

Mexican drug cartels are taking full advantage of Colorado's marijuana laws

BY: [Sally Mamdooh](#)

POSTED: 9:02 PM, Apr 7, 2016

UPDATED: 9:02 PM, Apr 7, 2016

TAG: [colorado](#) | [drugs](#) | [marijuana](#) | [marijuana industry](#) | [pot industry](#)

The legalization of marijuana in the state of Colorado has not only been good for the local economy, but it has inadvertently helped fuel the business of Mexican drug cartels.

"If you combine the legalization of marijuana and you combine that there are no regulations for the legalization of marijuana outside Colorado, it becomes an attractive criminal enterprises," said Jorge Duque with the Colorado Department of Law.

Duque said cartels are now trading drugs like heroin for marijuana, and the trade has since opened the door to drug and human trafficking.

"We have lots of victims. People are victimized whether they are being forced into prostitution, whether they are being kidnapped or just becoming addicts to illegal drug," said Duque.

And with that, Duque argued, comes money laundering. He said Cartels are often disguising their money through legally purchasing marijuana or buying houses and growing marijuana in it.

Duque said the Colorado Attorney General's Office is now working hand in hand with the Mexican consulate in Colorado to crack down on the growing criminal activity.

"We know now, that obviously we cannot solve every single problem that there is and obviously we can't do it alone."

The Attorney General's Office estimates that drug trafficking profits in the U.S are about \$65 billion a year.

[Sign up for Denver7 email alerts](#) to stay informed about breaking news and daily headlines.

Or, keep up-to-date by following Denver7 on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

Copyright 2016 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.