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Twenty-Four State-Level Cannabis Trade Associations and Four Financial Institutions Ask Congress to Include the Cannabis Industry in Next Congressional Coronavirus Relief Package

WASHINGTON - In a letter authored by the American Trade Association for Cannabis and Hemp and Policy Center for Public Health and Safety, 24 state-level cannabis trade associations from across the country including the Washington CannaBusiness Association (WACA), are calling on Congress to end the discriminatory practice of the Small Business Administration's exclusion of cannabis businesses from COVID-19 federal funding.

The letter, which can be found [here](#) and signed by WACA Executive Director Vicki Christophersen is also co-signed by four financial institutions that offer services to cannabis businesses in state regulated markets.

"The disruptions to our economic, social and community lives caused by COVID-19 are severe and the regulated cannabis industry is vulnerable to the same economic upheaval as any other business sector," **said Vicki Christophersen, WACA executive director.** "While we are thankful that Governor Inslee has declared legal cannabis an Essential Service so that we may provide medical products to patients, continue combating the illicit market and generate critical tax revenue for our state, the fact is that cannabis remains illegal at the federal level and therefore blocks our members from normal banking practices. The inability of regulated cannabis businesses to access normal loans or make standard tax deductions is exacerbating the negative effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic on the marketplace, creating a significant need for federal relief for the industry to help protect jobs."

"Salal Credit Union is proud to provide banking services to our state's regulated cannabis industry, helping small businesses grow and thrive as new jobs are created despite ongoing denial of normal banking services and tax deductions due to ongoing federal prohibition," **said WACA Board Member and Salal Credit Union CEO and President, Russ Rosendal.** "Several of our cannabis clients have attempted to access federal loans, but we are not able to help protect these small businesses until Congress includes this industry in their federal relief efforts."

“Today’s cannabis industry is a mature one, employing nearly 300,000 workers nationwide in direct and indirect jobs,” **said ATACH President Michael Bronstein.** “The industry is a job creator, and enjoys bipartisan public support, but without federal funding eligibility to help offset emergency costs related to COVID on top of already extensive state and federal taxes, many cannabis employers and ancillary companies will have no option but to cut jobs or cease to operate.”

“We think Congress should explore funding options like authorizing fixed block grants to each state for non-specific pandemic relief so states with medical or adult-use cannabis programs could direct monies to support the cannabis industry, meanwhile, non-legal states could direct those monies to other essential industries,” said **Fred Niehaus, Chairman of the Policy Center for Public Health and Safety.** “These are the conversations we’re hoping to jump start with positive outcomes for cannabis companies, states and municipalities depending on tax revenue, and the ancillary businesses that support them as this is when decreases in tax revenues will hit home in many states.”

This national grassroots call-to-action is aimed at the next congressional relief package lawmakers are considering.

About Washington CannaBusiness Association

Washington CannaBusiness Association solely represents Washington’s licensed and regulated cannabis businesses and provides its members with general support and representation before regulatory agencies and the legislature. As an association of cannabis producers, processors and retailers who have gathered to promote the private cannabis industry created by Initiative 502 and our member companies, our mission is to advocate on behalf of our member companies in the legislative, regulatory, legal and public policy arenas.

Learn more about Washington CannaBusiness Association by visiting our website at <http://www.wacannabusiness.org>

About ATACH

The American Trade Association for Cannabis and Hemp is a 501(c)(6) trade organization founded in 2014 by industry leaders to promote the expansion and protection of legal sales of cannabis and hemp for industrial, medical, and recreational use. ATACH has subsequently been named “Trade Association of the Year” and “Corporate Grassroots Organization of the Year” by Campaigns & Elections magazine for its representation of the leading national industry players, its role in state level legalization campaigns, and historic memorandum of understanding with ASTM International to develop standards for the cannabis industry. ATACH’s National Council of State Organizations is a coalition of the leading state-level permit holder organizations that work together to promote, protect, and expand, the cannabis industry by providing credible representation to the cannabis industry.

About the Policy Center for Public Health and Safety

The Policy Center for Public Health & Safety is a 501(c)4 founded to facilitate constructive dialogue on state-legalized cannabis issues among state, federal, and international regulators. The organization’s primary focus is on anti-money laundering, public health & safety, consumer protection, and rule-of-law.

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