

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

Thank you for your efforts to address the needs of the American people during the COVID-19 outbreak. As you draft the next COVID-19 relief bill, we write to ask that you address one of the shortcomings of the CARES Act—the exclusion of state-legal cannabis businesses and their employees. The COVID-19 crisis response demands the full participation of the American people, businesses, and workforce. However, without relief, a very large population is left without the means to execute the required public health measures and continue to provide financially for their families.

The state-legal cannabis industry is a major contributor to the U.S. economy and workforce, employing over 240,000 workers across 33 states and four territories, and generating \$1.9 billion in state and local taxes in 2019.<sup>1,2</sup> As states respond to the COVID-19 crisis by shuttering businesses to mitigate the virus' spread, jurisdictions across the country have recognized cannabis businesses as “essential.” Essential businesses, in many places, can operate during the pandemic provided they abide by required public health safety measures. Like other businesses with continued operations, cannabis businesses have met the moment by preserving access to treatment for patients with chronic conditions, donating protective clothing, and manufacturing equipment for medical use. However, unlike other small businesses, cannabis businesses are not eligible for the CARES Act programs.

State-legal cannabis businesses need access to CARES Act programs to ensure they have the financial capacity to undertake the public health and worker-focused measures experts are urging businesses to take. This includes access to and participation in SBA's loan programs—financial support that is designed to pay workers, group health care benefits, and family or sick leave.

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<sup>1</sup> Barcott, Bruce David Downs. “Cannabis Jobs Report: Legal Cannabis Now Supports 243,700 Full-Time American Jobs.” *Leafly*, 7 Feb. 2020, [www.leafly.com/news/industry/243700-marijuana-jobs-how-many-in-america](http://www.leafly.com/news/industry/243700-marijuana-jobs-how-many-in-america).

<sup>2</sup> Davis, Carl. “State and Local Cannabis Tax Revenue Jumps 33%, Surpassing \$1.9 Billion in 2019.” *ITEP*, 10 Apr. 2020, [itep.org/state-and-local-cannabis-tax-revenue-jumps-33-surpassing-1-9-billion-in-2019](http://itep.org/state-and-local-cannabis-tax-revenue-jumps-33-surpassing-1-9-billion-in-2019).

Current SBA policies prevent cannabis businesses from accessing the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs), EIDL grants, or SBA loan forgiveness – programs intended to help businesses fight COVID-19 in safe and equitable ways. Specifically, the PPP is designed to keep workers at America’s 30 million small businesses paid. Workers at state-legal cannabis businesses are no different from workers at any other small business—they show up to work every day, perform their duties, and most importantly, work to provide for their families. This lack of access will undoubtedly lead to unnecessary layoffs, reduced hours, pay cuts, and furloughs for the workers of cannabis businesses who need support the most. The COVID-19 outbreak is no time to permit federal policy to stand in the way of the reality that millions of Americans in states across the country face daily—that state-legal cannabis businesses are sources of economic growth and financial stability for thousands of workers and families, and need our support.

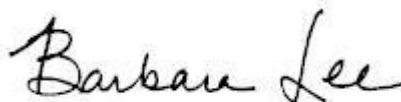
Given the nature of the epidemic, we must ensure that everyone has the capacity to carry out the recommended public health and worker-focused measures. Without doing that, we risk undercutting the public health efforts nationwide. We ask that House leadership include provisions to allow state-legal cannabis businesses and the businesses who work with this industry to access the critical support they need during this unprecedented time.

We thank you for your consideration of our request.

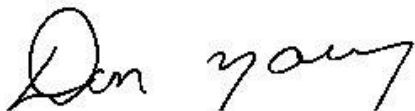
Sincerely,



EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress



BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress



DON YOUNG  
Member of Congress



TOM MCCLINTOCK  
Member of Congress

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