

Oregon Officials Drop Proposed Ban on Pot-Laced Foods

CHAD GARLAND, Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Oregon officials are backing off their proposal to prohibit sales of [pot-infused treats](#) [1] at Oregon medical marijuana stores after receiving hundreds of emailed comments opposing the ban.

In a new set of rules released Monday, the Oregon Health Authority seeks only to ban marijuana-laced products that are made or packaged in ways that might appeal to children. They prohibit drug-infused goods that are brightly colored or formed in the shape of animals, toys or candies.

They also require marijuana products to be sold in child-proof containers free of cartoons or bright colors.

"Medicine isn't candy, and it shouldn't look like candy," said Tom Burns, Director of Pharmacy Programs for the Oregon Health Authority, in a release announcing the new rules.

The rules were required under SB 1531, which the Legislature passed and Gov. John Kitzhaber signed into law earlier this month. The bill allows cities and counties to ban medical marijuana facilities within their borders until May 2015. It also requires the Oregon Health Authority to implement rules designed to keep the drugs away from children.

A March 19 draft of the rules would have prohibited the sale of all cakes, cookies, candy and gum that contain the drug, but Burns told The Associated Press that the agency had received "a couple hundred" comments opposing the measure.

Pot advocates said it went too far and would have harmed patients who can't smoke or prefer the longer-lasting effects they get from eating pot-infused foods. Dispensary owners said the products made up about 15-20 percent of their sales, but reported pulling the "edibles" from their shelves in anticipation of the ban.

Orders for Heather Williams' marijuana-infused sweets were being cancelled last week after the ban was proposed. She called it "great news" when she heard of the less-restrictive rules Monday, and she said her products are not colored or shaped in ways the rules prohibit.

Not all makers of the pot-infused goodies were pleased with the new rules, however.

Laura Brannan runs Elbe's Edibles of Portland. She said she was struggling to find opaque, child-resistant food containers the rules require. Having them specially

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made would be a "\$250,000 problem" from which her business couldn't recover, she said.

The new rules also give dispensary owners an option to revoke their license and get a refund of fees if they will be prohibited from opening shop due to a local dispensary ban.

The rules take effect Tuesday, but they could change based on public comments received during a six-month rule-making process that ends in September.

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