

Legal pot is making some states very happy - AvvoStories

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States that have legalized recreational marijuana are really happy with it, and it's not because they're high—it's because they're laughing all the way to the bank.

Money matters

In [Oregon](#) alone, the legal weed industry has created at least 12,500 new jobs and generates over \$20 million in revenue each month. This is no cocaine epidemic, either, where drug activity detracts from the state's general economy. According to <https://www.evernote.com/Home.action?login=true#b=d27a089f-1c24-4a42-9b1c-1b4b11a8e72f&st=p&n=068a6194-4dad-4637-adca-1f0ae823a681>

each month. This is no cocaine epidemic, either, where drug activity detracts from the state's general economy. According to [Bloomberg](#), Oregon had the best performing economy in the nation based on employment, home prices, personal income, tax revenue, mortgage delinquency, and publicly traded equity of its companies in 2015 (the first year after marijuana was legalized there). Correlation? Or causation?

Washington and Colorado, the first two states to legalize the use and sale of recreational pot, have also seen a hefty bump in revenue. Marijuana sales in Oregon, Washington, and Colorado have generated a combined \$335 million in annual tax revenues. Economic benefits in those states may have been initially suppressed, especially in Washington, where it took a while to figure out how to implement the voters' mandate. But states have continued to [learn from early mistakes](#), making establishment of regulatory and taxation structures more straightforward.

All good news, but money isn't everything. Has reefer madness destroyed the fabric of society in these states? The Drug Policy Alliance [studied the impact](#) of legalization in Washington and Colorado. They found that legalization had no effect on teen marijuana use or on traffic fatalities, but did result in fewer drug-related arrests.

Legal battles ahead?

No wonder states are ready to resist a federal crackdown on the [Schedule I-classified](#) drug. The current administration has [indicated](#) an intent to ignore the Cole Memo, the 2013 enforcement guidance that deprioritized legalized marijuana. No action has been taken yet, but states aren't waiting to see what kind of crackdown the new administration has in mind. Washington's Governor Jay Inslee and Attorney General Bob Ferguson sent a [joint letter](#) to U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions making legal and practical arguments defending the state's marijuana laws.

Meanwhile, in California, lawmakers scrambled to [prepare for battle](#) against the feds. California Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom sent a letter to the president, urging him not to carry through with threats to launch a federal enforcement effort. Some states have taken pre-emptive action in Congress. Representatives from Alaska, California, Colorado, and Oregon have formed the bipartisan [Cannabis Caucus](#) to develop policies bridging the gap between federal and state laws. "The federal government should stay out of this. Period," Alaskan Representative Don Young, one of the Caucus founders, said [in response](#) to the White House's statements on increased enforcement.

Legalized marijuana may be making states happy, but it definitely hasn't dulled their edge.

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