



House Bill 805

Cannabis – Licensee Locations – Restrictions

Position: **UNF**

Date: **February 21, 2024**

To: **Economic Matters**

The Caroline County Commissioners **OPPOSE** HB 805. This bill pertains to Cannabis – Licensee Locations – Restrictions. The Commissioners understand the importance of regulating cannabis businesses, particularly with respect to zoning requirements, we believe that certain provisions of this bill pose significant challenges and constraints on our local jurisdiction.

House Bill 805 seeks to alter the distance restrictions applicable to licensed cannabis dispensaries and growers, while also prohibiting political subdivisions from establishing zoning requirements that are more restrictive than those applicable to other entities. While we recognize the need for consistency and fairness in zoning regulations, we have serious concerns about the implications of this bill for our county.

Specifically, we are troubled by the provision that prohibits political subdivisions from establishing zoning requirements for licensed dispensaries and growers that are more restrictive than those for retail dealers and hemp farms. This limitation undermines our ability to regulate cannabis businesses in a manner that is tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of our community.

In addition, the bill's provisions regarding distance requirements for dispensaries raise concerns about the potential proliferation of cannabis businesses in close proximity to sensitive areas such as schools, playgrounds, and places of worship. While we support efforts to ensure access to medical cannabis for qualified patients, we believe that local jurisdictions should have the flexibility to establish reasonable distance requirements based on local needs and considerations.

House Bill 805 restrictions on the imposition of zoning requirements that unduly burden cannabis licensees may have unintended consequences for public health and safety. Therefore, the Commissioners respectfully urge your committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB 805.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President