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The Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act's March 1st Deadline

An open letter to County and City Government Officials:

Like many of my colleagues, I began my public service career at the local level where decisions made in Sacramento often have a profound impact on the decisions we make in our communities. Over the past several weeks, I have learned that cities and counties are scrambling to put regulations regarding medical marijuana in place ahead of a March 1st deadline that was inadvertently included in AB243 of the Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act (MMRSA). As a former local elected I understand this reaction. However, I am writing this letter to clarify some of the confusion that has resulted from the inclusion of the March 1st deadline in the MMRSA.

The MMRSA will bring a multi-billion dollar industry that has grown up largely in the shadows into the light. Ultimately, the goal is to provide Californians with the legal, consumer, and environmental protections we have come to expect from any other industry.

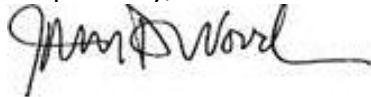
During the scramble at the end of the legislative session this year, an inadvertent drafting error placed a deadline on local jurisdictions, requiring them to adopt their own land use regulations for medical cannabis cultivation by March 1, 2016, or turn that responsibility over to the state. As soon as I was aware of the error I published a letter in the Assembly Journal, the official record of the Assembly, declaring my intention to pass urgency legislation as soon as the legislature reconvenes in January. The compromise agreement with the Governor's office did not include the March 1st deadline and this urgency legislation will ensure that the MMRSA's legislative intent is not altered. I have already amended one of my bills with language that will strike the deadline and maintain a local jurisdiction's ability to create their own regulations. As an urgency measure, the law will go into effect as soon as it is signed by the Governor.

My intent to remove the deadline has bi-partisan and stakeholder support. The Governor's office is prepared to partner with my office to ensure local control on this issue. I appreciate the Governor's acknowledgement of this drafting error and his office's willingness to work with me to quickly resolve the problem. Even if my urgency measure is not signed until after March 1st,

the Bureau of Medical Marijuana Regulation (BMMR), the entity responsible for developing the State's regulations, currently exists on paper only. It will be many months before the Bureau has the capacity to develop and enforce statewide regulations. Additionally we have received legal feedback confirming that once my urgency measure is in effect jurisdictions will retain the local control they need.

I am confident that my colleagues and I will eliminate the March 1st deadline before it becomes a realistic problem as opposed to a theoretical concern for local lawmakers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Wood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JIM WOOD
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, 2ND DISTRICT