

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Document with comment from Lisa Greene in a readable format.

My Name is Lisa Greene, a social equity advocate, and I am writing on behalf of Roxanne Salazar who is a 51% social equity owner in Phase 3 round 1 application. Roxanne is part of the first 100 approved to move forward and one of the many applicants who has been unable to press forward into the temporary licensing process due to seemingly predatory practices. As of right now, the current investors have tried to press Roxanne into relinquishing her 51% equity by giving the full control to run the business without her input and have asked her to move forward through temporary licensing so that they can replace her with another social equity applicant that they can control regardless of the social equity share requirements outlined by DCR.

In addition, during the almost year long wait to move forward after the initial application approval process, suddenly the location that was owned and provided by one of the investors and the main reason why we partnered with them, burned down. Although they have seemingly tried to secure a new location over the past year they would not allow Roxanne to be involved in the process as the investor was supposedly personally purchasing a new building in a different location in a better area within our community plan. After 8 months or more of stating that they were in talks to buy a building, suddenly the purchase fell through and they started to demand that Roxanne look for locations to lease. After explaining to them that the main reason why she went with these particular investors was because they owned the location, they are now refusing to move forward to securing a location or funding the business unless Roxanne agrees to hand over full control to run the business as they see fit.

The DCR recommendations will clear the way for Roxanne and others like her who are being strong armed and held back to move forward. At this time, applicants who are able to move forward should be able to too so the complaint about losing money on rent and blaming the DCR is really no longer valid, for the most part the ones that are not able or haven't moved forward are being held up by their investors or lack there of because just like in Phase 2, those who do not support social equity are looking to make Phase 3 fail so that the licenses can become public and they can move forward without a social equity applicant at all. These types of predatory practices are the same that plagued Phase 2 applicants. I can honestly say that of all of the Phase 2 SE applicants that I met, not 1 of them was able to move through the entire licensing process as their investors abandoned them or tried to strong arm them into giving up their equity control to a management company that was created by the investors themselves. Not only will the DCR recommendations improve Phase 3...it would also allow those that had to abandon their Phase 2 licenses to restart their process. This would be a win for Social Equity in the City of Los Angeles.

Although we appreciate the honorable Marqueece Harris-Dawson and the honorable Curren Price for introducing this motion 21-1083, it does not go far enough and parts of it play directly into the hands of the predatory investors. If the City Council really wants to see the Social Equity program succeed, we highly recommend that PLUM and any and all other councils that have hand in approving this motion amend the LAMC exactly as recommended by the DCR's executive directors response to the proposed motion, which was published on October 29, 2021.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Your willingness to work to make sure that these Social Equity applicants are supported in every manner possible is extremely appreciated. A special thank you also to Councilman Joe Buscaino who met with Roxanne so that she could share her story, Executive Director Cat Packer, Social Equity Program Director Dr. Imani Brown, The DCR Commissioners, SPARK, California Minority Alliance, SEOWA and every other true social equity advocacy group, advocate and applicant that are working tirelessly to make sure that this program is successful.

Lisa Greene
Cannabis Advocate