



## Science

### California Bay Area to be Silicon Valley of Pot, With Nation's First "Industrial" Farms

Jason Mick (Blog) - July 22, 2010 8:44 AM

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76 comment(s) - last by The Raven.. on Jul 26 at 11:26 AM

**"Industrial" sized farm wins approval from the state of California, tests federal resolve**

The U.S. is slowly approaching the legalization of the medicinal and recreational use of the *Canabis sativa* plant -- commonly known as marijuana or pot. Now the city of Oakland, located in the [San Francisco Bay Area](#), has announced the landmark approval of the nation's first "industrial" marijuana farms.

The city will offer up to four industrial licenses. The huge licensed farms will mark a transition away from small local growers, who often operate in a less-regulated atmosphere. The downside is the loss of small business, but a clear upside is a greater assurance of a quality, safe end of product.

An upside for the city is that it will be able to pull in tax revenue from the farm. Currently while medical marijuana sales are taxed in California, cultivation generally is not. Council Member Jean Quan describes the plan to transform Oakland into the Silicon Valley of pot, stating, "This is going to grow as an industry. And someone is going to have a high-tech producer."

Opponents of marijuana offered little opposition to the approval of the large farms. Only small growers voiced any major qualms with the plan, saying that they would be run under by this new "agribusiness".

Currently fourteen states [have approved](#) medical marijuana -- Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. A number of states are also considering proposals to approval recreational use as well. Detroit, Mich. will vote on a proposal to legalize recreational use this fall, as will the state of California. Recent polls show that 50 percent of Californians support recreational use.

As a medicine marijuana can reduce nausea, [reduce anxiety](#), induce hunger in chemotherapy patients (or patients with eating disorders), lower intraocular eye pressure, and act as a general pain reliever.

Recreational marijuana use is enjoyed by many Americans as it produces a state of relaxation and mild euphoria. Use does impair motor skills, much like alcohol -- and may raise lung cancer risk. However, according to an exhaustive study [published](#) in the medical journal *Lancet*, marijuana has a lower risk of both physical harm and dependence than alcohol and tobacco -- both legal recreational drugs in the U.S.

Many U.S. politicians including the popular U.S. Congressman from Texas Ron Paul [support decriminalization](#) of marijuana.



Oakland, Calif. has just approved the nation's first "industrial" sized marijuana farms. (Source: Memphis Flyer)



Californians will vote in November about whether to legalize recreational use. (Source: A Greener Nation)

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It appears that the last three U.S. Presidents all experimented with marijuana at one point. Democratic President Bill Clinton (who served from 1992-2000) infamously [claimed](#) [video], "When I was in England, I experimented with *marijuana* a time or two, and I didn't like it. I didn't inhale and never tried it again."

Republic President George W. Bush (who served from 2000-2008) [stated](#), "Al Gore, I tried it, it wasn't part of my life."

And current U.S. President Barack Obama [stated](#) [video] in 2007, "When I was a kid I inhaled frequently."

When asked if he inhaled, Obama, at the time serving as an U.S. Senator from Illinois quipped, "That was the point."

Under Obama's administration federal raids on growers in states with legalized marijuana have ceased. Amid that backdrop and spreading medical use (and potentially recreational use) the stage appears to be clearly set for national legalization. If that happens Oakland's decision to get a head start on industrial-scale growing may prove a very wise decision for the region's financial prosperity.

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