

Supporting HB0548

Good Morning,

My name is Mark Cullen Palmisano and I am writing in support of HB0548.

I was raised in Maryland and hold it dear to my heart.

I have been involved in the culinary/gourmet mushroom industry for about 20 years where I have worn many hats. Originally I was in cultivation, then I started doing equipment engineering and R&D. Now I provide consulting services and raw materials to other cultivators.

Over the past year, I had been consulting for a group of individuals in Oregon who intend to apply and acquire a psychedelic mushroom cultivation license. During my time consulting for them, I was able to learn many things in regards to the underground/black market. I have learned that there are many mushroom cultivators on the west coast that buy moldy and run down homes and warehouses for cultivating black market psychedelic mushrooms. Many of these moldy warehouses were left vacant after cannabis legalization put a lot of underground cannabis growers out of business. They have no quality control measures and in many cases use an illegal labor force. Some of these warehouses even have leftover, moldy, rotting cannabis plants in them. Their products turn out to be laden with other molds and mold spores, which pose health concerns/risks to the consumer. Unfortunately, many consumers have nowhere to go in order to find information on what a quality product is. They also have no place to test products they receive or ways to validate they have a safe product. These underground, contaminated mushrooms are making it back to places on the east coast by utilizing the same means of transportation used in the underground cannabis industry before it became legalized. This poses great risks to Maryland and other east coast residents. A framework for safe access and a regulated way to cultivate locally must be put in place.

In addition to the above mentioned information, I was also privy to information regarding some of the most widespread mushroom chocolate manufacturers and their practices. Without regulation, these mushroom chocolate manufacturers are able to label their products however they want. Most of them say they are using whole dried mushrooms on their packaging. However, after speaking with some of their employees and owners, they confided in me that they are actually using synthetic analogs (chemicals that are structurally similar to the active ingredients in psychedelic mushrooms). These chemicals are imported from clandestine labs (usually from Canada, China, or the Netherlands) and have no verifiable quality control measures in place. This is not only unacceptable, but dangerous. Without proper regulations and framework in place, it is impossible for the consumer to know what

they are actually getting. It is not acceptable for consumers, who are trying to heal themselves, to end up in a worst situation because there is a lack of information and regulation in place.

It is with my most sincere hope that you pass HB0548 in order to stop the inflow of tainted medicine and establish a framework for quality control and regulation in regards to psychedelic mushroom use for people who can genuinely benefit from it.

I greatly appreciate your time and consideration regarding this matter.

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