

Calif. cities, police chiefs change tune on pot

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

The last time lawmakers tried to regulate California's medical marijuana industry, the League of California Cities warned of "a radical expansion of existing law" and "a slippery slope to distribution of marijuana for recreational use." And police groups rushed out talking points protesting the "creation of a massive, for-profit medical marijuana model."

California cities and police were long considered obstructionists to regulatory legislation they said would legitimize marijuana businesses. But now they are jumping into the marijuana-regulation effort out of fear that the state is inevitably moving toward a sanctioned cannabis industry with or without their input.

Expressing alarm over the changing "marijuana arena," the League of California Cities and the California Police Chiefs Association announced Feb. 21 that they are dropping their policy of "unconditional opposition" to laws sanctioning marijuana businesses in California. They are backing a new bill that would license medical marijuana dispensaries and cultivators while setting new restrictions on doctors recommending marijuana to patients.

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