



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Senator Hoylman-Sigal's Letter to Office of Cannabis Management Regarding Unlicensed Cannabis Shops

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL July 17, 2023

| ISSUE: **OFFICE OF CANNABIS MANAGEMENT , CANNABIS**

Christopher Alexander

Executive Director

Office of Cannabis Management

Tremaine Wright

Chair, Cannabis Control Board

Dear Mr. Alexander and Chair Wright:

I am writing to you regarding the continued proliferation of unlicensed cannabis stores in my district and across New York City. In the 2023 budget, the New York State Legislature granted additional authority to the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) and the Department of Taxation and Finance (DTF) to address unlicensed cannabis stores. This includes conducting inspections, imposing civil penalties, and seeking injunctions to shut down stores. I am grateful to see OCM and DTF begin to take action. Given the serious issues caused by these stores, I urge OCM and DTF to continue to act quickly and aggressively to shut down these unlicensed stores.

The scale of these unlicensed stores is staggering, with over 100 stores identified in Hell's Kitchen alone. As I have **expressed previously**, these stores are deceptive to consumers, hazardous to public health, cheating on their taxes, undermining the State's equity-based and legal cannabis rollout, and have little incentive to inspect IDs to ensure they are not selling to minors. Additionally, because these stores are unregulated and have little oversight, they pose a danger to employees and neighbors. In January, a worker at an unlicensed store in Hell's Kitchen **was shot** during an attempted robbery and **a recent fire** at an unlicensed store impacted nearby businesses and apartments. Sadly, these are just a few examples of these incidents, which occur frequently in my district.

I am enclosing a list of stores which have been reported to us by constituents as well as a list of unlicensed stores in Hell's Kitchen compiled by the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Coalition. I urge OCM to act expeditiously to shut down these stores.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Brad Hoylman -Sigal

NYS State Senator

47th Senate District