

February 17, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jefferson Lee, and I am a parent of three young children. I am also a physician. We have lived in Lutherville-Timonium since 2015. When we moved here, the neighborhood was lovely. Our children loved playing in the green spaces and fresh air.

In the summer of 2019, we noticed a strong, nauseating odor that permeated our residential neighborhood. Both my wife and I developed recurring headaches and bouts of nausea. The presence of this odor persisted from August until October. We discovered that the odor was coming from a commercial cannabis (“hemp”) farm located several hundred feet from our home. We later learned that the cannabis plants from this commercial farm were releasing chemicals called terpenes into the air.

The headaches and nausea from the cannabis terpenes were just the start of our worries. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) specifically warns pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to avoid exposure to chemicals from cannabis plants. We now faced the real health concern that our young children – with developing brains, lungs, and other organs – will be inhaling cannabis terpenes every day, for months on end, year after year.

There is zero research demonstrating the safety of cannabis terpene exposure on our children. Sadly, the absence of research fails to constitute safety – history is littered with cases where seemingly innocuous chemicals were later found to be hazardous or even deadly. Thalidomide, for instance, was hailed as a “miracle drug” to treat vomiting in pregnant women; only years later did scientists realize that thalidomide was causing tragic birth defects in children.

Therefore, we are horrified by the prospect of our young children becoming “guinea pigs” for a cannabis terpene experiment. Our concern is reasonable, as the FDA has already sounded the alarm for exposure to cannabis-derived chemicals in vulnerable populations. Our home should be a safe haven for our family, not a research lab to study the health effects of daily terpene exposure in growing children.

We wholeheartedly support laws to protect our families, especially our young children, from the health risks of terpenes released by nearby cannabis farms. Commercial cannabis agriculture must be forbidden in the vicinity of residential neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jefferson Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jefferson" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Lee".

Jefferson Lee, M.D.