

Bill favors 'growing your own'

# Legislature faces pot's friends, foes again

By MIKE RUST  
Of the Emerald

Oregon's Legislature continues to ponder the marijuana question.

The House Judiciary Committee will hear testimony Tuesday on five bills pertaining to marijuana use and cultivation. The committee also may vote on some of the bills.

"You never know what they're going to do," says Kathy Wilson of People Effectively Appealing for Cannabis Equality (PEACE). "We'll just have to see how these hearings go."

PEACE, along with Oregonians Cooperating to Prevent Drug Abuse, is supporting HB 2422, a bill that would allow the cultivation of three marijuana plants in the homes of persons over 18 years of age for a \$20 fee.

The bill also would limit the sale of smoking accessories to people over 18 and would require stores that sell the paraphernalia to display signs with laws concerning tobacco and controlled substances.

According to current state laws, possession of less than an ounce of marijuana is a citation offense with a maximum \$100 fine, while possession of more than an ounce is a Class B felony with a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$2,500 fine.

Sales and manufacture — which under current definition includes cultivation of even one plant — is a Class A felony with a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Besides HB 2422, PEACE also supports HB 2066, a



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bill introduced by the House Interim Committee on Human Resources. This bill would make the sale of imitation drugs as controlled substances a Class A Felony with a penalty of up to 20 years in prison or a fine

of up to \$2,500.

"Catering to drug abuse" would become a Class C felony with a penalty of up to five years in prison or a fine of up to \$250.

In a press release, PEACE says it believes "this bill would reduce fraud."

However, the Lane County organization isn't very happy with the other three drug-related bills that will be discussed Tuesday.

HB 2535, introduced by Rep. Max Rijken, D-Newport, would outlaw all drug paraphernalia. HB 2585, introduced by Rep. Billy Bellamy, R-Culver, would restrict the sale of drug paraphernalia to people over 21.

PEACE claims both bills are unconstitutional.

Another bill, HB 2897, was recently introduced by Rep. Gratten Kerans, D-Eugene, at the request of Lane County District Attorney Pat Horton. The bill revises criminal penalties relating to controlled substances by raising the upper limit on fines in certain cases to \$25,000, including possession of over one ounce of marijuana, or \$50,000, which would include cultivation of one or more marijuana plants.

A statement released by PEACE describes this bill as "unreasonable because it does not differentiate between the personal and commercial marijuana users."

PEACE is urging interested individuals to testify at the hearing or call their representatives at 1-800-452-7813. More information can be obtained by calling 689-6804.

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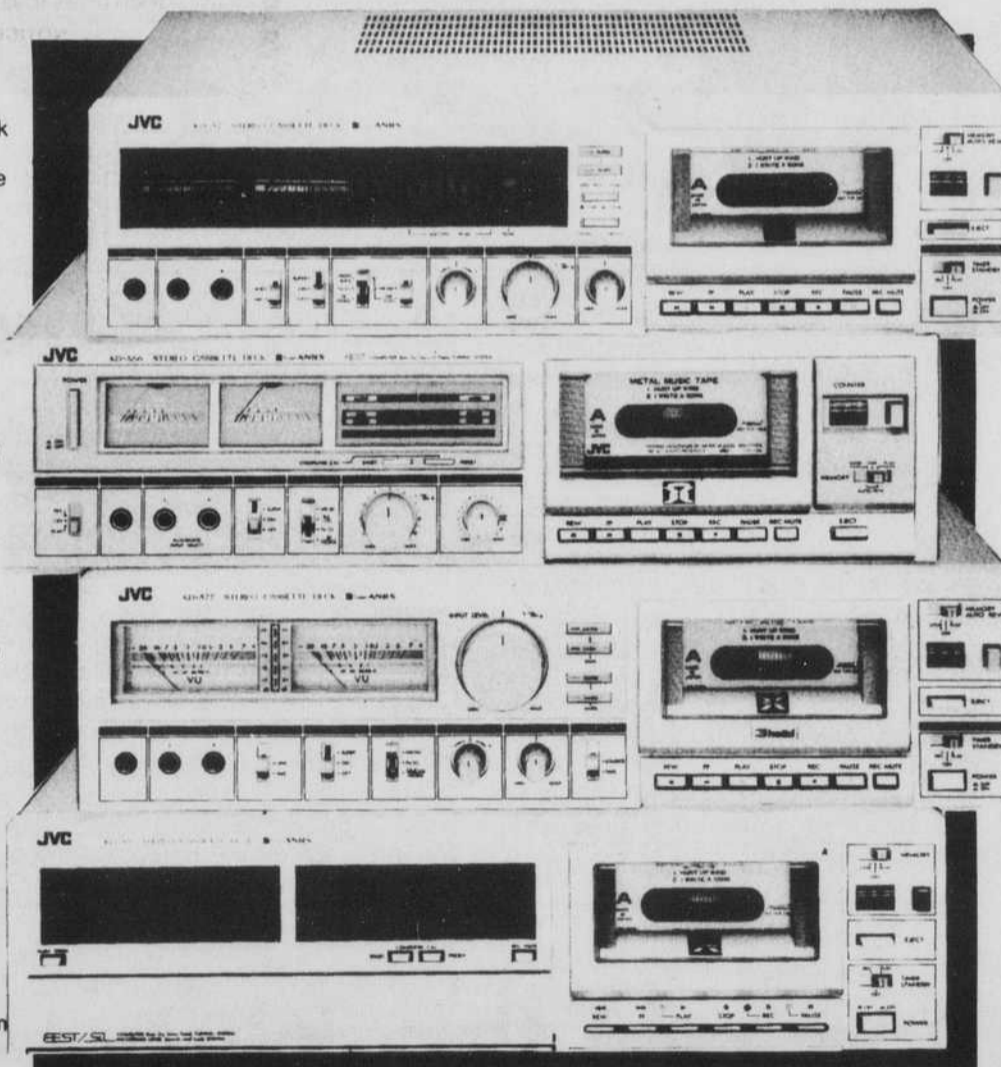
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