

**Nancy E. Barr**  
Legislator, 6th District  
Chair, Environment, Health & Energy



**Committee Assignments:**  
Appointments  
Budget & Appropriations  
Law & Major Contracts  
Public Safety  
Public Works  
Social Services

**TO:** Benjamin Boykin, Chair – Board of Legislators  
**FROM:** Nancy E. Barr, Legislator  
**DATE:** February 13, 2019  
**RE:** Items for the February 25, 2019 BOL Meeting Agenda

---

Please add the following item and refer it the Committees on Environment, Health & Energy, Budget & Appropriations and Social Services:

February 6, 2019, NYSAC Press Release: “Counties Voice Concerns about NYS Marijuana Proposal”

Thank you.



# Press Release

February 6, 2019

## Counties Voice Concerns About NYS Marijuana Proposal

Last week, the [New York State Association of Counties](#) (NYSAC) hosted a panel on proposals to legalize adult use marijuana and expand the farming and development of cannabis for hemp and medical use in New York State. The Governor's proposal, if agreed upon by the State Legislature, will impact several areas overseen by counties: agriculture, economic development, land use planning, public health, public safety, traffic safety, mental health and substance abuse, agriculture, district attorney and law enforcement, jails and probation, and consumer protection. *[Video links to the NYSAC panel are below.]*

To educate county officials about this major policy change and the potential local impact, NYSAC has published an in-depth report, [Making Marijuana Legal in NYS](#), available here.

County leaders are urging the state to provide counties with the resources needed for public education and technical assistance to manage the societal impact to public health, public safety, criminal justice, consumer protection, and economic development, among others. In addition to levying a sales tax on retail sales for community impact and support, counties support a general revenue sharing formula similar to casino funding distribution.

### Proposed Legislation and County Impact

The Cannabis Regulation and Taxation Act, included in the FY 2020 Executive Budget, would create and amend existing laws to legalize adult-use cannabis; consolidate governance of all forms of cannabis; and create a regulatory structure to oversee the licensure, cultivation, production, distribution, sale and taxation of cannabis within New York State. The legislation will also address the damaging consequences of marijuana criminalization. This will include investing in the communities hit hardest by the War on Drugs.

Under the proposed legislation, counties would have the home rule authority to opt out of community sale of adult-use cannabis with the passage of a local law or resolution.

"There are many facets of the Governor's plan, and county officials are exploring the entire proposal. There is industrial hemp, CBD oils for therapeutic applications, and the adult use of marijuana. Our current public health efforts combating tobacco use will double when we are talking about cannabis, including educational campaigns and cessation programs," said NYSAC Executive Director Stephen J. Acquario.

In 2018, the NYS Department of Health (DOH) issued a report recommending the State legalize non-medical use of marijuana. Ten states-Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington-and Washington DC have already legalized cannabis.

The State report acknowledges the difficulties that legalization is anticipated to present for local law enforcement. This legislation will also have other social and practical impacts that will place new responsibilities and service requirements on many county departments, including public health, mental health, substance abuse, consumer protection, economic development, and others.

**Resources on the County Impact of Marijuana Legalization:**

[Making Marijuana Legal in NYS, A NYSAC Report](#)

Cannabis panel discussion at the NYSAC Legislative Conference - video links:

- [Christine De La Rosa of The People's Dispensary](#)
- [Cheryl Sbarra of the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards](#)
- [Benjamin Banks-Dobson of Hudson Hemp](#)

[NYSAC Hosts Marijuana Panel for County Delegates - Radio News Story on WAMC](#)

[View all of NYSAC's recent resolutions here.](#)  
[All recent NYSAC Press Releases.](#)

*The New York State Association of Counties is a bipartisan municipal association serving all 62 counties of New York State including the City of New York. Organized in 1925, NYSAC's mission is to represent, educate and advocate for member counties and the thousands of elected and appointed county officials who serve the public. For more information, visit [www.nysac.org](http://www.nysac.org)*

New York Association of Counties | 540 Broadway | Albany, New York 12207  
Phone: (518) 465-1473 | Fax: (518) 465-0506 | [info@nysac.org](mailto:info@nysac.org)

RECEIVE ALERTS & TIMELY UPDATES WHEN YOU FOLLOW US:

