Follow-Up to May 20, 2026 Regional Planning Commission Study Session with Office of Cannabis Management
Illicit Cannabis Business Enforcement Overview

Introduction

During the May 2026 Regional Planning Commission study session, Commissioners requested additional information regarding County efforts to address unlicensed cannabis businesses. This overview responds to that request by providing a snapshot of recent enforcement activity and an overview of the County's coordinated approach to investigating and addressing unlicensed cannabis operations.

County Coordination to Address Unlicensed Cannabis Businesses

Addressing unlicensed cannabis retail businesses requires coordination among multiple County departments and law enforcement partners. Each agency has a distinct role, working collaboratively to investigate, litigate, and prosecute illegal cannabis operations throughout unincorporated LA County.

While the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) is responsible for developing and, if approved, administering the County's proposed commercial cannabis regulatory program, enforcement against unlicensed commercial cannabis activity is coordinated across several agencies, including:

Department/Agency	Primary Role
Sherriff's Department	Conducts investigations, search warrant operations, and other law enforcement activities related to unlicensed cannabis businesses.
County Counsel	Pursues civil enforcement actions seeking injunctive relief, and civil penalties, and where necessary, court orders to appoint receivers to enforce judgments
District Attorney	Prosecutes criminal violations, as appropriate, in coordination with law enforcement.
Office of Cannabis Management	Coordinates complaints and information sharing, supports interdepartmental coordination, conducts public education, and administers the proposed regulatory program if approved.
California Department of Cannabis Control	Pursues civil and criminal enforcement actions against licensed and unlicensed businesses and partners with local jurisdictions for coordinated enforcement operations.

Because enforcement actions often involve extensive investigations, court proceedings, and coordination among multiple agencies, addressing illegal cannabis activity is resource intensive and remains an ongoing challenge throughout the region.

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Recent Enforcement Activity

County of Los Angeles Enforcement of Illegal Cannabis Businesses between January 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026	
Enforcement Activity	**Count**
Search warrant operations conducted	16
Warning letters issued	44 (across 22 locations)
Cases with Receivers appointed[1]	2
Pending litigation cases	11
Illegal retail businesses closed/inactive	21

How the Proposed Regulatory Program Supports Enforcement

If approved, the proposed program would complement existing enforcement efforts by:

- **Providing a regulated alternative.** Licensed businesses would operate under comprehensive operational, security, inspection, and age-verification requirements while offering tested and traceable products.
- **Helping to promote legal businesses.** The proposed program would include public education and a County-maintained list of licensed businesses, making it easier for consumers to identify lawful operators.
- **Expanding future enforcement resources.** Implementing a regulated program may position the County to pursue additional State cannabis grant funding that can support enforcement that addresses the illicit market, public education, and regulatory administration.

[1] A court-appointed receiver is a neutral officer of the court who is appointed to manage, preserve, or sell property during pending litigation.