



MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT & COMMERCE

PRESS RELEASE

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Minister Shaw Welcomes New Chairman of the Cannabis Licensing Authority – Tasks Board to Pick Up The Pace of Growth

The Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, the Hon. Audley Shaw, has welcomed the newly appointed chairman of the Cannabis Licensing Authority (CLA), Le Vaughn Flynn, and has tasked the chairman to move post-haste to improve the growth of the industry.

Speaking at a virtual introductory meeting hosted by the Ministry today, Minister Shaw, while noting the work of the previous board, staff and stakeholders of the CLA, said all efforts must now be placed on moving the cannabis industry forward if Jamaica is to take its rightful place in the global arena.

“We have a lot of catching up to do if we are going to hold on to a piece of the pie of the global cannabis industry,” Minister Shaw said.

The export regulations to support stakeholders’ push to launch out globally are now at the final stages before promulgation, the Minister said adding that work has been done to remove the impediments to the take-off of the industry.

For his part, State Minister Hon. Dr. Norman Dunn, who has responsibility for the industry, noted that the current changes in sentiments in key international markets may augur favourably for Jamaica's push for growth in the coming months.

While thanking the outgoing Chief Executive Officer, Lincoln Allen, Minister Dunn said the time is now ripe to get Jamaica's fledgling cannabis industry off the tarmac.

"The time is now for us to get what I believe we can get out of this industry," the State Minister said, adding that the work of the Rastafari community, who are recognized as the historical purveyors of the industry, must not be overlooked.

He further commended the regulatory framework set out by the CLA, noting it has laid the foundation for the new thrust of promotion and the accelerated focus on growth.

In accepting the charge to take the baton from the previous board, Mr. Flynn thanked the Ministers for their confidence in his ability to deliver on the mandate and heralded his intent to develop a robust framework to support communication and solid relationships with stakeholders as the CLA moves to develop a more responsive platform to induce the well sought-after growth.

"If I were a licensee some of the things I would want are a regulator that offers an efficient process so that routine requirements such as applications for licenses are done efficiently. Another thing I would want is a regulator that creates an environment that promotes the growth of commercial activity and the latter part is where I think the focus of the CLA will be going forward," the new chairman said.

While commending the work of the previous board and CEO, Flynn said a “fine job of establishing the regulatory framework” of the CLA was done and “this will continue to form the bedrock of how the Authority operates.”

“We have seen the rescheduling and reclassification of cannabis by the United Nations and the United States government and those things give us the impression that potentially in another couple years, we could have cannabis legalized at the federal level in the US and when that happens, it will completely open the global free trade for cannabis. The question we have to [therefore] ask ourselves is ‘When that happens, where will Jamaica be?’” he said, noting that going forward there will be a strong collaborative effort between the licensees and the Authority.

Other board members include:

- Ms. Gabrielle Hylton
- Ms. Shullette Cox
- Ms. Ava Maxam
- Mr. Andre Coore
- Mr. Delano Seiveright
- Ms. Samantha Allen
- Mr. Barrington Thomas
- Dr. Jacqueline Bassasor-Mckenzie
- Prof. Wayne McLaughlin
- Ms. Michelle Walker
- Ms. Cameil Wilson-Clarke
- Mr. Kamau Janai
- Mrs. Barbara Blake-Hannah
- Representative - National Council of Drug Abuse