



February 19, 2020

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill 625 – “Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Cannabis Commission – Reporting – Cannabis Use and Criminal Law Enforcement” – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (the Commission) is submitting this letter of information for House Bill 625 entitled “Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Cannabis Commission – Reporting – Cannabis Use and Criminal Law Enforcement.” HB 625 would require the Commission to submit an annual legislative report on youth consumption of cannabis; specified cannabis-related arrests, prosecutions, and convictions; and the impact of cannabis consumption on the sale and consumption of alcohol.

The Commission is responsible for implementing and regulating the legal medical cannabis program in Maryland. This primarily entails developing regulations, policies, and procedures governing medical cannabis businesses and conducting compliance and enforcement activities of the same. The Commission does not maintain any of the information requested in this bill, as the Commission does not handle any issues relating to the illicit use of recreational cannabis, the enforcement of criminal laws regarding cannabis, or the sale and consumption of alcohol. The agencies that maintain the information are as follows:

1. Maryland Department of Health (MDH). MDH administers the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in Maryland, which is a biennial survey of adolescent health risk behaviors such as smoking, drug use, and other risk behaviors. Maryland’s YRBS contains six questions relating to cannabis use by youth. The Monitoring the Future survey, which is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, is also published each year and contains relevant data about cannabis use among 8th, 10th and 12th graders.
2. Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP). GOCCP collects arrest, prosecution, and conviction data from 1975 through the present. Local law enforcement agencies report certain associated data to GOCCP which is incorporated into their Uniform Crime Reporting statistics.
3. Comptroller of Maryland. The Comptroller collects data on the sale of alcohol in Maryland.

The bill would have an operational impact on the Commission. To fulfill the requirements outlined in this bill, the Commission would have to dedicate staff to collecting and evaluating data and drafting the legislative report. In addition, Commission staff would need to contact each of the

three agencies responsible for collecting and maintaining the data required under HB 625, since the Commission does not collect or maintain this data. The Commission's efforts would likely be redundant, since the agencies referenced above are already responsible for developing and submitting legislative reports on each topic.

The Commission believes obtaining baseline data as described in HB 625 is vitally important to understanding the impact of legalizing adult-use cannabis. In fact, given the General Assembly's interest in legalization of adult-use cannabis, the Commission plans to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) in Spring 2020 to conduct an assessment of the current and future medical cannabis program and potential effects of legalizing adult-use cannabis in Maryland. The assessment will analyze a broad range of economic, health, safety, social, and environmental effects.

We hope this information is helpful as you deliberate HB 625. If you have any questions or wish to discuss, please contact me at william.tilburg@maryland.gov or (410) 487-8069.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Tilburg". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, horizontal flourish line.

William Tilburg, JD, MPH
Executive Director

cc: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee