

Representative Grier Hopkins



ALASKA STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill 289

An Act establishing the Alaska marijuana industry task force

Sponsor Statement

Since the 2014 legalization of recreational marijuana by citizen initiative, the state of Alaska has sought to create a vibrant, sustainable and responsible marijuana industry. Under the oversight of the Marijuana Control Board, marijuana businesses have sprung up across Alaska – putting Alaskans to work, creating new revenue streams for local governments, and moving an unregulated black market out of the dark and into the public light.

While many businesses initially thrived under the terms of Alaska's marijuana market, the ongoing inequities and inflexible fiscal terms of the voter initiative has left many marijuana businesses struggling to comply with the letter and spirit of the law. Limited scope of enforcement powers have resulted in scattershot oversight, resulting in too many small businesses running afoul of regulations.

With the wide, varied scope and size of the businesses competing in Alaska's marijuana market, it is difficult to find a single solution to stabilize our business model, maintain revenue streams for state and local governments and preserve our unique Alaskan-controlled marijuana industry.

HB 289 would convene a task force of knowledgeable Alaskans to analyze this problem, propose solutions, create models to see how these proposed changes would impact taxpayers, businesses and governmental entities, and offer their findings to the next Alaska legislature for action. Chaired by the head of the Marijuana Control Board, the task force will be composed of the heads of relevant state agencies, local government leaders, representatives of the marijuana industry and an economist from the University of Alaska. Members of the Alaska House and Senate will serve as ex-officio task force members.

This task force will meet over the 2022 interim, and make their recommendations for action to the Thirty-Third Alaska Legislature. I urge your support for HB 289.

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