

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

June 10, 2026
8.4

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE RELATIVE TO THE
DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT STATUS ON CANNABIS ENFORCEMENT
AND STAFFING NEEDED - COUNCIL FILE NO. 26-0029

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD or "Department") response to the Public Safety Committee regarding the Department's current status on cannabis enforcement and additional staffing or resources needed.
2. That the Board TRANSMIT this response to the Public Safety Committee.

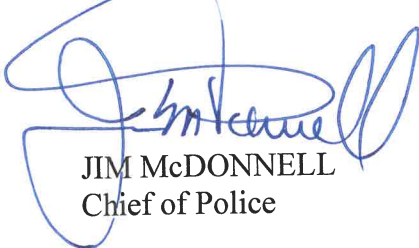
DISCUSSION

In a report from the Public Safety Committee, the Department was directed to provide an update on current cannabis enforcement practices and to identify any additional staffing or resource needs necessary to address illegal cannabis operations and to support the development and integrity of the City's regulated cannabis market.

To strengthen enforcement against illegal cannabis operations and support the City's regulated cannabis market, a staffing increase for the Cannabis Support Unit is recommended, along with additional funding for Narcotics Enforcement Details conducting cannabis-related investigations. These resources would enhance the Department's ability to address illegal operations and ensure regulatory compliance within the licensed cannabis industry.

If you have any questions, please contact Deputy Chief Alan Hamilton, Chief of Detectives, at (213) 486-7000.

Respectfully,



JIM McDONNELL
Chief of Police

Attachment

Fact Sheet
Los Angeles Police Department
2026 Cannabis Enforcement Efforts
June 10, 2026

Background

On January 28, 2026, the Public Safety Committee requested that the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) report on the current cannabis enforcement practices and requested recommendations for additional staffing or resources needed to address illegal cannabis operations and strengthen the regulated market within the City of Los Angeles. The Cannabis Support Unit (CSU), operating out of LAPD's Gang and Narcotics Division, oversees all cannabis-related enforcement in the City. The CSU works closely with the Department of Cannabis Regulations (DCR), the Department of Water and Power (DWP), the Department of Building and Safety (DBS), and the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) to shut down unlicensed cannabis operations. This multi-agency collaboration ensures that enforcement addresses both criminal activity and related safety hazards within the community.

Note: Due to staffing challenges, CSU has been reallocated and is merely an ancillary duty. In 2019, CSU consisted of (4) detective supervisors and (2) investigators. As retirements occurred, vacancies were not filled. In order to have an effective CSU, the unit would require a minimum of (4) supervisors, (2) investigators, and (1) analyst.

Current Enforcement Structure

The LAPD is divided into 21 geographical Areas, each with a Narcotics Enforcement Detail (NED). These NED Units consist of three to six detectives or officers who report to their divisional captain. Most of these NED units must collaborate to accomplish their missions. Priorities vary across divisions but generally include surveillance of narcotics-related crimes, investigations into cocaine, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and cannabis, and support for major crime cases.

Enforcement against unlicensed cannabis businesses requires specialized resources. Search warrants often demand personnel beyond regular staffing levels as divisions must meet minimum patrol requirements. Metropolitan Division is frequently called in to breach fortified doors at unlicensed locations. Following search warrants, DBS contractors board up or padlock businesses to prevent reopening.

Unlicensed cannabis cultivation remains widespread across both residential areas and large warehouse operations. Some seizures have exceeded 4,000 pounds of cannabis in a single location. Cannabis exceeding 200 pounds is taken directly to landfills for destruction; however, large-scale seizures require substantial personnel and resources. In addition, Butane Honey Oil (BHO) labs pose significant risks due to the volatile and explosive chemicals used in extraction, requiring specialized dismantling by the GND Lab Squad.

Cannabis Management System

The Department of Cannabis Regulation relies on the Cannabis Management System (CMS) to track and report enforcement activity. The system requires an annual licensing fee of \$30,618, with 75 licenses held by LAPD divisional supervisors and CSU personnel. All enforcement statistics are entered into CMS, ensuring accurate and transparent reporting across City agencies.

Recent Enforcement Activity

In 2026, year-to-date, LAPD cannabis enforcement efforts have resulted in 34 arrests; three for felony charges and 31 for misdemeanors. Enforcement actions have seized nearly 4,500 pounds of cannabis, recovered \$75,779 in illicit currency, and taken four firearms off the streets, all being handguns. In addition, there have been six cease-and-desist letters, three utility disconnects, and eight search warrants served.

When comparing the five-year statistical average from 2021 to 2025, the current year reflects reduced enforcement due to fiscal constraints and staffing shortages for cannabis enforcement. On average during those years, enforcement produced 236 cease-and-desist letters, 309 utility disconnects, 360 search warrants, 126,750 pounds of cannabis seized, and over \$1.9 million in seized currency. Firearm recovery averaged 104 over the same period.

Category	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Average	% Change-2025 vs 2021
Cease & Desist Letter	403	264	232	178	101	236	-74.9%
Utility Disconnect	311	320	399	348	166	309	-46.6%
Search Warrants served	321	398	439	376	268	360	-16.5%
Currency Seized	\$2,127,613	\$3,377,642	\$1,041,930	\$2,866,502	\$219,754	\$1,926,688	-89.7%
Cannabis Seized	258,625	120,762	97,530	94,972	61,899	126,750	-76.1%
Firearms Recovered	91	141	124	131	34	104	-62.6%
Felony Arrests	302	290	218	117	32	192	-89.4%
Misdemeanor Arrests	401	346	318	387	138	315	-65.6%

Additional Staffing and Resources Needed

Despite progress, the CSU faces significant resource constraints. The CSU is currently staffed by one Criminal Analyst who records citywide stats, uploads them to CMS, and performs other duties for the division. Due to attrition and retirements, the Detective III of the CSU was reassigned to supervise an LAPD/Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force as his primary duty, with CSU as an ancillary duty. The officer assigned to the CSU was promoted to Sergeant and transferred out of the division. The Gang and Narcotics Division has lost 19 sworn positions over the past year and is down to 116 sworn personnel.

Since May of 2025, 47 search warrants have been conducted without dedicated cannabis funding. Of these, 15 targeted unlicensed businesses and 32 focused on unlicensed cultivation operations. Twenty-five of these operations were supported by federal DEA Cannabis Eradication Program funding, underscoring the importance of external partnerships.

To maintain enforcement on the unlicensed cannabis market, continued and expanded funding is necessary. Without overtime resources, the NEDs cannot adequately support enforcement.

Detective Michael Boylls, along with the LAPD Grant Section, applied for a state grant for cannabis enforcement. If awarded, this would provide necessary overtime to increase unlicensed cannabis enforcement.

Additional Funding

In 2022, the LAPD entered a contract with the DEA Domestic Cannabis Eradication / Suppression Program (DCE/SP) to combat illegal cannabis cultivations. The additional funding is approximately \$325,000.00 per fiscal year and is used for overtime for officers serving search warrants at illegal cannabis cultivations. This program has assisted the divisional NEDs in gathering additional detectives and officers at cannabis cultivations. Most locations will yield hundreds of pounds of cannabis, and some warehouse cultivations will yield well over a thousand pounds of illegal cannabis.

Continued Enforcement

The divisional NEDs continued receiving narcotic complaints at illegal cannabis businesses and at illegal cannabis cultivations. The NEDs continue working these complaints and executing search warrants at locations, but without dedicated cannabis overtime, they are unable to conduct follow-up search warrants when locations reopen. Most NEDs have limited personnel and must coordinate with other divisional NEDs and watch commanders to get personnel for enforcement. When there was dedicated overtime for cannabis enforcement, divisional NEDs and GND personnel averaged approximately 35 search warrants per month, and without overtime, that number has been greatly reduced.

Prior Cannabis Unit Personnel

Prior to 2020, the Cannabis Support Unit (CSU) was staffed with (2) Detective Supervisors and a Crime and Information Analyst (CIAN). In 2022, one of the supervisors was transferred to a different unit and an investigator was brought in as a replacement. In 2025, the investigator was promoted to Sergeant, and in early 2026, the Detective III was reassigned as a Group Supervisor in HIDTA. The CIAN has remained the only person in the CSU, and her duties include aggregating all cannabis statistics, overseeing the DCE/SP overtime funding, coordinating with DEA and Fiscal Group, responding to all cannabis requests that come into the office, and performing many ancillary duties within GND.

Full staffing of Cannabis Support Unit

A fully staffed Cannabis Support Unit would be able to ensure all statistics provided were accurate and could quickly follow up with divisional NEDs on questions regarding new laws and cannabis trends. A supervisor would be assigned to each bureau and would be able to attend most search warrants and assist in coordination with outside agencies such as the Department of Cannabis Regulation, Department of Water and Power, Department of Building and Safety, the District Attorney and City Attorney's Offices, the Los Angeles Fire Department, the Mayor's Office, the Department of Cannabis Control (State), and numerous outside agencies who call the CSU for assistance. This would relieve CSU of the need to request assistance from each bureau to ensure Cannabis statistics and overtime were submitted in a timely manner. Additional supervisors would ensure a Cannabis subject matter expert would be available, especially with new laws constantly developing and the possible rescheduling of cannabis by the federal government. The Mayor's Office and Department of Cannabis Regulation have regular meetings, and the CSU is expected to attend. The cannabis subject-matter expert is called to the City Council, Budget and Finance, and Cannabis Commission meetings regularly. If overtime

was reallocated for cannabis enforcement, multiple supervisors would ensure the funding was used properly by LAPD divisions and could audit the overtime used in conjunction with enforcement efforts, making cannabis enforcement in the City much more efficient.

Conclusion

Illegal cannabis businesses continue to pose risks to public safety, neighborhood stability, and the regulated cannabis market. The CSU, in partnership with other city and state agencies, has demonstrated consistent results in reducing illegal operations. However, the fiscal challenges highlight a critical gap that must be addressed to sustain momentum.

In addition to the required overtime, it is recommended that the Cannabis Support Unit be staffed by a minimum of two supervisors, two investigators, and an analyst. This would enable the Unit to generate momentum with the Mayor's Cannabis Task Force and to continue partnerships with the LAPD, DCR, DWP, DBS, LAFD, the Department of Cannabis Control, the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, and the City Attorney's Office.

Prepared by:
Detective III Michael S. Boylls
Gang and Narcotics Division

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT relative to requesting a report on current cannabis enforcement practices and identifying additional staffing or resources needed to address illegal cannabis operations and strengthen the regulated market within the City.

Recommendation for Council action pursuant to Motion (Rodriguez - Hutt):

REQUEST the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and all other necessary City departments and agencies, to report on the Cannabis Support Unit's current procedures and practices, including recommendations for any additional staffing and resources needed to improve cannabis enforcement within the City.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the CAO nor the CLA has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted

Summary:

On January 28, 2026, your Public Safety Committee considered a Motion (Rodriguez - Hutt) relative to requesting a report on current cannabis enforcement practices and identifying additional staffing or resources needed to address illegal cannabis operations and strengthen the regulated market within the City.

After providing an opportunity for public comment, the Public Safety Committee moved to approve the recommendation in the motion. This matter is now forwarded to the Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
LEE:	YES
PRICE:	ABSENT
McOSKER:	YES
SOTO-MARTINEZ:	YES
PARK:	YES

HR 01.28.26

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-