

James E. Risser
11802 Berans Road
Lutherville-Timonium, MD 21093

February 17, 2020

Maryland State Senator Hettleman
Maryland State Delegates Stein and Cardin

Dear Senator Hettleman and Delegates Stein and Cardin,

I am writing in support of HB 510, which would place restrictions on licensing hemp research and production facilities within close proximity to residential communities.

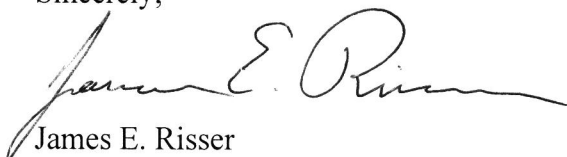
Like my neighbors, I am annoyed by the pervasive and strong odor emanating from the nearby hemp farm that began operation in 2019. However, I am much more concerned about the public health hazard posed by this farm. As is well-documented, and as I'm sure you're aware, hemp plants naturally emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that react with oxides of nitrogen in the presence of sunlight to produce harmful ground-level ozone. Thus, the VOCs that produce the stench in our neighborhood also threaten our children and anyone with even mild respiratory problems.

Having worked for nearly two decades in the field of protection against chemical and biological weapons, I am an expert in the airborne transport of chemical vapors and particulates, as well as the associated risks to human health. Without a detailed study, I question whether the 2-mile restriction in HB 510 is sufficient. However, it is much better than nothing. I would encourage you not to let this get watered down to some shorter distance.

I would also ask that you not permit an exception allowing indoor production with a VOC removal apparatus inside of the 2-mile restriction. Carbon filtration is expensive to install and even more expensive to maintain. While such a removal system can be expected to be effective when first installed, filters must be replaced regularly if the system is to continue to be effective. This is particularly true in the humid summer months when the carbon adsorbs moisture from the air, reducing its effectiveness at the very time that the VOCs are at their most dangerous. Any type of program that allows these systems should include provisions for regular inspections to make sure that the systems are maintained and functioning properly.

In closing, I want to thank you for taking up this fight for us to balance the needs of the agricultural economy with our right for a healthy and happy community.

Sincerely,



James E. Risser