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Stop offering 'free' weed with cookies, N.J. attorney general tells 4 companies

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New Jersey's top law enforcement official has accused four local companies of illegally offering free cannabis "gifts" alongside orders of cookies, chips and other products.

Cease-and-desist letters sent Tuesday to NJ Green Direct, Sky High Munchies, Slumped Kitchen and West Winds Wellness said each was under investigation for potentially misrepresenting their sales.

While marijuana is generally legal in New Jersey, the state's Cannabis Regulatory Commission is still figuring out the rules for how it can be sold and businesses have not yet been licensed.

"Instead of waiting for those regulations to be established, some vendors have decided to move forward on their own, in ways that the law does not allow," state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal said in a statement.

The commission's chairperson, Dianna Houenou, said the companies were "trying to preempt the rules" which could "jeopardize public health and undermine confidence in the forthcoming regulated cannabis industry."

Messages left with each business were not immediately returned, but the head of NJ Green Direct previously said the entry points were too high to get a license.

"The government really made it impossible for the little guy," Sam Gindi told NJ Advance Media earlier this year.

Experts have previously questioned the legality of openly pairing "free" marijuana with other exorbitantly priced goods.

On Sky High Munchies' website for example, residents can buy a small bag with nuts, rice crisps, fig bars, an almond bar and water — for \$165.

Before you add that item to your cart, you choose a "free gift" from a cannabis menu.

"You have to give some vendors an A for effort," said Edmund DeVeaux, president of the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association. "It does force us to come to terms with the fact that we should have done this a long time ago and that we really do have to focus on making sure that we do get a responsible, sustainable, diverse industry in place."

Violating the state's Consumer Fraud Act can trigger tens of thousands of dollars in fines, according to Grewal's office.

State officials also released their final agreement with Anthony Anzalone, a former medical doctor in New Jersey accused of authorizing medical marijuana for patients he'd never examined.

Anzalone agreed to permanently stop practicing medicine in the state, according to a Final Consent Order signed in April. His license expired two years ago and is listed as "suspended" on the State Board of Medical Examiners' website.

When reached by phone, Anzalone disputed that he'd practiced irresponsibility and said he'd helped many people.