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Challenges of Accurately Testing Marijuana Potency Highlighted in New Report

Data validation report released by the Alaska Alcohol and Marijuana Office in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Conservation—Division of Environmental Health

June 11, 2018 ANCHORAGE – The [data validation report](#) released by the Alaska Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office and the Department of Environmental Conservation—Division of Environmental Health describes some of the challenges associated with accurately testing marijuana for potency. The report also offers recommendations for possible revisions to Alaska Administrative Code regulations to improve the oversight and quality assurance activities of licensed marijuana testing facilities.

“The comparative study conducted by the Environmental Health Laboratory provides additional information for the board-convened testing working group to consider,” said Erika McConnell, director of the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office. “We are encouraged by the work that has already been done by the industry and public health officials as part of the working group. I am confident this report will help the working group accomplish their mission to offer some solid recommendations to the Marijuana Control Board that will give consumers confidence in the system; protect public safety, health, and welfare; and allow the industry to move forward in a way that is also good for licensed establishments.”

The data validation compared the results of several sample tests of cannabis and cannabis products from two licensed marijuana testing facilities. The samples were analyzed using different extraction protocols for potency but similar analytical techniques. The report provides insight into how the two facilities could be testing the same product but come up with different results.

The testing working group, convened by the Marijuana Control Board in late 2017, is developing recommendations for improving testing accuracy and clarity of the marijuana testing regulations. The first round of recommendations will be reviewed by the Marijuana Control Board during its meeting June 13-15, 2018 in Anchorage. Should the board decide to move forward with any of the recommendations, the public will have the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed regulations changes during a 30-day public comment period. Draft marijuana regulations currently under review or open for public comment can be viewed on the [Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office website](#).

Alaska voted to legalize commercial marijuana in November of 2014. The initial set of regulations went into effect on February 21, 2016. To date, the Marijuana Control Board has approved licenses for 62 operating retail

stores, 133 operating cultivators, 11 operating product or concentrate manufacturers, and two operating marijuana testing facilities.

The mission of the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office is to enforce alcohol and marijuana commerce laws and provide clear, consistent standards for licensure to protect the public from harm. For additional information about the agency, visit commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco. For additional information about the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development and its other agencies, please visit commerce.alaska.gov.

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