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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cannabis Coalition Critical of New "Drugged Driving" Legislation

The Canadian cannabis community is concerned that the federal government's proposed drugged driving legislation seeks to test for "amount of cannabis" rather than test for actual impairment. Focusing on the amount of cannabis in one's body or as proposed in the new legislation - in the glove compartment of the vehicle,, rather than the level of impairment will inevitably allow some people impaired for other reasons (lack of sleep, prescription drugs, old age, too much caffeine etc.) to continue to drive impaired, while others who are found with cannabis in their system but who are not impaired will be wrongly prosecuted.

Various published studies have concluded that:

1) "Cannabis alone, particularly in low doses, has little effect on the skills involved in automobile driving..." and that "cannabis leads to a more cautious style of driving." (2002 Report of the Senate Special Committee on Illegal Drugs Chapter 8: Driving under the influence of cannabis <http://www.cannabislink.ca/gov/senatesumm.htm#chap8>)

2) "The results to date of crash culpability studies have failed to demonstrate that drivers with cannabinoids in the blood are significantly more likely than drug-free drivers to be culpable in road crashes." (G. Chesher and M. Longo, 2002. Cannabis and alcohol in motor vehicle accidents, Cannabis and Cannabinoids: Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Therapeutic Potential.)

3) "The THC-only drivers had a responsibility rate below that of the drug free drivers. While the difference was not statistically significant, there was no indication that cannabis by itself was a cause of fatal crashes." (K. Terhune. 1992. The incidence and role of drugs in fatally injured drivers. Washington, DC: US Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Report No. DOT HS 808 065.)

4) "Another way THC seems to differ qualitatively from many other drugs is that the former users seem better able to compensate for its adverse effects while driving under the influence." (H. Robbe. 1995. Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety. Marijuana's effects on actual driving performance. Australia: HHMRC Road Research Unit.)

5) "Drivers under the influence of marijuana retain insight in their performance and will compensate, where they can, for example, by slowing down or increasing effort. As a consequence, THC's adverse effects on driving performance appear relatively small." (1993 Marijuana and Actual Driving Performance U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Final Report, November 1993 (DOT HS 808 078).)

Like the Canadian police forces and general public, the Canadian Cannabis Coalition is extremely concerned about impairment on our roadways, but we believe that federal policies should be evidence-based and designed to save lives. Roadside body-fluid testing is not a scientifically defensible means of testing for actual impairment, will inevitably lead to the arrest of innocent people, and will do nothing to protect the Canadian public.

Other resources may be found at: Canadian Cannabis Coalition Forum -> Drugged Driving <http://cannabiscoalition.ca/html/index.php?name=Forums&file=viewforum&f=25>

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