Communication from Public

Name:	Sarah Armstrong
Date Submitted:	06/15/2025 11:44 AM
Council File No:	20-1125-S1
Comments for Public Posting:	Please see the attached letter supporting the continued existence of EMMDs.

AmericansFor SafeAccess
Advancing Legal Medical Marijuana Therapeutics and Research

To: The Honorable Members of the Government Operations Committee

From: Sarah Armstrong, JD - California Legislative Coordinator - Americans for Safe Access (ASA)

Re: Tuesday, June 17, 2025, Agenda Item No. 4 CF No. 20-1125-S1 – relative to amending the Los Angeles Municipal Code to allow Existing Medical Marijuana Dispensaries (EMMDs) to continue conducting their licensed cannabis activities and a request that no sunset date be imposed.

Date: June 13, 2025

Americans for Safe Access (ASA) respectfully submits the comments below, and hopes that the Honorable Members of the Government Operations Committee, will take into consideration the needs of medical cannabis patients as it considers Agenda Item No. 4 on its June 17, 2025, Agenda. Our organization is hopeful the Committee will support the continued operation of the City's EMMDs, the first cannabis retailers to operate legally in the City, historic pioneers who should never face sunsetting or any other impediments to their continued operation.

Nearly two decades ago, in 2007, the City of Los Angeles (the City) began allowing the operation of medical cannabis dispensaries under the concept of Limited Immunity. These pioneering businesses were subject to rules and regulations, including sensitive use ratios and the payment of taxes.

They were proud to be the first cannabis business operators to legally operate in the City and took their responsibilities very seriously. They have proven over nearly two decades of operation that they run clean, quiet, and compliant establishments. It is not their fault, nor should they be penalized in any way because the longevity of their existence meant the law around their businesses changed.

These pioneering establishments served medical cannabis patients exclusively until a voter initiative legalized cannabis for adult use in 2016, which means all of these shops had nearly a decade of experience exclusively serving the sick and dying prior to legalization. Moreover, they have retained their Medical Use State and Local Licenses to this day.

Closing these historic businesses long after these businesses had been established and already had a long history of compliant operation would be a huge blow to medical cannabis patients. These patients are often too sick to travel out of their neighborhoods to acquire their medicine and depend on the commitment to their patients that these shops have long exhibited.

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Given the long history of honorable, trouble free operation and the fact that the City has numerous ways to shut down any licensed cannabis operations as well as keep them closed if they misbehave, there is little risk in permanently allowing these facilities to operate.

Imposing a sunset date on these historic businesses is unnecessary, instead they should be permanently grandfathered in. These businesses are historic organizations of great value to patients who depend upon medical cannabis for therapeutic relief.

They will be particularly needed if the the City pauses new cannabis retail applications. This is not the time to shutter honorable businesses whose reputations are unblemished and whose value has been proven over a long period of time, nor should they face closure in the future.

For the reasons stated above, Americans for Safe Access (ASA) hopes that the honorable members of the Government Operations Committee when considering the Department of Cannabis Regulation's Report of will remove the requirement of a sunset date for EMMDs whose value has been more than proven over the years, and who have been law abiding assets to the city's economic fabric for nearly two decades.

Founded in 2002, Americans for Safe Access (ASA) advocates for a national regulatory framework that invests in the development of standardized cannabis-based products, ensures a safe and consistent supply, fosters the integration of cannabis into patient treatment plans as a frontline medication, and encourages insurance coverage, as well as an end to employment, housing, parental and healthcare discrimination. You can read more about our organization at: http://www.safeaccessnow.org. Should there be any questions or concerns, I can be reached at: canwonk@gmail.com or (805) 279-8229.

Sincerely,

Sarah Armstrong JD
California Legislative Coordinator
Americans for Safe Access (ASA)

Cc: Michelle Garakian
Jason Killen