



# MCA 2026 Legislative Updates

449th Maryland General Assembly Session

# Work Completed During Legislative Session

## January

- Micro licensee engagement
- Comptroller tax session
- Conditional Licensee Listening Sessions
- PHAC/OCR briefings
- Advisory Board & Taskforce relaunch efforts to align on legislative priorities

## February

- Expanded outreach with industry groups, local governments, and licensees
- Hosted zoning meetings, payment processing discussions, and licensing pathway webinar

## March

- Implementation planning through coordination meetings, zoning discussions, planning/approval of incubator outreach
- Engaged with the Cannabis Public Policy Consulting (CPPC) on on legislative report

## April

- Local official briefings
- Regulation feedback sessions
- Grant funding discussions with Commerce

## May

- Stakeholder coordination through implementation check-ins
- Hosted hemp guidance discussions and incubator outreach

# Bills That Passed This Legislative Session

- **HB 622:** Cannabis - Licensees - Dispensary Licenses, Micro Dispensary Employees, and Cannabis Agent Training Programs
- **SB 594:** Cannabis - Advertising - Alterations
- **HB 427/SB 336:** Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances - Extension and Membership
- **SB 820:** Natural Resources - State Parks - Terminology
- **SB 136:** Collective Bargaining - Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission - Police Officers
- **SB 54:** State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners - Grounds for Disciplinary Action - Restrictions
- **HB 797/SB 439:** Employment Discrimination - Fire and Rescue Public Safety Employees - Use of Medical Cannabis

# HB 622: Cannabis - Licensees - Dispensary Licenses, Micro Dispensary Employees, and Cannabis Agent Training Programs

*Effective Date: July 1, 2026*

- **Increases the micro dispensary agent cap** from 10 → 20
- Changes the “Responsible Vendor Training” (RVT) to “**Cannabis Agent Training**” (CAT)
  - Removes statutorily required training components, and permits MCA to develop core curriculum components via regulation
  - Directs MCA to prioritize previously approved vendors
  - Allows biennial CAT (*every two years*)
  - Initial completion required within 90 days of employment start date
- Converted registrants and standard dispensary **may continue to deliver medical cannabis** through June 30, 2027

# SB 594: Cannabis - Advertising - Alterations

*Effective Date: July 1, 2026*

- **Reduces the ownership threshold for social equity status** from 65% to 55%
  - Conditional licensees may **transfer up to 45% of their business** to non-social equity transferees
- **Alters the requirements for demonstrating compliant audience composition for advertising** via television, radio, internet, mobile application, social media, or other electronic communication, event sponsorship, or print publication
- **Allows the use of a cannabis business' distinguishing characteristics** *if* used in a news article or editorial content, provided the cannabis business has not paid for it

# SB 594: Cannabis - Advertising - Alterations (Continued)

*Effective Date: July 1, 2026*

- Dispensaries may still place exterior signage on the premises for the limited purpose of identifying the business to the public; however exterior signage for operational purposes, signs painted on the permanent structure of the business prior to January 1, 2026, and freestanding interior displays are **exempt from purpose and dimensional restrictions**
- Dispensaries may now also **place exterior signage** for the purposes of providing business **contact information**, providing **safety contact information**, providing **adverse event guidance**, **911 advisories**, and identifying **MCA-approved ownership designation**. Signage may not exceed 900 square inches for an individual exterior sign, and 1200 square inches total for all exterior signage.
- **Requires new reporting by MCA** on progress in implementing this bill

# HB 427 / SB 336: Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances - Extension and Membership

*Effective Date: July 1, 2026*

- Extends, through 2027, the **Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances** to study and make recommendations
- Adds additional reporting requirement for October 2026

# SB 820: Natural Resources - State Parks - Terminology

*Effective Date: July 1, 2026*

- Alters the violations of law with respect to which the **Alcohol, Tobacco and Cannabis Commission's (ATCC) Field Enforcement Division** is authorized to issue a **citation or charging document** prohibiting a retailer from distributing, selling, exposing for sale, or advertising for sale unauthorized consumable products
- Authorizes the **Executive Director of the Commission** to seize, confiscate, or destroy unauthorized consumable products and certain other products

# SB 136: Collective Bargaining - Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission - Police Officers

*Effective Date: July 1, 2026*

- Applies certain provisions of law governing **collective bargaining** for State employees to the **Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission (ATCC) police officers** who, in an official capacity, are authorized to make arrests and who are not supervisory, managerial, or confidential employees

# SB 54: State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners - Grounds for Disciplinary Action

## - Restrictions

*Effective Date: July 1, 2026*

- Prohibits the **State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners** from **suspending or revoking a license** to practice veterinary medicine in the State, reprimanding or censuring a licensee, or placing a licensee on probation solely **on the basis of the licensee discussing or recommending the use of cannabis** or a product that contains cannabidiol on an animal for certain purposes

# HB 797 / SB 439: Employment Discrimination - Fire and Rescue Public Safety Employees - Use of Medical Cannabis

*Effective Date: July 1, 2026*

- Prohibits an employer from taking certain discriminatory employment actions against a **fire and rescue public safety employee based on the employee's use of medical cannabis**, subject to certain conditions

# Implementation & Regulation Timeline



# Summer 2026 Stakeholder Engagement Series

MCA is preparing a series of stakeholder engagement opportunities to support implementation of recent legislative and regulatory changes.

## Topics currently include:

- New Legislation - **July 1, 2026**
- Medical & Therapeutic Claims and Advertising - **July 8, 2026**
- Regulatory Guidance and Clarity - **August 2026**

*Additional participation details will be announced as they become available.*



**Thank You!**

*If you have any questions, please reach out to us at [mca.policy@maryland.gov](mailto:mca.policy@maryland.gov)*