

Health and Government Operations
Maryland House Office Building
6 Baden Street Committee Room
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 28, 2020

Re: Cannabis House Bill HB1449

To Whom it May Concern:

I am providing this letter as testimony in support of Cannabis House Bill HB1449 and its recommended Amendments. As a long time Howard County Maryland resident, I am aware of MD's challenges with building an infrastructure for licensing and regulation of medical cannabis, and the resulting MD Medical Cannabis Commission's (MMCC) challenges with providing fair consideration for granting the coveted licenses.

Because of the unfair results in the very first round of MMCC issuing licenses where minority businesses were left out, Maryland lawmakers ultimately approved legislation to expand the state's medical marijuana industry in a way that gives minority-owned companies a better chance at opening a new cannabis business.

Despite this, as a woman of Native American heritage and a small business owner, I am witnessing that black and brown people, including Native Americans, are still being left out of the medical cannabis industry in MD. It's happening to me. And the result is a negative impact on not just me and my business, but on economic development for Native Americans in the state of MD in general.

Native Bloom applied for the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC)'s Processor License in May 2019. And then again in June 2019 due to issues in the MMCC application submission process and its technology. Our organization provides next generation solutions for the emerging cannabis market. We are dedicated to making the cleanest and safest medical cannabis concentrates and extracts to serve medical cannabis dispensaries that in turn provide access to wellness for those in need in our great state. But we are being left out and shut out as the small number of approved licenses are targeted to be awarded by the MMCC to big businesses, most of which are not minority owned.

All of us must consider and must contend with our country's history of criminalizing underprivileged populations for marijuana-related offenses. Even as cannabis laws are being passed, it's clear that black and brown people are not only still being arrested and incarcerated for such offenses at higher rates, we're also being marginalized within the legal marijuana industry, including in the state of MD.

For Native Americans, marijuana is a medicine from Mother Earth. Cannabis is tribal and is consistent with our relationship with Mother Earth. My business is well qualified to run a thriving cannabis business and provide outstanding economic results for Native Americans and for the state of MD.

I support Cannabis House Bill HB1449 and its recommended Amendments. Please VOTE for this bill. And thank you for your consideration and support in helping those of us who have been marginalized and left out.

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