

In addition to DOJ Antitrust Division responsibility for enforcing specific antitrust laws, she said, “Promoting competition should be taken seriously across the executive branch. The FDIC, the Federal Reserve, and other agencies have a role to play in making sure that financial institutions don’t become so large that their smaller competitors don’t have the opportunity to serve American families and small businesses. **The FCC and FTC both have a role to play in making sure that small, innovative tech companies can develop newer and better ways for us to connect with each other without being crushed by the big guys.**”

Warren said that, in addition to their economic impact, “concentrated markets create concentrated political power.” Echoing remarks by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., during his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, she said, “Over time, this means a closed, self-perpetuating, rigged system – a playing field that lavishes favors on the big guys, hammers the small guys, and fuels even more concentration.”

Her prepared remarks said the next president could reverse a nearly 50-year trend of continued consolidation. “Strong executive leadership could revive antitrust enforcement in this country and begin, once again, to fight back against dominant market power and overwhelming political power,” she said, adding, **“Competition in America is essential to liberty in America, but the markets that have given us so much will become corrupt and die if we do not keep the spirit of competition strong.”**

## **Cannabis growers look for clarity on pesticide use**

Growing Cannabis is big business.

In 2015, the second year that recreational use of the smokable, edible plant was legal in Colorado, sales in that state totaled nearly \$1 billion (\$996 million, to be exact). And in fiscal 2015, which ended June 30, 2015, [the state took in nearly \\$70 million](#) in taxes – \$28 million more than were collected from alcohol sales.

Washington state has done well, too. Sales and tax revenue estimates have closely tracked Colorado’s, and last fall, the state estimated pot sales [would bring in more than \\$1 billion in taxes](#) in the next four years. Oregon, another state where recreational use is legal, [expects to take in \\$43 million](#) in pot-related tax revenues this year. (Recreational use is also permitted in Alaska and Washington D.C.)

But as with any fast-growing business, there have been bumps along the way. **One difficult issue, for a product that is still illegal under federal law, is pesticide use.**

“It’s a tough situation for cultivators,” says Mark Slaugh, executive director of the Cannabis Business Alliance in Colorado. “They’re between a rock and a hard place when it comes to federal law and state law. **There’s no pesticide out there that says ‘approved for marijuana.’**”

In Colorado, the state Department of Agriculture has issued a list of approved pesticides. But Slaugh says the state is taking an approach close to “zero tolerance” by prohibiting the presence of any pesticide or plant growth regulator above 10 parts per billion.

**“While that sounds good in theory, we also have the complications and challenges of the everyday, real-life world,”** Slaugh says. Earlier this year, the city of Denver tested marijuana

using its own lab, which resulted in more than a dozen recalls and ultimately, destruction of product.



Nestled in the mountains above Colorado Springs, Colo. are greenhouses and a lab growing a special strain of medical marijuana, known as Charlotte's Web, which helps with seizure disorders in young children, according to growers. Many marijuana farms are now seeking approvals for products to combat pests and plant diseases.

“A lot of that was because Denver city was doing the investigations,” Slaugh said “They were doing their own swabbing and own testing” at a laboratory not certified for testing. The city, which was sued over its policy, has since determined that it will refer any situations where pesticide use is suspected to the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

EPA has yet to receive any applications for a Special Local Needs (SLN) registration under 24(c) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. [In a letter to Colorado last year](#), the agency said the best way to obtain such approval would be to apply for an SLN using “a federally registered pesticide (that) is approved for use(s) similar to the manner in which the SLN pesticide would be used. EPA expects that a showing of such similarity would provide the best support for making the necessary determinations.”

And Colorado Agriculture Commissioner Don Brown [said recently](#) he did not foresee pesticide manufacturers getting into the marijuana business because the industry is still too small.

Slaugh said he would like to see EPA conduct research on the issue. In the meantime, he says, “We’ve encouraged compliance and responsibility in all aspects,”

Washington and Oregon, however, have set “action levels” for pesticides that, if detected, could result in a recall. That level of clarity is welcomed by Vicki Christopherson, executive director of the Washington CannaBusiness Association.

**“From the growers’ perspective, they want their products to be safe,” Christopherson said. But in order to ensure safety, they need clear guidelines about what they can use, and how much, she said.**

The state’s original guidance called for “zero tolerance,” she said, which is why her members were pleased when Washington followed Oregon’s lead and adopted the list of approved pesticides and action levels in May.

**“I can say that growers want to use as little pesticide as possible,” she said. “Most of the people growing are traditional organic growers,” she said, but there are some conventional farmers in eastern Washington who are experimenting with growing marijuana.**