

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Defunct Hemp Board Leaves DLCA Unable To Adjust Regulations Governing Retail Hemp Products

Businesses face regulatory hurdles as the defunct Hemp Board leaves DLCA unable to update licenses to reflect new cannabis laws

Business / **Published On July 10, 2024 04:55 AM /**

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Even as the Office of Cannabis Regulation continues to slowly roll out a framework for adult Virgin Islanders to use marijuana legally, local businesses are facing severe consequences for selling hemp products intended for human consumption.

The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs currently allows the sale of specific hemp-derived products under a Hemp Retailers License. On Monday, DLCA issued a press release reminding the business community that certain items were [not permissible](#)

[to sell](#), even by valid license holders. Restrictions would be strictly enforced, DLCA said, and consequences would be severe – including the confiscation of prohibited items and the suspension or revocation of the license.?

On Tuesday, DLCA Commissioner Natalie Hodge clarified the issue. “At the time when those licensees signed the agreement, that was the law,” she explained during a meeting of the Cannabis Advisory Board. “The law has since changed,” Ms. Hodge acknowledged. However, despite the change in statute, and the introduction of the OCR, hemp products are still governed by the Hemp Board, which is under the umbrella of the Department of Agriculture. That board is currently defunct, said Cannabis Advisory Board member Positive Nelson, former Agriculture commissioner. “We’ve been stagnant for some time, but Mr. Joseph getting on board, we should see meetings again,” he continued, referring to Clifford Joseph Jr., who was recently appointed chair.

?Until those meetings start taking place, the DLCA is hamstrung by the non-operational Hemp Board, unable to change any aspect of the hemp retail license regulations to reflect the more permissive environment envisioned by the territory’s new cannabis laws. “We can’t do anything without the hemp board’s approval,” Ms. Hodge declared.?

Mr. Nelson held out hope that “maybe in the future, there’ll be some kind of collaboration or merge” between the Hemp Board and OCR. However at present, officials are determined to enforce the current regulations governing the sale of hemp products in the territory.