



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0159, **Version:** 2

A MOTION requesting the King County executive establish a cannabis business security task force to develop strategies to prevent criminal activity targeting cannabis businesses and address security concerns at cannabis businesses and to provide a report.

WHEREAS, King County has experienced an increase in criminal activity, including armed robbery, targeting cannabis businesses over the last year, and

WHEREAS, according to the Washington Cannabusiness Association, roughly eighty robberies have been recorded at cannabis retailers across the state of Washington since the beginning of 2022, and

WHEREAS, federal law prohibits cannabis related businesses from accessing traditional banking services, forcing these businesses to operate on a cash-only basis and making them a target for criminals, and

WHEREAS, while King County has traditionally allocated its portion of cannabis excise tax revenue collected by the state in accordance with RCW 69.54.540 to law enforcement activities by the King County sheriff's office, in 2020, the executive proposed, and the council approved, redirecting cannabis excise tax revenues away from the sheriff's office and toward community-based programs within the department of local services and the department of community and human services, and

WHEREAS, criminal activity targeting cannabis businesses impacts the broader community, and

WHEREAS, a coordinated cannabis-business-security effort is required to prevent crimes against cannabis businesses and to ensure the safety and security of communities across King County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council requests the King County executive address the recent increase in criminal activity

targeting cannabis businesses across King County by establishing a cannabis business security task force to develop strategies to prevent that criminal activity and to prepare a report.

B. The task force should consist of representatives, including, but not limited to:

1. The King County prosecuting attorney's office;
2. The King County sheriff's office;
3. Cannabis business owners and employees; and
4. Impacted neighborhood groups and community organizations.

C. The task force should consider strategies including, but not limited to:

1. Identifying and providing the resources necessary to aid law enforcement in the prevention of criminal activity targeting cannabis businesses, including the use of cannabis excise tax revenues to prevent and mitigate community impacts of cannabis business related crimes;

2. Deepening interjurisdictional cooperation and data sharing to identify trends in criminal activity targeting cannabis businesses; and

3. Coordinating emphasis patrols by law enforcement officers in the vicinity of cannabis business locations across King County.

D. The report should include, but not be limited to:

1. A listing and description of cannabis business security and crime prevention strategies and techniques that will be developed and implemented to reduce criminal activity targeting cannabis businesses across King County and an estimated timeline for their implementation; and

2. An analysis of the need for additional staff and resources across King County government departments and agencies to develop and implement cannabis business security and crime prevention efforts as well as a fiscal note summarizing the budget need to support these efforts.

E. The King County executive should electronically file the report not later than August 31, 2022, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide

an electronic copy to all councilmembers and the lead staff of the law and justice committee, or its successor.