

January 10, 2018

Attorney General Jeff Sessions
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We write to express our deep concern with your decision to rescind the “Cole Memo.” This guidance clarified federal marijuana enforcement policy in states in light of legalization which, as you know, is now legal for some purposes in 28 states and the District of Columbia.

When the Department of Justice (DOJ) clarified its policy on legal marijuana, it took a step forward in properly deprioritizing criminal enforcement of legal marijuana, and ensured that states had clear guidance on how to implement medical marijuana to help patients and end the black market. This allowed the federal authority, with state and municipal partners, to focus efforts on protecting children and targeting organized crime, and ending cartel related activity. Reversing course now is a misguided legal overreach and an attack on cities where legal, safe, and high regulated recreational sale and use occurs, and on the majority of states where the voters have made their voices heard loud and clear on this issue.

With overdose deaths, primarily caused by opioids, at an all-time high throughout this country, the federal government should be a better partner to help combat this epidemic. President Trump and DOJ should not waste our law enforcement resources and taxpayer money on prosecuting legal activity and instead prioritize their efforts on ending the scourge of the opioid crisis.

This will be our priority. It is neither tough nor smart to roll back the well-established and effective decision on federal intervention.

We will do everything we can within the rule of law to keep our residents safe, end the opioid crisis, and ensure our businesses, residents, and visitors are protected from this overreach.

Sincerely,

Jenny A. Durkan
Mayor, City of Seattle

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor, City of Denver

Mayor Bill de Blasio
New York, New York

Mayor Jim Kenney
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mayor Robert Garcia
Long Beach, California

Mayor Ted Wheeler
Portland, Oregon

Mayor Paul Soglin
Madison, Wisconsin

Mayor Jonathan Rothschild
Tucson, Arizona

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Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson
Gary, Indiana

Mayor Pauline Cutter
San Leandro, CA