

Contributors:

Brandon Davis | Grass Man and Serve (Owner & CEO) | Tea Pad (Advisory Board Member)

As a Medical Safe Transit license holder with the MMCC I believe that It is unfair to allow existing medical cannabis cultivators, processors and dispensaries the opportunity to transition to recreational by only paying a fee while there are minority business owners that have played the game the right way and obtained safe transit licenses for the fate of their business to be held on a lottery once legalization occurs.

Allowing existing medical cannabis operators to transition with a fee gives an advantage to those who are profitable, have a huge customer base and already have a foothold in the cannabis industry, while ignoring the hard work and dedication of minority business owners who have done everything by the book. These small business owners have followed the rules and regulations of the State of Maryland and the MMCC, and have invested time and money into their businesses with the expectation that they would have a fair shot at competing in the new recreational market.

Allowing existing medical cannabis operators to transition to the recreational market without going through the same process as these minority/social equity business owners is not only unjust, but it also creates an unlevel playing field that can lead to further inequalities in the industry. If there is going to be a lottery for minority business owners/social equity applicants then there should also be a lottery for existing medical operators.

It is important that all businesses, regardless of their previous experience in the cannabis industry, are held to the same standards and regulations when transitioning to the recreational market. This will ensure that all businesses have a fair chance at success and that minority business owners are not left behind in the rush to profit from the growing cannabis industry. I propose that current Safe Transit license holders are allowed to also pay a fee to transition to one of the proposed license types highlighted by HB0556 dedicated to social equity applicants.

It is crucial that policymakers and regulators consider the impact of their decisions on all stakeholders in the cannabis industry, and take steps to create a fair and equitable environment for all businesses to thrive.

