

Mitchel Chargo Discusses Community Benefits for Tribal Nations Participating in Minnesota Cannabis Market

Via Green Market Report

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Mitchel Chargo was featured in a *Green Market Report* article discussing the benefits of cannabis markets for tribal nations in Minnesota. As Tribal nations prepare to enter the adult-use cannabis industry, they can leverage first-mover advantages to enhance economic development.

Chargo explained that cannabis can generate significant revenue for Tribal infrastructure and community needs like education, health, and welfare while also creating jobs and promoting entrepreneurship. This is especially meaningful for Tribal nations in remote areas with limited resources.

Green Market Report excerpt:

The opportunity to fill that void comes as Northern Minnesota nations look to boost their economies via the cannabis trade, according to Mitch Chargo, chair of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP's national cannabis practice.

"It's one of the most compelling benefits that a tribal nation can have. It can generate substantial revenue," Chargo said. "In remote areas – especially tribes that operate in areas that have limited resources, or that often rely on federal funding and grants for their economic strength – cannabis markets can create these new revenue streams that can bolster their economies."

Aside from direct sales revenue, Chargo said the money could help fund community needs like education and health care. The industry also brings jobs, particularly valuable for reservations in remote areas.

In other words, factors that make a people more sovereign in the long run.

State officials have publicly acknowledged they'll need tribal growers and manufacturers to supply the first wave of retail stores, said Chargo, who previously worked as in-house counsel for one of Minnesota's two medical marijuana manufacturers.

Chargo also highlighted the challenges of aligning tribal and state cannabis operations due to their different regulatory frameworks. While Minnesota officials acknowledge the need for tribal involvement in the market, the complexities of federal law and tribal sovereignty can create complications. Chargo stressed the importance of ensuring compliance and readiness as tribes prepare to enter the market.

Green Market Report excerpt:

The legal picture gets murky when tribal and state cannabis markets overlap. Chargo explained that federal law puts tribes in a unique position.

“Because our Constitution granted power over Indian affairs to the United States Congress, states have no authority over tribal governments or affairs on tribal lands unless expressly authorized by Congress,” he said. “And since tribes and states are both considered sovereign, neither is subordinate to the other.”

[...]

“The bigger piece for me is, let’s really make sure our compliance program is working; let’s make sure our operational plans are working,” Chargo said, noting the advantage of fixing issues before the “tidal wave really comes with everybody up and running.”

Meanwhile, regulators are also trying to make sure its existing [and future laws and regulations governing low-potency (or, hemp-derived products)] and marijuana [...] don’t tangle too much in the process. The state’s rules created what Chargo called “distinct lanes” for the two cannabis-derived industries.

“They created this kind of split or divide in the licensing apparatus,” Chargo said. The state “has been constantly trying to work backwards to figure out how to regulate something that they legislated in a somewhat unregulated way,” referring to the Minnesota hemp-derived market created in summer 2022.

[Read the full article](#) (*subscription may be required*).

- “[Tribal cannabis operators take the lead as Minnesota prepares for adult-use sales](#)” was published by *Green Market Report* on February 20, 2025.

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