

— — — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — — —

Canadian Policy and Advocacy Groups Call for Government to Reduce the Role of Organized Crime in the Cannabis Industry Through Inclusive Regulations

VANCOUVER, August 9, 2016 - Three groups are making submissions to the Government of Canada's Task Force on Marijuana Legalization and Regulation, addressing the role of organized crime in the cannabis industry from three different perspectives: the evidence-base; the legal, policy and regulatory framework; and that of cannabis consumers and producers.

These groups want to ensure that the form of legalization enacted by this government does not unnecessarily and arbitrarily exclude Canadians from participating in a new legal cannabis market. In their submissions, these groups agree that a primary goal of legalization is to reduce the role of organized crime. However, they also note that the government and media are inflating the role of organized crime in the current industry, without providing evidence to substantiate the claims. This is a cause for concern, as these opinions could lead to overly restrictive regulations.

In the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition's (CDPC) submission, "Organized Crime in the Cannabis Market: Evidence and Implications" it is argued that the evidence suggests a relatively low involvement of organized crime in the cannabis industry in Canada; the majority of those in the industry tend to be non-violent and have minimal, if any, involvement with other criminal activities. "We recommend that the government base the new cannabis regulations on the best available evidence, to allow for a balanced approach that further restricts the operation of organized crime, while allowing for the involvement of a variety of independent producers and retailers in the emerging legal market," said co-author Neil Boyd, a criminologist and professor at Simon Fraser University.

The Cannabis Trade Alliance of Canada's (CTAC) submission, "Inclusivity through Regulation: Weeding Out Organized Crime" notes that the vast majority of cannabis industry participants are otherwise law-abiding and productive citizens. Rosy Mondin, Executive Director of CTAC stated, "We want to encourage government to leverage the existing knowledge base of the cannabis industry to create an inclusive, sustainable and transparent legalized structure. The key to our country's success in these initiatives is working with successful entrepreneurs from the existing cannabis industry and giving them an opportunity to participate in a regulated market, fostering innovation and economic growth in our communities."

The Craft Cannabis Association of British Columbia (CCABC), a non-profit society founded by a diverse group of cannabis advocates, consumers and producers, supports regulations that deter the involvement of organized crime in the cannabis market. Their submission, "The Real Faces of Craft Cannabis", outlines their support for craft cannabis producers and retailers, and provides descriptions of everyday Canadians currently involved in BC's cannabis industry. Sarah Campbell, a director of CCABC states, "As the consumers upon whom the new legal cannabis industry depends, we want to choose where our cannabis products come from. We want to make intelligent, responsible and legal choices. We want craft producers and retailers to be included so that we can continue to purchase from them within a legal framework."

- 30 -

Press

Contacts:

Neil Boyd

Canadian Drug Policy Coalition (CDPC)

Mobile: 604-505-9803

Email: nboyd@sfu.ca

Rosy Mondin

Cannabis Trade Alliance of Canada (CTAC)

Mobile: (604) 346-8118

Email: rosy@sustainablecannabis.ca

Sarah Campbell

Craft Cannabis Association of BC (CCABC)

Mobile: (250) 415-3127

Email: sarah@craftcannabis.ca