

WeHo Council member John Duran endorses pot's legalization

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West Hollywood, California (March 18, 2010) - West Hollywood Councilmember John Duran endorsed efforts to legalize marijuana this week in a news conference held at City Hall.

Joined by Dale Sky Clare, spokesperson for The Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act campaign, Mr. Duran said he is “the first elected official in Southern California to endorse the Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010.”

He pointed out the futility of prohibition and the government’s “war on drugs.”

“During Prohibition, the most dangerous form of underground alcohol was “moonshine” that was unregulated and sometimes fatal,” he said.

“Today, Mexican drug cartels produce unregulated marijuana heavily-laden with unsafe pesticides and making billions of U.S. dollars in the process.”

He derided the hype over the evils of recreational marijuana use as traditionally painted by law enforcement and stated that marijuana posed less danger to people than did alcohol.

“The “reefer madness” mentality of our failed criminalization of marijuana must come to an end just as prohibition did. Marijuana is no more dangerous than alcohol,” he said.

The Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010 proposes to regulate cannabis like alcohol; allow adults 21 and older in California to possess up to one ounce of cannabis; give local governments the ability to tax and regulate the sale of cannabis to adults 21 and older.

The initiative’s sponsors also claim that the revenue would amount to billions of dollars “to fund what matters most in California including jobs, healthcare, public safety, schools and libraries, state parks, roads, transportation, and more.”

Under the language offered, both State and local jurisdictions would have the power to tax marijuana, potentially generating \$1.4 to \$1.8 billion annually, according to Ms. Clare.

Local jurisdictions could also opt out of allowing the initiative to apply in their areas, as already happens with alcohol regulation in states where cities opt in or out.

Richard Lee, Oakland medical marijuana dispensary and "Oaksterdam University" marijuana college owner, is funding the ballot measure.