

December 7, 2012

Governor Deval Patrick  
State House, Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

Senate President Therese Murray  
State House, Suite 332  
Boston, MA 02133

Speaker Robert Deleo  
State House, Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Randy Hunt  
State House, Room 136  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re:** Impact of Medical Marijuana Law on Municipalities

Dear Governor Patrick, Senate President Murray, Speaker Deleo, and Representative Hunt:

The Town of Sandwich would like to express its concerns about the implementation of the new medical marijuana law and how it will impact municipalities. There are several concerns we have, many of which are undoubtedly shared by cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Foremost, we would like the Legislature and Governor to pass a law delaying implementation of the medical marijuana requirements by 6 months. The law which was passed in November is slated to go into effect on January 1 with no regulatory framework in place. The law required the adoption of standards and regulations through the Department of Public Health (DPH) within 120 days, but that is significantly later than the January 1 implementation date. This does not give municipalities sufficient time to prepare for the law's implementation or adopt local standards or bylaws. We all need time to fully understand the law with minimal confusion and to use our limited resources efficiently.

For example, most municipalities governed legislatively by Town Meetings have to follow very formal timelines in adopting zoning bylaw amendments. The required M.G.L. timelines are impossible to meet by January and will be very difficult to have ready by Annual Town Meetings which typically occur from mid-April to mid-May. Town Counsels, Planning Boards, and Boards of Selectmen need sufficient time to react to the standards and regulations DPH issues and the current implementation timeframe does not allow this to occur. This is especially true for the siting of medicinal marijuana dispensaries in locations that may make no sense for a municipality.

The same concerns municipalities have also hold true for the general public. Our citizens need time to fully understand and become informed about the law. Many human service groups, local boards and committee, and public safety and health professionals have already expressed concern that thoughtful and careful consideration needs to be given in creating the local regulatory frameworks. This concern is based on evidence from the 17 other states that have passed similar laws. Legitimate public safety and health concerns need to be fully understood and addressed prior to the law going into effect. This is especially true in secondary schools where our educational institutions needs time review codes of conduct and educate parents and students about the law.

Thank you for your consideration of our input. It is extremely important that sufficient time be allowed for the Commonwealth and local governments to prepare for the law's implementation and the corresponding regulatory standards. Any assistance you could provide to extend the implementation timeframe for the medical marijuana law and address our concerns would be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

**Sandwich Board of Selectmen**

John G. Kennan, Chairman

Ralph Vitacco, Vice-Chairman

Linell M. Grundman

Frank Pannorfi

Jim Pierce

cc: Massachusetts Municipal Association  
Cape Cod Selectmen & Councilors Association