

Press Release: Open Letter To California's Cannabis Industry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, September 3rd, 2020

Open Letter To California's Cannabis Industry,

Dear California Cannabis Industry,

The California Cannabis Industry Association has become compromised by hemp interests.

The problem began in late 2019 when the CCIA supported AB 228, a contentious hemp bill, while never having an internal discussion amongst all levels of membership, including the executive board. Lobbying reports filed with the California Secretary of State's office ([click here for link](#)) indicate that Amy Jenkins, CCIA's legislative representative, was not only lobbying in support of AB 228 for CCIA, but for her 6 other cannabis clients as well. During this time, the CCIA was using its members' money to make quarterly payments of \$30,000 (\$10k / month) to her firm, Precision Advocacy Group. At the same time, she was taking in over \$47,000 / quarter from her other clients with hemp-related interests.

Christopher Coggan, a former CCIA board member, was asked by our group if he remembered voting on AB 228 in 2019 and he stated "I remember discussing it, but I don't recall an actual vote on it. I think it's accurate to say that throughout 2019 and before, hemp was not considered a legislative priority for the CCIA. After all, it is the cannabis industry association, not the hemp association."

When asked if he would have voted "yes" last year on this bill knowing it would allow CBD to be sold without any testing standards whatsoever, he responded "Never. At no time did myself or anybody else on the board suggest for a minute that an unregulated market in hemp would somehow help be beneficial to cannabis."

When the surprise hemp bill was reintroduced in the 2020 legislative session, it was renamed AB 2827. When that bill died early for lack of support, the proponents (including CCIA) attempted to gut and amend AB 2028 as urgent legislation with very little time left in the session for negotiations. Gut and amend is a questionable legislative tactic that lacks transparency and seeks to circumvent typical legislative procedure by limiting potential discussion and debate. However, the CCIA stated that they had been deeply involved in those discussions for the past

four months at the request of the governor's office despite the membership having little information and not being included in this complicated and important discussion.

A serious breach of trust has occurred between this association and an overwhelmed, exhausted, and underrepresented industry. Given the tumultuous year cannabis businesses have been forced to endure, it is only fair that they have loyal representation.

Cannabis businesses must save their energy and hard-earned resources to continue to weather fires, looting, riots, robberies, and burglaries as this year is not over yet. They should not have to worry about also fighting our own industry association's alternative hemp agenda, too.

We at The California City and County Regulation Watch Group (CCCRWG) are calling on an industry boycott on behalf of our community in order to communicate to this industry association that it has become a threat to the best interests it was hired to protect.

We are demanding that Amy Jenkins and her firm, Precision Advocacy Group, be replaced by a new lobbying firm void of any hemp conflicts. We are also demanding that the Executive Director, Lindsay Robinson, be relieved of her duties. This incident is just the most recent example of her gross mismanagement of CCIA and the resources entrusted to her by its members. We would also like to see a way to divest of board members who have hemp CBD companies which represent a clear conflict to 400 cannabis companies the association claims to represent.

We recommend that an urgent internal audit be taken to determine if they are currently an association that represents hemp or cannabis businesses and begin to separate the two. If and only if these demands are met will we be asking the California cannabis community to retreat from this action.

Signed,

The "California City & County Regulation Watch" Group
An Industry Watchdog and Online Cannabis Community