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Supervisor Rafael Mandelman Introduces Changes to SF Cannabis Laws

Proposed changes include extending medical cannabis permits through 2019, protecting businesses getting priced out of their leases

SAN FRANCISCO — At Tuesday’s Board of Supervisors Meeting, District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman introduced an ordinance updating the city’s retail and medical cannabis codes. The legislation, which initiates a series of proactive updates, deals with issues that followed the city’s previous initial retail cannabis regulations passed last year.

“This industry is in its infancy, and in the years to come will be a significant creator of new, good, jobs and local economic activity,” said Mandelman. “The way our City regulates the retail cannabis industry needs to be as innovative as the industry itself, and what I’m introducing today is a step in that direction--a series of proactive policy solutions that will allow the retail cannabis industry to continue to grow in a way that is sustainable for operators as well as the city.”

Among many other things, this ordinance will enable medical cannabis operators waiting for their retail permits to thrive by allowing the existing industry to continue to operate on medical cannabis permits and temporary permits through the end of next year while the Office of Cannabis continues to process the 240+ permit applications already submitted to the office since mid-May.

Additionally, this ordinance will strengthen equity ownership in a way that honors the intent of the program to help those impacted by the War on Drugs own and operate successful businesses. It will also allow for more flexibility around permit applications for existing operators who are getting priced out of their leases or dealing with predatory landlords.

The legislation will sit for a full 30 days so that Supervisor Mandelman, along with the Mayor and Board President Malia Cohen, Mandelman’s co-sponsors on this legislation, can work with the City’s Office of Cannabis to solicit comments and feedback and make any additional amendments necessary prior to acting on the legislation in October and November.

Rafael Mandelman, 44, grew up in San Francisco and is an 18-year resident of District 8. In June 2018, Mandelman was elected to the Board of Supervisors, earning 60% of the vote. He represents the Castro District, Noe Valley, Glen Park and Diamond Heights, among other San Francisco neighborhoods.

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