

September 3rd, 2015

Jim Larkin
CEO
Backpage LLC.
2501 Oak Lawn Ave,
Dallas, TX 75219 USA

Re: Advertisements for Synthetic K2 Products

Dear Mr. Larkin:

We are writing to you to urge your company to remove all advertisements on your website for K2, Spice, herbal incense and synthetic marijuana products. As you know, over the past several years several state governments and the federal government have been taking action against the threat posed by synthetic cannabinoids. These drugs, also known as synthetic marijuana, are artificial chemicals that mimic many of the effects of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main active ingredient in marijuana, on the human brain. While these drugs may induce feelings similar to those caused by marijuana, they also have extremely negative effects. Health officials have indicated that users are at an elevated risk of heart attacks or seizures and that these drugs can cause extreme paranoia which can manifest itself into fits of violence, putting members of the public beyond the user in danger. Here in New York State the Department of Health has issued extensive regulations banning the sale and distribution of a whole host of synthetic drugs, including over 30 different types of synthetic cannabinoids and also synthetic phenethylamines.

Law enforcement officers recently conducted a sting operation on a number of local stores in the New York City area that were found to be selling this dangerous drug. We are also working on legislation to criminalize the sale of these drugs in New York State and punish stores that sell them with heavy fines and the loss of a number of business licenses. This campaign to crack down on businesses that deal these drugs can't be successful without the support of responsible retailers. The Office of Senator Jeffrey D. Klein recently searched on the various Backpage pages that cover New York State. To our dismay, we found a number of

advertisements on New York State pages when searching for terms “K2” or “Spice” which are the two most ubiquitous names for this kind of synthetic marijuana product. As of August 28, 2015, we found two advertisements of concern on the New York City site, with the following Post ID’s: 61846037 newyork; 61571782 newyork.

The company posting these advertisements on your website proclaims the legality of their products, claiming that what they are selling is powerful herbal potpourri and/or incense, sought out for the aroma that it would create, free of any synthetic cannabinoids. The seller can’t decide whether the product is a potpourri or incense, one of which is burned, the other one which isn’t. The product is branded as ‘Planet X’ which is quite an aggressive name for a product meant to, in the words of the advertisement itself, “relax the individual.” Finally, if this product is meant to be safe, unlike K2 Spice, why are they using those terms to advertise their product? It only requires a little common sense to realize the questionable legality of this product.

The Office also found an advertisement specifically for the sale of synthetic marijuana. This seller, who placed the advertisement with Post ID: 62744801 newyork, does not even pretend to hide the fact they are advertising an illegal substance. In your company’s terms of use, you state that posting any ad for products or services, use or sale of which is prohibited by any law or regulation is prohibited. The sale of synthetic marijuana is clearly illegal in New York State, and thus any ads for this product violate the terms of use. As for the other ads, any proclamations of legality ring hollow for a product being advertised under search terms associated heavily with illicit drugs.

In conclusion, we urge you to take immediate steps to remove these questionable and dangerous postings from your website and to take all steps necessary to prevent such advertisements from being posted on Backpage in the future. We appreciate your response to this inquiry at your earliest convenience and we thank you for your consideration.



Senator Jeffrey D. Klein
Independent Democratic Conference Leader
Senate Coalition Leader



Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker
New York City Council



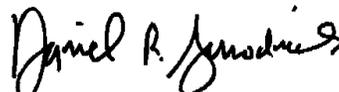
Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj
NY S Assembly District 80



Councilman Ritchie Torres
New York City Council District 15



Councilman Ruben Wills
New York City Council District 28



Councilman Daniel Garodnick
New York City Council District 4