

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CANNABIS POLICY 2025-2026 (194th) BILL SUMMARY

Bill Number:	H.171
Title:	An act to modernize the cannabis regulatory environment
Sponsor(s):	Rep. Dawne Shand (Newburyport)
Hearing Date:	April 9, 2025
Reporting Deadline:	June 8, 2025
Prior History:	None
Similar Matters:	S.75 (Sen. William N. Brownsberger – Identical)

SUMMARY:

Sections 1 and 5 amend Chapter 94G of the Massachusetts General Laws to codify the Cannabis Control Commission’s (CCC) regulation requiring that all agents of cannabis licensees be registered with the CCC, but provides that the CCC is required to issue the registration card to the individual agent rather than the licensee. The registration is valid for six years. A self-attestation verifying compliance needs to be submitted every two years. There is no fee for social equity program participants or social equity business employees.

Section 2 amends Section 1 of Chapter 94G to codify CCC regulations interpreting the statutory term “licensee” to mean a person or entity with direct or indirect control of a license (935 CMR 500.002), except that it alters the qualification threshold by no longer considering whether the person makes major decisions or executes significant contracts.

Section 9 strikes out Section 16 of chapter 94G and replaces it with language lifting the retailer license cap from three to six for a person or entity with direct or indirect control. The new license cap would be introduced in a staggered manner, with the retailer cap increasing to four licenses in the first year after the law’s passage and to five licenses in the second year. The law further provides that a person or entity with direct or indirect control could own up to four additional licenses so long as the interest in each additional license is no more than 35% and the additional licenses are majority-owned by social equity businesses, economic empowerment businesses, Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), or Veteran Business Enterprises (VBEs).

Section 9 also amends section 16 of chapter 94G to require the CCC to adopt regulations requiring that any person or entity seeking to have direct or indirect control of more than three retail licenses must purchase existing marijuana business. Further, the CCC must give priority consideration to

the purchase of retailer licenses from social equity businesses, Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), or Veteran Businesses Enterprises (VBEs).

Section 3 amends Section 4 of Chapter 94G to restrict the CCC from prohibiting marijuana businesses from advertising sales, discounts, and customer loyalty programs from within their business, their website, or through opt-in email marketing.

Sections 4 and 11 amend both Section 7 of Chapter 94G and Section 34 of Chapter 94C to increase the amount of marijuana that a person can purchase and possess from 1 ounce to 3 ounces, with up to 15 grams in the form of marijuana concentrate and up to 1.5 grams of THC in an ingestible product. Section 12 further requires the CCC to promulgate regulations in accordance with this bill.

Section 6 amends Section 15 of Chapter 94G (on laboratory testing and licensure) to prohibit the CCC from requiring a batch size under 40 pounds for testing and tracking.

Section 7 further amends Section 15 of chapter 94G by requiring the CCC to collaborate with marijuana testing labs and businesses to annually review regulations and testing protocols to ensure that they are in line with industry standards and best cultivation practices for outdoor grows in New England. The CCC is required to report on its findings and update regulations and protocols accordingly, as well as to update the legislature on a bi-annual basis.

Section 8 further amends section 15 to prohibit the CCC from requiring any testing of environmental media beyond testing finished marijuana or marijuana products.

Section 10 requires the CCC to publish data collected by Independent Testing Laboratories and to investigate and publicly report on significant outliers identified in the data. The data must include both the industry average and per license average of failure rates for contaminants (pesticides, heavy metals, microbiological contaminants, residual solvents, and mycotoxins) and total THC for flower, marijuana vaporizer devices, and concentrates. The first report would present all previously collected data per Independent Testing Laboratory, per quarter of reports, and subsequent reports would be published on a quarterly basis. The bill further requires the CCC to promulgate regulations in accordance with this bill.

Section 12 requires the CCC to promulgate or amend regulations in accordance with all of the above sections not later than 365 days from the law's effective date.