
23 comments. No length record -- no length maximum there
24 on our website, nj.gov/cannabis/meetings. If you want
25 to submit written comments, the deadline to submit

1 those comments is 5 o'clock tomorrow, Friday, April
2 4th. And so this concludes the business that we have
3 before us today. Before I make a motion -- before I
4 move to adjourn, I do wanna recognize and acknowledge.
5 When it comes to legal issues, we do take those
6 seriously with the commission and the issues that have
7 been presented and commented on by our several
8 commenters. Just know that we are gonna be working
9 through it, and we will bring it to a resolution, and
10 we'll make sure everybody is up to speed and
11 understands what comes next. Right? So I just wanna
12 make that very clear for folks. We don't wanna -- I do
13 not want us to leave folks in the dark with questions
14 unanswered. So those answers will be coming. Please
15 be patient with us, but they will be coming to you.
16 Now with that, I move that we adjourn. Is there a
17 second?

18 VICE CHAIR: I second.

19 CHAIR: Seconded by Vice Chair Delgado. I
20 was worried for a second that the board wanted to stay
21 a little longer. Any discussion on this motion to
22 adjourn? Hearing no discussion, all those in favor of
23 adjourning say aye.

24 ALL: Aye.

25 CHAIR: All those opposed say nay.

1 (Inaudible) abstentions. Motion passes. The time is
2 3:35 p.m. and we are adjourned. Thank you everyone,
3 and have a great evening.

4 (Meeting concluded)

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