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### **One House Budgets Proposals Loom, COVID infections wane, Cannabis Developments Announced**

The legislature, Governor, and State Agencies focused this week on initiatives related to National Consumer Protection week, as the Senate and Assembly continued to work on their One-House Budget Proposals which will likely be released by early next week and subsequently acted on in both chambers. Once the bills are introduced, budget negotiations will begin in earnest as the two houses and the Governor push the meet the April 1 deadline. A New York State Division of Budget overview of the budget process can be accessed [here](#).

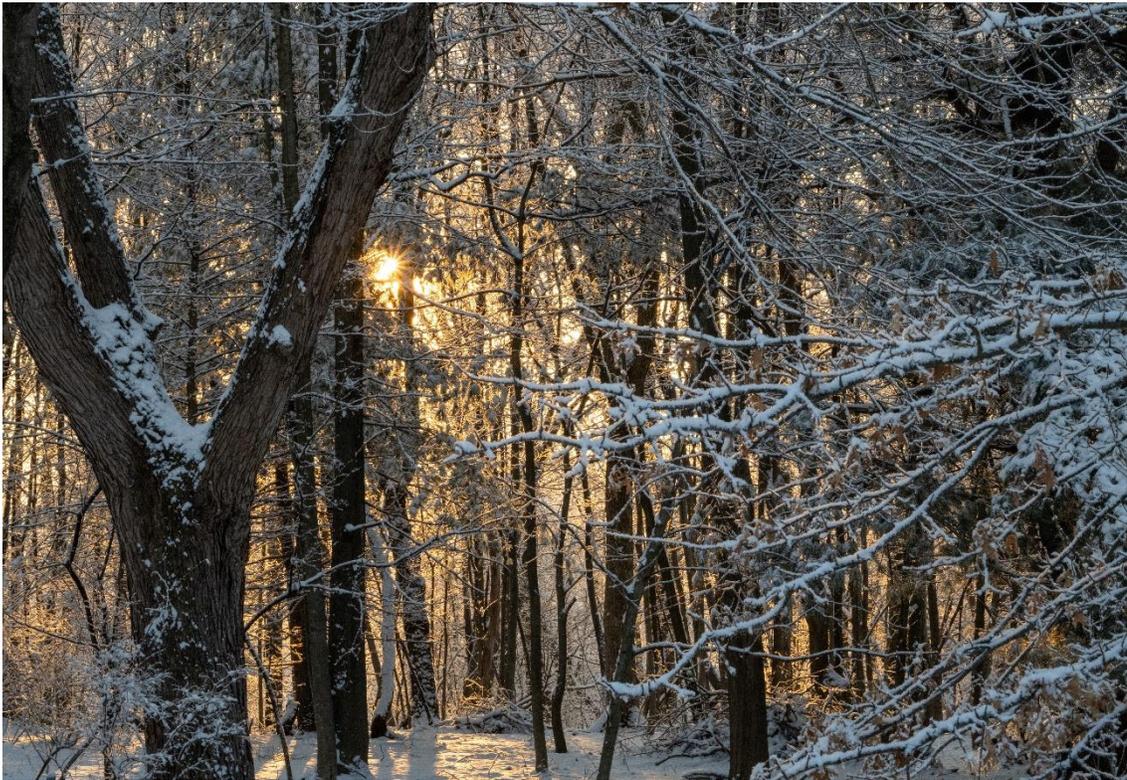
In other news this week, the Cannabis Control Board announced important developments in the commercial cannabis industry at their meeting on Thursday, the Attorney General touted plans to attack price gouging, the impacts of the COVID pandemic [continued to wane](#), and of course it would not be early March without a winter storm on tap for the weekend.

**CCB Licensing Update:** The Cannabis Control Board (CCB) passed a [resolution](#) Thursday approving an [application form](#) for conditional adult-use cultivation licenses and set a time period for the application process beginning March 15<sup>th</sup> and closing on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The conditional licenses were authorized by Chapter 18 of the Laws of 2022 (S.8084-A/ A.9283) and are available to qualified applicants.

The Board also considered a [resolution](#) approving *proposed regulations* outlining a licensure process for justice-involved-applicants to apply for [conditional adult-use retail dispensaries](#). The regulations will be subject to a 60-day public comment period, which opens when they are published in the State Register (*likely near the end of the month*). Under the proposed regulations, the first 150-200 retail dispensaries issued by the OCM will be issued to eligible applicants.

**Attorney General:** New York Attorney General Letitia James [launched a rulemaking process](#) to look into whether major corporations are using the pandemic and inflation as an excuse to unfairly raise the price of basic goods. The first-ever price gouging rulemaking process by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) will examine and address new evidence that some of the recent price hikes by big corporations were driven by profit not increased costs.

**PSLLC notes:** NYS Senator Diane Savino was the guest speaker at last Friday's **Park Strategies Cannabis Practice** webinar held exclusively for our cannabis industry clients. The weekly webinars offer clients the opportunity to discuss the wide-ranging nuances associated with getting a new industry off the ground with state and local decision makers and with industry experts from across the state and the country.



## From the Governor

### Office of Cannabis Management Seeding Opportunity Initiative

Governor Kathy Hochul [announced](#) the first-in-the-nation Seeding Opportunity Initiative, following the Cannabis Control Board meeting, which will position individuals with prior cannabis-related criminal offenses to make the first adult-use cannabis sales with products grown by New York farmers. The farm-to-store initiative is intended to make sales in New York possible, prior the end of 2022, and serve as a jumpstart to New York's new adult-use cannabis industry. The initiative is also touted to guarantee support for future equity applicants, and secure an early investment into communities most impacted by the disproportionate enforcement of cannabis prohibition.

### Executive Orders:

There were no new COVID related Executive Orders this week.

## Legislative News

### Legislative Activity

The Legislature will be in session the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> next week (the *2022 Legislative Calendar* can be accessed [here](#)). There were 71 bills passed this week. Of particular note was:

~ [S5063 \(Jackson\)](#) which prohibits employers from discriminating against individuals based on such individual's status as a caregiver. The bill has yet to be sponsored in the Assembly, however, it passed the Senate this week 55-8.

### Budget / Public Hearings

There are no Public Hearing currently announced for either house of the legislature.

The public hearing calendar can be accessed [here](#).

## State Agencies

### **From the New York Office of the NYS Attorney General**

#### **AG Releases Top 10 Consumer Complaints of 2021**

Attorney General Letitia James kicked off National Consumer Protection Week by [releasing a list](#) of the top 10 consumer fraud complaints received by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) in 2021. The top ten list from highest number of complaints to lowest was: Internet-Related, Landlord/Tenant Disputes, Retail Sales such as price gouging, Consumer Related Services, Automobile services, Credit Companies, Utilities, Home Repair/Improvement Companies, Health Clubs inability to cancel memberships, and Furniture and Appliances.

### **From the New York Office of the NYS Comptroller**

#### **NY Received \$1.59 for Every Tax Dollar Sent to DC in Federal Fiscal Year 2020, Still Below National Average of \$1.92**

For the first time in recent years, [New York received more money](#) from Washington D.C. than it sent to the federal government. Relief funds from the federal government, provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, boosted New York's per capita balance of payments from Washington from second-to-last in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019 to 40th in FFY 2020 among states, according to a report released by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. New York received \$146 billion, or \$7,236 per capita, more in federal spending than residents paid in total taxes to the federal government in FFY 2020. Overall, the state received 6.4% of total federal spending compared to 5.9% it received last FFY. He noted that all states had a positive balance of payments for FFY 2020 due to the unprecedented influx of federal relief aid.

### **From the New York Office of the NYS Department of Financial Services**

#### **Superintendent Harris Announces DFS Secures more than \$66 Million for Consumers & Healthcare Providers in 2021**

Marking National Consumer Protection Week this year, Superintendent of Financial Services [Adrienne A. Harris announced](#) the New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS) recovered more than \$60 million in 2021 for consumers and healthcare providers who filed complaints with the Department, as well as almost \$6 million in restitution from DFS enforcement actions and \$127 million in penalties against financial institutions and service providers.

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