

HB 1449 Testimony SWA

Natasha Pugliesi

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SWA

HB 1449

Chairman and Delegates,

We are Mazey Farms, one of three alternate groups that were selected by the medical cannabis commission in 2016 to operate in the event one of the initial licenses failed. (Commission letter attached) All three groups are majority women owned and ours is majority African-American women owned. All three groups scored higher on their cultivation applications than three companies that are currently licensed and operating in the industry.

We support HB 1449 with the proposed amendments from Chairman Barnes to open up the licensing in the Maryland Cannabis industry to include more minority and women owned groups. We are hoping to add the words "2016 alternates and" to the sections of the amendment opening up the licensing for the 2019 applicants. The main purpose of HB 1449 is to bring in more minority and women ownership to the medical cannabis industry in Maryland, while ensuring the applicants selected qualify with a high score. The only way legislation can ensure this is to add the 2016 alternates since those groups are known entities that fit the criteria the legislation is looking for.

If legislation truly wants to make the industry more diverse and correct the issues of the past with corruption and lack of minority and women majority ownership in the program, HB 1449 should be passed with the amendments also including the 2016 alternates. These three groups were identified in 2016 with the qualifications to operate, and all submitted evidence of their majority ownership makeup. Four years later we are still waiting for legislation to implement the obvious solution to address the industry concerns, hopefully this is the year.

Please feel free to call with questions.

Regards,

Natasha Pugliesi
CFO
Mazey Farms, LLC
(202) 412-8183



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH NATALIE M. LAPRADE
MARYLAND MEDICAL CANNABIS COMMISSION

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Larry Hogan, Governor - Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor - Van Mitchell, Secretary

August 15, 2016

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION AND US MAIL

Mr. Brian M. Bickerton
Mazey Farms LLC
4680 Morgan Court
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Re: Application for Medical Cannabis Grower License

Dear Mr. Brian M. Bickerton:

Thank you for your interest in a Medical Cannabis Grower License. After a careful review of your application, I am writing to advise you that, although your application was ranked among the top twenty (20) applications received for Medical Cannabis Grower Licenses, at this time Mazey Farms LLC was not selected for Pre-Approval to pursue a Medical Cannabis Grower License in the State of Maryland for the reasons set out more fully below.

The application review process was conducted as set out in COMAR 10.62.08.05. As you know, the Commission enlisted the services of the Regional Economic Studies Institute (RESI) to assist in reviewing and evaluating the applications received from interested applicants. The Commission received scoring information on one hundred and twenty-seven (127) applicants seeking a Medical Cannabis Grower License, despite having statutory authority to issue no more than fifteen (15) medical cannabis grower licenses. The Commission gave very careful consideration to applications that scored in the top 20% of all grower applicants.

Your application was evaluated highly enough to rank in the top twenty (20) applications received for Medical Cannabis Grower Licenses, but was not evaluated highly enough to be selected for immediate Pre-Approval to proceed. As stated at the August 5th meeting, all Pre-Approvals issued are expressly conditioned upon investigations of applicants' backgrounds and financial due diligence. Additionally, Pre-Approved applicants face a number of requirements in the coming weeks and months before they may be deemed eligible for a license. If any of the presently Pre-Approved applicants is unable to complete the steps necessary to be awarded a license, the Commission intends to proceed to the next ranked applicant within the top twenty.

This is an administrative action, and will not impair your ability to apply for a Medical Cannabis Grower License in the future. If you would like to contact the Commission regarding this letter, please do so by email to dhmh.medicalcannabisapplications@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Davis, MD

Paul W. Davis, MD, Chairman
Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission