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Marijuana Directive Denounced

New policy may not have much impact

New federal guidelines on prosecuting marijuana crimes probably won't lead to a crack-down on personal and medical uses of the drug in states where it is legal like Oregon, but the new policy by U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions got strong denunciations from state and local officials when it was announced last week.

Sessions reversed an Obama-era directive of non-interference with states that have legalized marijuana. Instead he will now leave it up the discretion of local federal prosecutors on how they try cases in their jurisdictions, encouraging them to focus on shared public safety objectives.

Ellen Rosenblum, Oregon's Attorney General, said she would do everything within

her legal authority to protect Oregon's marijuana industry within its "carefully considered state regulatory requirements."

She said the industry has created over 19,000 jobs throughout the state, adding over \$1 million in revenue to schools, to public safety, and to drug and alcohol treatment in Oregon in the last year and a half.

Billy J. Williams, the U.S. Attorney for Oregon, responded to the new guidelines by saying he will continue working with federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement in Oregon to stem the overproduction of marijuana on the black market and "the diversion of marijuana out of state, dismantling criminal organizations and thwarting violent crimes in our communities."

That statement appears to recognize that under Oregon Law there's not sufficient local support to enforce federal prohibitions against personal and medical use of the drug.

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— Martin Luther King, Jr.



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