

# Calif. undecided on legalizing recreational pot

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

On New Year's Day in Colorado, state-licensed marijuana stores will begin selling pot purely for pleasurable consumption.

Colorado, already home to the nation's most regulated medical marijuana industry, expects to open its first two dozen stores selling recreational cannabis users up to an ounce of pot each. Another 400 applications are pending for retail marijuana shops, commercial cultivators or pot product producers. In Washington, where voters also legalized recreational marijuana use in November 2012, the state is reviewing a flood of applications for 340 state licenses for marijuana stores expected to begin opening this spring.

Now in California, where a recent Field poll showed 55 percent voter support for marijuana legalization beyond medical use, four pot legalization ballot initiatives have emerged as contenders for the November ballot. Yet in the home of America's largest marijuana economy, advocates remain hesitant about moving forward – and putting the necessary money on the line – to qualify a California pot legalization vote next year. They remain uncertain over the state's political climate and are frustrated by failure of lawmakers to set rules governing California's medical marijuana trade, once estimated at \$1.5 billion, in the face of federal raids on cannabis businesses.

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