

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Nelson Wants To Create Caribbean Organization To Legally Sell Marijuana To The World

Business / **Published On March 18, 2015 10:44 AM /**

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Senator Terrence "Positive" Nelson has big plans for the production of marijuana in the territory. At a press conference held Tuesday at Frederiksted's Budhoe Park, he made known an array of ideas, including the development of a medical marijuana industry and an ambitious goal of establishing what he is calling a Caribbean Cannabis Trade Organization that will see Caribbean islands leading the legal trade of cannabis to the U.S., Europe and the rest of the world.

The senator explained that his cannabis trade plan would help establish a super fund that would supply islands participating in the trade organization significant capital to invest in their infrastructures.

"Since the same natural attributes and resources we have here on St. Croix exists throughout the Caribbean, think for a moment if we were to establish and help the Caribbean region to establish a Caribbean Cannabis Trade Organization," Nelson began. "The purpose [would be] to create a super fund source so that the Caribbean islands, and we will include St. Croix even though we're not part of CARICOM, can invest in needed infrastructure."

The senator highlighted the various industries that could benefit from a cannabis trade organization, and said if leaders are serious about rebuilding their islands, proactive measures must be taken.

"Tourism infrastructure, health infrastructure, infrastructure in general because we can't talk about tourism and inviting people to our homes, while our homes are falling apart," Nelson said. "While right there at the very Legislature building right now there's sewage bubbling up all in my parking space; and this happens frequently."

He continued: "Many of us, back in the day, when our friends and family were coming from off island, we knew, even if [our parents] didn't tell us. And how did we know? We knew because our parents did the extra cleaning up. We may not be able to build a new house [or] build a new room, but it was sure as heck going to be tidy, and new curtains were going to be up. And the extra cleaning in the corners of the room was [going to be done]."

"And that's the same way we ought to approach our infrastructure and tie it to tourism development," Nelson said.

He added: "So I've just proposed to you as it relates to cannabis, that we, through CARICOM, and I'd like it to be headquartered here in the Virgin Islands, a Caribbean Cannabis Trade Organization, and we will trade cannabis legally, with the United States, with the European nations. Why? Because of the [favorable] whether all year long."

Relative to medicinal marijuana, Nelson said the territory's voters have confirmed, [through a referendum](#) that garnered 56 percent of votes in the 2014 elections, they would like a medicinal marijuana industry in the territory. In light of this, the senator said he and his team will be embarking on an exploratory trip to the U.S. "to see, on ground, what medicinal cannabis looks like."

Nelson invited the media, senators and the governor's office to join the delegation it ventures to Washington state and then to Colorado. The date of the Colorado trip is April 20, which is also known as National Marijuana Day.

Nelson said the interest in Colorado is to monitor the "economic activity around the legalization of medicinal marijuana."

"They have recreational, too, and it might be an opportunity for us to see what that looks like even though our interest right now, immediately before us, is medicinal cannabis," Nelson said.

The six-term senator also made known that meetings have been scheduled with the governors of Washington and Colorado, as well as with other policy makers and some medical marijuana dispensaries.

"Because the purpose of this trip," he said, "is to get on-hand, upfront view, to hear the perspectives, the challenges, obstacles, which these states have had so that as we move forward with implementing [a] medicinal cannabis bill and exploring the medicinal cannabis industry on St. Croix and the Virgin Islands, we can have a more clear view so that we don't run into the same obstacles the other states and territories have."

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