Proposition 64
Marijuana Legalization. Initiative Statute.

BACKGROUND

State Marijuana Laws

Marijuana Generally Illegal Under State Law. Under current state law, it is generally illegal to possess or use marijuana. (Please see the nearby box for detailed information on how marijuana is used.) Penalties for marijuana-related activities vary depending on the offense. For example, possession of less than one ounce of marijuana (the equivalent of roughly 40 marijuana cigarettes, also known as "joints") is punishable by a fine, while selling or growing marijuana may result in a jail or prison sentence.

How do Individuals Use Marijuana?

Smoking. The most common way individuals use marijuana is by smoking it. Typically, users smoke the dried flowers of the marijuana plant. Dried marijuana leaves can also be smoked but this is rare because leaves contain only small amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is the ingredient in marijuana that produces a "high." Marijuana leaves, flowers, and stalks can also be processed into concentrated marijuana and smoked. Examples of concentrated marijuana include hash and hash oil. Concentrated marijuana is much stronger than dried marijuana, often containing five to ten times the THC levels found in dried marijuana flowers.

Vaporizing. Some users consume marijuana with devices called vaporizers. A vaporizer heats up dried marijuana or concentrated marijuana but does not burn it. This heating process creates a gas containing THC that is inhaled.

Eating. Marijuana can also be added to food. Edible marijuana products are typically made by adding THC from the plant into ingredients (like butter or oil) that are used to prepare foods such as brownies, cookies, or chocolate bars.

Other Methods. Other less common ways of using marijuana include drinking beverages infused with marijuana and rubbing marijuana infused lotions on the skin.

Proposition 215 Legalized Medical Marijuana. In 1996, voters approved Proposition 215, which made it legal under state law for individuals of any age to use marijuana in California for medical purposes. Individuals must have a recommendation from a doctor to use medical marijuana. In 2003, the Legislature legalized medical marijuana collectives, which are nonprofit

organizations that grow and provide marijuana to their members. Collectives are not now licensed or regulated by the state, but cities and counties can regulate where and how medical marijuana is grown and sold by individuals or collectives.

State Currently Adopting New Medical Marijuana Regulations. Recently, new state laws were adopted to begin regulating medical marijuana. As shown in Figure 1, a new Bureau of Medical Cannabis Regulation and other state agencies are responsible for this regulation. The new laws require the state to set standards for labelling, testing, and packaging medical marijuana products and to develop a system to track such products from production to sale. Currently, these regulations are being developed by the different regulatory agencies. Under the new laws, medical marijuana collectives must be closed within a few years and replaced by state-licensed businesses. Local governments will continue to have the ability to regulate where and how medical marijuana businesses operate.

Figure 1
Medical Marijuana Industry to Be Regulated by Multiple State Agencies

Regulatory Agency	Primary Responsibilities
Bureau of Medical Cannabis Regulation	License medical marijuana distributors, transporters, testing facilities, and retailers.
Department of Food and Agriculture	License and regulate medical marijuana growers.
Department of Public Health	License and regulate producers of edible marijuana products.
State Water Resources Control Board	Regulate the environmental impacts of marijuana growing on water quality.
Department of Fish and Wildlife	Regulate environmental impacts of marijuana growing.
Department of Pesticide Regulation	Regulate pesticide use for growing marijuana.

Taxes on Medical Marijuana. State and local governments currently collect sales tax on medical marijuana. A small number of cities also impose additional taxes specifically on medical

marijuana. The total amount of state and local taxes collected on medical marijuana likely is several tens of millions of dollars annually.

Federal Marijuana Laws

Under federal law, it is illegal to possess or use marijuana, including for medical use. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2005 that federal agencies could continue under federal law to prosecute individuals who possess or use marijuana for medical purposes even if legal under a state's law. Currently, however, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) chooses not to prosecute most marijuana users and businesses that follow state and local marijuana laws if those laws are consistent with federal priorities. These priorities include preventing minors from using marijuana and preventing marijuana from being taken to other states.

PROPOSAL

This measure (1) legalizes adult nonmedical use of marijuana, (2) creates a system for regulating nonmedical marijuana businesses, (3) imposes taxes on marijuana, and (4) changes penalties for marijuana-related crimes. These changes are described below.

Legalization of Adult Nonmedical Use of Marijuana

Personal Use of Nonmedical Marijuana. This measure changes state law to legalize the use of marijuana for nonmedical purposes by adults age 21 and over. Figure 2 summarizes what activities would be allowable under the measure. These activities would remain illegal for individuals under the age of 21.

Figure 2

Proposition 64 Legalizes Nonmedical Marijuana Activities, With Restrictions

Activity	Activities Allowed Under the Measure	Activities Not Allowed Under the Measure
Smoking marijuana	Smoking marijuana in a private home or at a business licensed for on-site marijuana consumption.	Smoking marijuana (1) while driving a car, (2) in any public place (other than at a business licensed for on-site consumption), or (3) anywhere that smoking tobacco is prohibited.
Possessing marijuana for personal use	Possession of up to 28.5 grams (about one ounce) of marijuana and up to 8 grams of concentrated marijuana (such as hash).	Possession of marijuana on the grounds of a school, day care center, or youth center while children are present.
Growing marijuana	Growing up to six marijuana plants and keeping the marijuana produced by the plants within a private home.	Growing in an area that is unlocked or visible from a public place.
Giving away marijuana	Giving away to other adults up to 28.5 grams of marijuana and up to 8 grams of concentrated marijuana.	Providing marijuana to minors under the age of 21 for nonmedical use.

Purchasing Marijuana. Under the measure, adults age 21 and over would be able to purchase marijuana at state-licensed businesses or through their delivery services. Businesses could generally not be located within 600 feet of a school, day care center, or youth center, unless allowed by a local government. In addition, businesses selling marijuana could not sell tobacco or alcohol. Under the measure, local governments could authorize licensed businesses to allow on-site consumption of marijuana. However, such businesses could not allow consumption in areas within the presence or sight of individuals under the age of 21 or areas visible from a public place. In addition, businesses allowing on-site marijuana consumption could not allow consumption of alcohol or tobacco.

Regulation of Nonmedical Marijuana Businesses

State Regulation of Nonmedical Marijuana Businesses. This measure changes the name of the Bureau of Medical Cannabis Regulation to the Bureau of Marijuana Control and makes it also responsible for regulating and licensing nonmedical marijuana businesses. In addition, the measure requires other state agencies to regulate and license different parts of the nonmedical

marijuana industry. These state agencies would have responsibilities similar to the ones they currently have for medical marijuana. The measure requires each licensing agency to charge fees that cover its marijuana regulatory costs. Under the measure, the system for tracking medical marijuana products that must be developed under current law would be expanded to include marijuana for nonmedical use. The measure also creates the Marijuana Control Appeals Panel to hear appeals from individuals affected by a decision of the state's regulatory agencies. Decisions of the panel could be appealed to the courts.

Local Regulation of Nonmedical Marijuana Businesses. Under the measure, cities and counties could regulate nonmedical marijuana businesses. For example, cities and counties could require nonmedical marijuana businesses to obtain local licenses and restrict where they could be located. Cities and counties could also completely ban marijuana-related businesses. However, they could not ban the transportation of marijuana through their jurisdictions.

Taxation of Marijuana

The measure imposes new state taxes on growing and selling both medical and nonmedical marijuana. As shown in Figure 3, the new tax on growing marijuana would be based on a dollar amount per ounce of marijuana, and the new excise tax would be based on the retail price of marijuana products sold.

Figure 3
Taxation of Marijuana Under Proposition 64

Type of Tax	Type of Marijuana Taxed	Rate
New state tax on growing	Both medical and nonmedical.	$9.25 per ounce of dried marijuana flowers and $2.75 per ounce of dried marijuana leaves.
New state retail excise tax	Both medical and nonmedical.	15 percent of retail price.
Existing state and local sales tax	Nonmedical only.	Rates vary across the state but average around 8 percent.
Existing and future local taxes	Can apply to both medical and nonmedical.	Subject to local government decisions.

The measure would also affect sales tax revenue to the state and local governments in two ways. First, legalizing the sale of nonmedical marijuana will result in new sales tax revenue. (This would happen automatically, as generally products are subject to this tax under current law.) Second, the sale of medical marijuana, which is currently subject to sales tax, is specifically exempted from that tax. The measure does not change local governments' existing ability to place other taxes on medical marijuana and does not restrict their ability to tax nonmedical marijuana.

Beginning in 2020, the tax on growing marijuana would be adjusted annually for inflation. The measure also allows the state Board of Equalization to annually adjust the tax rate for marijuana leaves to reflect changes in the price of marijuana flowers relative to leaves. In addition, the measure allows the board to establish other categories of marijuana (such as frozen marijuana) for tax purposes and specifies that these categories would be taxed at their value relative to marijuana flowers.

Allocation of Certain State Tax Revenues. Revenues collected from the new state retail excise tax and the state tax on growing marijuana would be deposited in a new state account, the California Marijuana Tax Fund. Certain fines on businesses or individuals who violate regulations created by the measure would also be deposited into this fund. Monies in the fund would first be used to pay back certain state agencies for any marijuana regulatory costs not covered by license fees. A portion of the monies would then be allocated in specific dollar amounts for various purposes, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Proposition 64 Allocates a Portion of State Revenues for Specific Purposes

Purpose	Annual Funding	Duration
Grants for certain services (such as job placement assistance and substance use disorder treatment) in communities most affected by past drug policies	$10 million to $50 million[a]	2018-19 and ongoing
Evaluate effects of the measure	$10 million	2018-19 through 2028-29
Create and adopt methods to determine whether someone is driving while impaired, including by marijuana	$3 million	2018-19 through 2022-23
Study the risks and benefits of medical marijuana	$2 million	2017-18 and ongoing

[a] $10 million in 2018-19, increasing by $10 million annually until 2022-23, and $50 million each year thereafter.

All remaining revenues (the vast majority of monies deposited in the fund) would be allocated as follows:

- 60 percent for youth programs—including substance use disorder education, prevention, and treatment.
- 20 percent to clean up and prevent environmental damage resulting from the illegal growing of marijuana.
- 20 percent for (1) programs designed to reduce driving under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs and (2) a grant program designed to reduce any potential negative impacts on public health or safety resulting from the measure.

Penalties for Marijuana-Related Crimes

Change in Penalties for Future Marijuana Crimes. The measure changes state marijuana penalties. For example, possession of one ounce or less of marijuana is currently punishable by a $100 fine. Under the measure, such a crime committed by someone under the age of 18 would instead be punishable by a requirement to attend a drug education or counseling program and

complete community service. In addition, selling marijuana for nonmedical purposes is currently punishable by up to four years in state prison or county jail. Under the measure, selling marijuana without a license would be a crime generally punishable by up to six months in county jail and/or a fine of up to $500. In addition, individuals engaging in any marijuana business activity without a license would be subject to a civil penalty of up to three times the amount of the license fee for each violation. While the measure changes penalties for many marijuana-related crimes, the penalties for driving a vehicle while under the impairment of marijuana would remain the same. The measure also requires the destruction—within two years—of criminal records for individuals arrested or convicted for certain marijuana-related offenses.

Individuals Previously Convicted of Marijuana Crimes. Under the measure, individuals serving sentences for activities that are made legal or are subject to lesser penalties under the measure would be eligible for resentencing. For example, an offender serving a jail or prison term for growing or selling marijuana could have their sentence reduced. (A court would not be required to resentence someone if it determined that the person was likely to commit certain severe crimes.) Qualifying individuals would be resentenced to whatever punishment they would have received under the measure. Resentenced individuals currently in jail or prison would be subject to community supervision (such as probation) for up to one year following their release, unless a court removes that requirement. In addition, individuals who have completed sentences for crimes that are reduced by the measure could apply to the courts to have their criminal records changed.

FISCAL EFFECTS

Fiscal Effects Subject to Significant Uncertainty

This measure would affect both costs and revenues for state and local governments. The size of these effects could vary significantly depending primarily on three key factors:

- First, it would depend on how state and local governments chose to regulate and tax marijuana. For example, if many cities and counties banned marijuana businesses, the amount of revenue from taxes on marijuana would be less than without such bans.
- Second, it would depend on whether the U.S. DOJ enforced federal laws prohibiting marijuana. For example, if the U.S. DOJ chose to prosecute state-licensed marijuana businesses, there could be significantly reduced revenue from marijuana taxes. This analysis assumes the U.S. DOJ will follow its current policy regarding enforcement of marijuana laws.
- Third, the fiscal effects would depend heavily on how marijuana prices and consumption change under the measure. This analysis assumes that the price of marijuana would decline significantly. This is primarily because (1) businesses would become more efficient at producing and distributing marijuana and (2) the price of marijuana would no longer be inflated to compensate for the risk of selling an illegal drug. This analysis also assumes that marijuana consumption would increase under the measure. This is primarily because of (1) the reduced price and (2) the reduced legal risk for marijuana users.

The actual effects on marijuana prices and consumption are unknown, as are the regulatory and enforcement actions of the state, federal, and local governments. As such, the potential cost and revenue impacts of this measure described below are subject to significant uncertainty.

Effects on State and Local Costs

Reduction in Various Criminal Justice Costs. The measure would result in reduced criminal justice costs for the state and local governments. This is primarily related to a decline in the number of offenders held in state prisons and county jails for growing and selling marijuana. The measure would also reduce the number of such offenders placed under community supervision (such as county probation). In addition, the measure would likely reduce other criminal justice costs, such as state court costs for the handling of related criminal cases.

The above cost reductions would be partially offset by increased costs in several areas. In particular, the courts would incur costs to process applications from individuals seeking to be resentenced or have their criminal records changed. In addition, there would be costs to supervise resentenced offenders in the community. These various costs would be incurred largely within the first couple of years following the passage of the measure. In addition, there would be ongoing costs in a few areas. For example, there would be court costs to destroy records of arrest and conviction for individuals who commit certain marijuana-related crimes. In addition, there would be ongoing costs to operate drug education and counseling programs as required by the measure. There would also be some increased criminal justice costs (such as county jail and state court costs) to the extent that increased marijuana use leads to increased marijuana-related crime (such as driving while impaired by marijuana).

In total, the net reduction in state and local criminal justice costs from the above changes could be in the tens of millions of dollars annually. In many cases, these resources would likely be redirected to other criminal justice activities.

Effects on State and Local Health Programs. The measure could also have various fiscal effects on state and local health programs as a result of increased marijuana use. For example, the measure could result in an increase in the number of individuals seeking publicly funded substance use treatment. Any additional costs for such services could be partially or entirely offset by additional funding that would be available for substance use treatment under the measure. Although research on the health effects of marijuana use is limited, there is some evidence that smoking marijuana has harmful effects. For example, marijuana smoke is among a list of substances identified by the state to cause cancer. To the extent that an increase in marijuana use negatively affects users' health, it would increase somewhat state and local health program costs.

Increased State Regulatory Costs. The measure would also result in costs for the state to regulate nonmedical marijuana businesses. These costs would vary depending on how the state chooses to regulate marijuana but could amount to several tens of millions of dollars annually. Eventually, these costs would likely be entirely offset by license fees and tax revenues.

Effects on State and Local Revenues

Tax Revenues Could Reach $1 Billion Annually, but Not Right Away. State and local governments would receive more revenues—including sales, excise, and income taxes—from marijuana sales allowed under this measure. This increase in tax revenue would result primarily from (1) new state excise taxes on growing and selling marijuana, (2) individuals switching from

illegal purchases of marijuana (made from individuals who do not pay all the taxes they owe) to legal purchases (at businesses that collect and pay the taxes they owe), and (3) an increase in consumption of marijuana. In addition, lower marijuana prices due to the measure may provide individuals using marijuana now with some savings. This could allow them to purchase other legal products that generate tax revenue. These revenue increases, however, would be partially offset by the loss of sales taxes now collected on medical marijuana sales, as the measure exempts such purchases from these taxes.

In total, our best estimate is that the state and local governments could eventually collect net additional revenues ranging from the high hundreds of millions of dollars to over $1 billion annually. However, the revenues are likely to be significantly lower in the first several years following the passage of the measure. This is because it will take a couple of years for the state to issue licenses to marijuana businesses. In addition, it will likely take time for newly licensed businesses to set up efficient production and distribution systems. Prices in the legal market will likely fall as more legal businesses are licensed and as they become more efficient. As this occurs; more consumers will begin purchasing marijuana legally. It is unknown precisely how long this process will take but it could be several years after the measure passes before revenues reach the range described above. As discussed earlier, the measure requires that most of these funds be spent on specified purposes.

Additional Local Government Revenues. The measure could result in additional revenues if local governments impose taxes on marijuana. The amount of additional revenues could vary significantly, depending primarily on how many local governments impose marijuana taxes and at what rates. These revenues could easily amount to tens of millions of dollars annually.

Potential Impact on Local Economies in Marijuana Producing Areas. Exports of marijuana currently contribute significantly to the economy in parts of Northern California, such as Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity Counties. Precisely how this measure would affect these local economies is unknown. Lower marijuana prices and more opportunity for legal cultivation elsewhere could hurt the economy in these areas, reducing local government tax revenues. If, however, local growers and businesses successfully marketed their marijuana products as premium goods, consumers might be willing to pay above-average prices for them. If that occurred, it could help offset some of the negative economic effects in those areas.