

Colorado moves to crack down on black-market pot ads online

January 23 2017, by Kristen Wyatt

Weed on Craigslist? It is widely for sale in Colorado, but legislation moving through the state Legislature aims to crack down on those who sell marijuana illegally using online ads.

A bill approved unanimously by the state Senate on Monday would make it a misdemeanor to advertise pot if the person does not have a license to sell the drug.

It's already a crime to sell pot without a license in Colorado, but it's not illegal to place an advertisement for weed. That means law enforcement has a hard time going after those who skirt the law by posting marijuana for sale by the pound online and hoping police don't show up to see them make a black-market sale.

Like other legal-pot states, Colorado is trying to crack down on the lingering black market for marijuana as it awaits word on how President Donald Trump's administration will approach states violating federal drug law.

"If you don't have a license to sell marijuana, you may not advertise to sell marijuana," said Democratic Sen. Irene Aguilar of Denver, sponsor of the bill.

There is no official projection of how many people would be charged with a new crime of advertising pot without a license. But Aguilar told the Senate that on a single day in Denver, authorities found more than

690 ads on Craigslist for marijuana, almost all of it likely being sold outside the regulated market.

Under former President Barack Obama, a memo to weed states directed them to try to keep marijuana out of the [black market](#). But the memo had no force of law and could simply be rewritten by the next attorney general.

Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama is awaiting confirmation as [attorney general](#) and opposes legal [marijuana](#).

Trump in his inaugural address Friday said drugs "have stolen too many lives." The president did not elaborate on which drugs or how he planned to address the nation's drug problem.

One more formal vote on the Colorado advertising bill is required in the Senate before it heads to the House.

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