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AB-1496 Cannabis task force. (2025-2026)

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Date Published: 02/21/2025 09:00 PM

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 1496

Introduced by Assembly Member Blanca Rubio

February 21, 2025

An act to add Section 26203 to the Business and Professions Code, relating to cannabis.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1496, as introduced, Blanca Rubio. Cannabis task force.

The Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act of 2016 (AUMA), an initiative measure, authorizes a person who obtains a state license under AUMA to engage in commercial adult-use cannabis activity pursuant to that license and applicable local ordinances. The Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MAUCRSA), among other things, consolidates the licensure and regulation of commercial medicinal and adult-use cannabis activities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Cannabis Control. Existing law authorizes local jurisdictions to enforce the provisions of MAUCRSA and to regulate cannabis businesses, as specified.

Prior existing law, which was repealed on January 1, 2025, established a task force on state and local regulation of commercial cannabis activity to promote communication between state and local entities engaged in the regulation of commercial cannabis activity and facilitate cooperation to enforce applicable state and local laws, consisting of specified members from state agencies and all local jurisdictions regulating commercial cannabis activity that opt to participate. That prior law exempted the meetings of the task force from the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and the Ralph M. Brown Act.

This bill would reinstate the task force and expand the task force to include representatives from tribal governmental entities regulating commercial cannabis activity that opt to participate in the task force. The bill would exempt the meetings of the task force from the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and the Ralph M. Brown Act.

Existing constitutional provisions require that a statute that limits the right of access to the meetings of public bodies or the writings of public officials and agencies be adopted with findings demonstrating the interest protected by the limitation and the need for protecting that interest.

This bill would make legislative findings to that effect.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 26203 is added to the Business and Professions Code, to read:

26203. (a) There is hereby established a task force on state and local regulation of commercial cannabis activity. The purpose of the task force is to promote communication between state and local entities engaged in the regulation of commercial cannabis activity and facilitate cooperation to enforce applicable state and local laws.

(b) The task force shall be composed of representatives from all of the following:

- (1) The Department of Cannabis Control.
- (2) The California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.
- (3) The Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- (4) The State Water Resources Control Board.
- (5) The Department of the California Highway Patrol.
- (6) The Labor and Workforce Development Agency.
- (7) The Department of Justice.

(8) All local jurisdictions and tribal governmental entities regulating commercial cannabis activity that opt to participate in the task force, which may send representatives from one or more of the following:

- (A) The contact person designated pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 26055.
- (B) A county sheriff's office or municipal police department.
- (C) A district attorney's office or city attorney's office.

(c) The task force shall meet twice each fiscal year, through teleconference or similar means to facilitate remote participation, for discussions to be convened and led by the Department of Cannabis Control. Discussion topics may include, but need not be limited to, enforcement against the illicit market, social equity programs, state licensing requirements, and labor and workforce compliance.

(d) The task force shall not be subject to the requirements of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code) or the Ralph M. Brown Act (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 54950) of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code).

SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares that Section 1 of this act, which adds Section 26203 to the Business and Professions Code, imposes a limitation on the public's right of access to the meetings of public bodies or the writings of public officials and agencies within the meaning of Section 3 of Article I of the California Constitution. Pursuant to that constitutional provision, the Legislature makes the following findings to demonstrate the interest protected by this limitation and the need for protecting that interest:

In order to protect the integrity of active and prospective administrative, civil, and criminal investigations conducted for law enforcement and licensing purposes; to prevent premature or overbroad disclosure of potentially sensitive information regarding those investigations to suspected violators of applicable state and local laws, as well as potential witnesses and others, in ways that might compromise those investigations; to allow members of the task force created by Section 26203 of the Business and Professions Code to more freely share information, and otherwise coordinate, regarding those investigations; and to otherwise promote fuller cooperation among members of the task force to enforce applicable state and local laws, it is necessary to exempt the task force from the provisions of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and the Ralph M. Brown Act.