



## Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board

November 17, 2022

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Saldaña and Mr. Makoso –

On behalf of the Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) I am writing to thank you, the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force and the Task Force staff for the opportunity to work with you on creating a more equitable cannabis industry. I appreciate your invitation to contribute this statement for your final report to the Legislature.

The Legislature embedded the Task Force in, E2SHB 2870, the 2020 LCB-request legislation. A primary purpose for creating the Task Force was to assemble stakeholders from the communities intended to benefit from the program to help guide development of key elements of the program's structure.

The LCB has looked to the Task Force for guidance on many program components. We believe that the LCB has also been a consistent, collaborative partner in assisting and supporting the Task Force in its work. Below are just a few illustrative examples of our collaboration:

- LCB contracted with an African American-owned consulting firm to assist the agency in reaching the community and facilitate dialogue to gather input on preferred directions for the program. The LCB held multiple community forums in the fall of 2020;
- LCB Board Member Ollie Garrett has served as a member of the Task Force, engaging with not only the public meetings of the Task Force but providing active leadership within the LCB as well;
- LCB contracted with a UW researcher to assist the LCB in exploring options for defining Disproportionately Impacted Areas;
- LCB formed an internal work group, led by LCB Licensing Division Director Becky Smith, with a key goal being to share information with, and provide assistance to, the Task Force; and
- LCB staff have actively participated in most meetings of the full Task Force and its work groups, often providing presentations, and answering questions, as well as meeting regularly with Task Force staff to assist them in preparing for work group and Task Force meetings.

The LCB has also worked diligently on a parallel track to create a social equity licensing program. Our agency has done that in consistent communications with the Task Force. That work has resulted in:

- Creating a Social Equity in Cannabis section of the LCB website to serve as central information source;
- Development of a robust social equity licensing program that will be open to applications in the coming months. We have contracted with an independent third party to score applications for social equity licenses;
- Created a scoring rubric that takes into account as much of the Task Force's recommendations as possible that now includes provisions to target licenses for those harmed by the war on drugs, with a demonstrated history in operating a medical dispensary and/or those living in economically distressed areas in our state.
- Coordinating with King County and the Administrative Office of the Courts to obtain residency and criminal justice system data necessary to assess eligibility for social equity licenses; and
- Coordinating with the Department of Commerce to create educational material, training and live workshops, mentoring assistance and other resources for applicants.

LCB has very much appreciated an open, constructive and collaborative relationship with the Task Force and shares your commitment to fulfilling the goals of the social equity in cannabis program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Postman', written over a white background.

David Postman  
Board Chair